

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of an Extraordinary Hybrid meeting held on 6th January, 2026.

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

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

Present: Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby (Chair); Councillor C. Iannucci-Williams (Vice-Chair); Councillors G.M. Ball, C.E.A. Champion, P. Drake, V.P. Driscoll, A.M. Ernest, M.J. Hooper, J.M. Norman, E. Penn, I.A.N. Perry and S.T. Wiliam.

Also present: M. Blackmore and D. Paskin (Tenant Working Group / Panel Representatives); O. Carroll (Citizens Advice Cardiff and Vale); and Councillors A. Asbrey, G. Bruce, I.R. Buckley, L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), S. Campbell, G.D.D. Carroll, J.E. Charles, C.P. Franks, S.J. Haines, S.M. Hanks, W.A. Hennessy, 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), S. Sivagnanam (Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services).

539 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer 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”.

540 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillor C. Stallard and K. Mitchell (Tenant Working Group / Panel Representative).

541 MINUTES–

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 18th November, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

542 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

The Chair, Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby, declared a personal, but not prejudicial, interest in respect of Agenda Item 4 – Vale of Glamorgan Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2021-2036, Revised Delivery Agreement and Green Infrastructure Strategy. The nature of her interest was that she was an independent member of the Cardiff and Vale Health Board which had been involved

in this process as a statutory consultee. Due to this being a personal interest only, the Chair remained in the meeting when the agenda item was discussed.

543 VALE OF GLAMORGAN DEPOSIT REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RLDP) 2021-2036, REVISED DELIVERY AGREEMENT AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 18th December, 2025 was presented by the Head of Sustainable Development to the Committee. The purpose of the reference / report from Cabinet was for the Committee to consider the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2021-2036, Revised Delivery Agreement and Green Infrastructure Strategy, and, if considered appropriate, forward any recommendations to Cabinet. This was to enable the RLDP, etc., to be considered by Cabinet and Full Council, and then for further public consultation.

A presentation highlighting some of the key points of the report was given to the Committee, including the following areas of interest:

- The background to the RLDP Strategy / Deposit Plan, and its development and progress to date. Reference was also made to those matters previously approved / agreed which the Deposit Plan would be building on;
- Housing provision and levels of growth in terms of housing units at the various sites outlined;
- Other housing allocations within the Vale of Glamorgan: Clive Road, (which had been the subject of a number of written representations from the public), Hayes Lane, The Bendricks, and Neptune Road, Barry Waterfront;
- How the RLDP supported affordable housing delivery, including in rural areas;
- How the Infrastructure Delivery Plan formed part of the Deposit Plan and was informed by a Strategic Transport Assessment considering cumulative impacts on the highway network, as well as considerations on education, health, water and sewage;
- Highlighting the allocation of land within the RLDP for employment opportunities;
- The RLDP and the development / provision of retail and town centres;
- The Deposit Plan and its response to climate change; and
- The next steps in this process which included: Scrutiny, Cabinet and Full Council input and endorsement for public consultation on this Plan and the opportunity for further representations to be provided prior to it being considered by an Independent Planning Inspector.

Following the presentation of this reference / report, the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services explained that the report represented a key milestone in the overall RLDP process, and that the next stage would be to send the Deposit Plan out for further consultation along with the Green Infrastructure Strategy, etc., for public and Elected Member comments. This was the next formal stage which detailed the planning policy framework and outlined/ addressed the key challenges for the County going forward, such as the need for affordable housing. There had already been Elected Member engagement with the report and Plan and by Members supporting the report this would ensure further

consultation on it in order to progress this process and to have a Deposit and updated Local Development Plan in place by the end of the year.

The Chair referred to the written representations that had been provided by local residents and other groups concerning the report, which had been shared with Members of the Committee prior to the meeting, for their consideration.

E. Reed, a member of the public, wished to speak on the report, and raised several points, following her collecting comments from local residents at Rhoose, concerning those areas of the RLDP and Deposit Plan related to Rhoose, including:

- Objection to the proposed residential development off Readers Way in Rhoose because it was felt it would not deliver the much-needed green and transport infrastructure;
- Rhoose had already been developed significantly without the required facilities and infrastructure to accommodate this being in place;
- It was felt that the Plan did not have sufficient proposals within it to provide the necessary infrastructure, transport, education and other facilities for the Rhoose area, which would lead to greater car use and travel, defeating the Plan's stated aims;
- Weycock Cross junction was already over capacity, which could be exacerbated by further housing developments nearby, and talk of developing and improving this junction further could be costly and challenging, in her opinion. A new link road from the Airport Dragons Tail roundabout to connect with Five Mile Lane bypassing Weycock Cross junction was needed instead;
- In her opinion, successive Administrations at the Council had let Rhoose residents down and asked the Committee to carefully consider the transport and flooding infrastructure to be provided as part of any proposals within the draft Plan.

Subsequently, non-Committee Elected Members were invited to speak on the proposals detailed in the reference and report:

- Councillor Haines raised St Athan and proposed developments there, and the challenges and issues these would face, in his opinion, including limited public transport, and reference to a train station within the RLDP which had not been realised, and no clear plans on the alternative transport interchange at St Athan that had also been referred to. On employment opportunities, St Athan already had sufficient housing for both existing and potential employment. On social housing within the RLDP, etc., he felt there was no evidenced need for more such housing and this would put more pressure on existing infrastructure and facilities. On Clive Road, this was an informal "community open space / village green", which would be lost under the proposed development in the RLDP Strategy / Deposit Plan, and its proximity to an active airport runway. He asked the Committee to reject the strategy and Plan, and to require any perceived inaccuracies, etc., be corrected before it was returned for consideration. Also, to ensure that any development in the Flemingston Ward included the relevant facilities, including a shop; and finally that the Clive Road site be removed from the list of candidate sites.

- Councillor Hennessy raised questions and concerns made by local residents in Rhoose about the proposed developments, including the perceived significant distance to travel to the local train station by walking and other active travel methods from the proposed site, the impact on local schools already at, or almost at, full capacity, the maintenance of the proposed pond close to the Readers Way site, which was an area at risk of flooding, a lack of sufficient public transport within the Rhoose area, as well as health and medical facilities. He asked that Committee recommend the removal of Readers Way, etc. as proposed sites on the Strategy / Plan.
- Councillor Franks concentrated on what he felt were the significant flaws of this current iteration of the RLDP and of previous ones, including the latest proposed developments at Northwest Barry and north of the Eastbrook area of Dinas Powys and the potential negative impact on the local landscape, public and private transport, roads and schools' capacities, as well as that on local healthcare and potential flood risks.
- Councillor Campbell raised concerns around the proposed developments impacting Rhoose, and what she felt was the lack of infrastructure in order to accommodate these and the accountability and responsibility of various bodies, such as the Local Health Board and housing developers to help deliver sufficient infrastructure and the Strategy and the Plan did not have a 'Plan B' in order to address this should the infrastructure not be put in place by developers, which had been seen at some other previous housing sites and developments.
- Councillor Asbrey raised concerns about the proposed development north of the Eastbrook area of Dinas Powys, next to an area that had already experienced significant development under the existing Local Development Plan and that the new site faced significant challenges, including its location, which was seen as not being a logical extension of Dinas Powys and would be distant from many facilities that you would expect in an urban area, as well as being more Cardiff facing. The site would rely on single vehicle access on Cardiff Road, which had been flooded previously and safe / accessible pedestrian and cycle linkages on the site would be extremely limited. She felt there would be issues with more housing in terms of more residents requiring healthcare and other services which were already under pressure or were limited. The proposed development could also exacerbate existing issues with flooding in Dinas Powys, and prevent or prejudice further mitigation and other measures to combat the risk of flooding in the area. Therefore, she requested that the Committee recommend the site be removed from the Strategy and Plan.
- Councillor John referred to the retail site development near Llantwit Major / Llanmaes and its current status as well as that of Boverton and Welsh Government decision making around this.
- Councillor Carroll spoke about his concerns and opposition to the RLDP and Deposit Plan, which he felt was rushed and Members had not had sufficient time to consider and digest the information provided fully. He also reiterated the point previously raised about proposed developments such as at Dinas Powys, St Athan and Rhoose and the lack of appropriate infrastructure and services there for further housing, as well as the increase of road traffic on adjacent roads and its impact on road capacity and safety. He felt that due to the concerns raised by various parties, the RLDP and the related documents

were flawed and if they went to consultation, he felt the public would oppose them. In his opinion it was better to withdraw and reassess these prior to further consultation to ensure the concerns raised were addressed.

The Chair advised that, in response to concerns regarding the volume of papers, she considered that Members had had sufficient time to review the documentation and trusted that they had given due consideration to the matters raised.

In response to the comments, queries and concerns raised by the previous speakers, the Head of Sustainable Development set out the following:

- Where the Council was in terms of the RLDP and Deposit Plan was the result of a number of stages, including informal engagement through to formal reporting to various Committees within the Council and public consultation, and engagement with other stakeholders and statutory bodies. The Council was at the point where a recent meeting of the Full Council had voted to include the key sites mentioned within the Plan and at the meeting tonight. What the Council was seeking to do now, as part of the Deposit Plan consultation, was to add further detail to the work already undertaken. However, the key sites had been subject to extensive scrutiny, consultation and debate, and this stage was not intended to revisit decisions that had already been made or matters of principle about these sites.
- In terms of Rhose and sustainability of the proposed development(s) nearby, this was not based on a 'binary' set of criteria but rather consisted of a 'sliding scale', with the Council's intention to always look at those areas of development / allocation of land at the most appropriate and sustainable locations. It had also become increasingly difficult to find new development locations that were as sustainable as those identified in previous Local Development Plans. Nevertheless, the Council had to consider as part of its RLDP the ongoing housing crisis and demand, and the fact that the County sat within a national growth area. Although Rhose may not be as sustainable as other settlements such as Barry, it nevertheless still constituted one of the County's more sustainable settlements, with a train station (which was felt to be walkable from the new development) and other wide-ranging facilities. With reference to the increased demand in schools, etc., developers would be required to help supplement capacity there, and where that was most needed. Drainage infrastructure, roads and open spaces could be retained by developers or transferred to local Councils.
- It was important to note that the RLDP could not be used to allocate new, alternative settlements in order to address the concerns raised about the proposed locations, that could only be done through the Strategic Development Plan. The Council had to look at allocations both within, and adjoining, existing settlements.
- With regard to the Weycock Cross development, work had been undertaken at a strategic level with transport consultants that agreed that the impact on traffic, transport and congestion there could be mitigated effectively without the need to build a new road and increasing traffic congestion as a result, which would be in contravention of the Welsh Government's position on new roads.

- To reiterate, the RLDP and the associated documents would be going out for consultation, and this would be done over a six-week period to allow time for stakeholders to digest these. Although these consisted of a large number of supporting documents and pages, there was not an expectation that Elected Members would need to read all 900 pages of the combined report in order for this to be progressed for public consultation.
- On the comments on the Rhoose development and the Health Board, there was an ongoing discussion between the Council and the Health Board and opportunities would be sought to improve healthcare capacity and infrastructure locally to enhance the viability of these developments, coupled with affordable housing, education, sustainable transport, community facilities and open spaces.
- Regarding St Athan, the proposed sites had already gone through the same level of consultation and scrutiny as the proposed Rhoose site and the comments made on these were based on matters of principles previously addressed. On the proposed train station development, the proposed housing allocations would help to justify and build a business case for it, that would not exist otherwise. The proposed site would be allocated based on nearby employment opportunities which could increase retail, community and educational opportunities and development.
- On the previous proposed Northeast Barry site that had been withdrawn due to deliverability issues, this did not mean that it was fundamentally an inappropriate site or unsustainable or that it undermined the case for the other proposed sites as part of the RLDP and Deposit Plan or the overall strategy involved. The flooding issues mentioned regarding the proposed Dinas Powys site, were pre-existing ones which the allocation would not impact on.
- On the retail development at Llantwit Major, the current position was clarified and the future status of the development should it be refused permission by the Welsh Government.
- It was reiterated that the RLDP and related documents, etc., had not been rushed, with much time and consideration having been involved in it from Council officers, Elected Members, members of the public and others, resulting in several revisions to these already, and with the proposed six-week consultation to be undertaken following Scrutiny and Full Council input.

Following this, Members of the Committee raised several comments and questions, including:

- Councillor Penn felt the RLDP and supporting documents represented a thoughtful and forward-looking framework that built on the preferred Strategy to deliver sustainable growth. It would address housing need, employment opportunities, infrastructure, prioritise placemaking, etc., and had addressed or mitigated potential issues and had revised allocation and development pragmatically, making it viable and realistic. However, greater detail would be needed in the RLDP on mitigating or preventing potential delays in infrastructure delivery which would make it more robust and increase public confidence. The RLDP and related documents provided a solid foundation in order to go out for consultation and needed to take all stakeholders' opinions into account prior to the proposed locations being finalised. Research had repeatedly shown that the environment that you grow up in, you lived in, you

worked in, significantly impacted on health and well-being and life chances. The Council should build with imagination, creativity and with the environment at the forefront of any plans.

- Councillor Ernest highlighted that residents wanted sufficient infrastructure and facilities as part of these new developments, including healthcare, transport, roads and retail shops, citing previous examples in Penarth, and elsewhere where these had not fully materialised. Due to these factors, he would not be supporting the recommendations of the report, etc., as well as the overall RLDP.
- Councillor Hooper acknowledged the work and effort that been put into the RLDP and supporting documentation, but felt that there had still not been sufficient scrutiny of this process, and not enough time to consider all the details around the report and documentation at tonight's meeting on this, which would mean that not all stakeholder concerns would be adequately addressed and effective consideration on this would not be undertaken as it should. Also, the Vale of Glamorgan had signed up to the Cardiff City Region as part of a wider economic area, but with no Strategic Development Plan as part of this as yet and asked why this was not part of the RLDP. It was important to have the right houses in the right places and Welsh Government housing projections showed substantial increases in older persons living in the County and single households, and how would the RLDP address this. Also, how would the RLDP help the Council to house those people locally who required good quality housing, and the numbers involved around this. Finally he asked how the proposed six-week consultation could be made to work as effectively as possible in order to engage with as many residents as possible and to have their voices heard.
- In relation to Councillor Hooper's point on affordable housing above, the Chair also asked how the Council could ensure that affordable housing would meet the needs of local people who were currently on the Council's housing waiting list in the County, as part of the RLDP / Deposit Plan. On the concerns raised about the consultation process, she suggested that Elected Members had a role in addressing these concerns and ensuring that the consultation had the necessary 'reach' in their wards in conjunction with Council officers.
- Councillor Champion suggested that as part of the consultation process that posters and other more traditional forms of advertising and media be used in order to raise public awareness of the consultation process and the opportunities to engage with this, which newer forms of digital and social media may not be able to reach. He also referred to the proposed St Athan development, and suggested earmarking parts of the land for healthcare and retail and other development of facilities and services. Without earmarking these on the Deposit Plan, there was no guarantee that developer(s) would progress with these facilities as part of the development. Developments of this size required community facilities, which had not always been achieved in similar, previous, developments in the County.
- The Vice-Chair asked if, in order to maximise engagement with the public around the consultation, the Council had reached out to Town and Community Councils in the County in order share these details with the public and promote it. Also, had the use of print media, i.e. newspapers, leaflets, etc., been considered.

- Councillor Perry felt that the issues with the RLDP / Deposit Plan were due to the party politics at play, rather than the efforts undertaken by Council officers, with some good points having been addressed by the Plan, but key fundamentals, such as putting the necessary infrastructure into the proposed developments first, had not been addressed or were in the wrong order or priority in the Plan, with the housing coming first instead. This resulted in an over reliance on cars in the County, and limited public transport. A strategic transport plan or assessment was missing from the RLDP, and he cited the existing traffic congestion and related pressures on the County's road networks at present, which would only increase due to the RLDP. Furthermore, the challenges faced as part of the climate emergency were not adequately addressed by the RLDP in terms of construction, mitigating increased flood risks, etc. This was also reflected in local, national and UK wide politics. He felt that the report and other documentation recommendations should be deferred prior to further scrutiny by the Committee.

In response to the comments, queries and concerns raised by the Committee Members, the Head of Sustainable Development set out the following:

- Regarding details on infrastructure delivery, etc., in the RLDP, the infrastructure improvements would come alongside the developments and would therefore have to rely on when the allocations, applications and developers came forward and when these were subsequently realised. This meant that the RLDP could not go into too much detail realistically on infrastructure delivery, as it remained contingent on the developers themselves to bring this forward.
- On transport and roads, the Plan was not intended to encourage car and road use but rather achieve a balance between encouraging sustainable modes of transport and mitigating transport impacts as much as possible in light of the climate emergency and current planning policy.
- The delivery agreement for the Strategic Development Plan was in place and would be shared, with it projecting a submission of it to PEDW for examination in 2030 through to its adoption in 2031/32.
- The proposed sites in the RLDP would not be able to deal with all the housing need in the County. This would require much more housing allocation and that brought challenges in satisfying everyone's needs in terms of infrastructure, location, etc. A balance had to be achieved between allocating or delivering as much affordable housing as possible whilst respecting the other competing issues or concerns which go against that. The local lettings policies in place with the Council would ensure that housing would go to those in local need and in most need. There was a slightly different lettings policy in relation to the rural exception sites and the proportions allocated there. But in both cases initially it would go to local need and those persons with the highest need. On the point raised previously on the rural affordable housing led sites, which would have a minimum of 50% of new units as affordable, agreement was also being sought on requiring the market proportion of the site to have regard to what local need was in those areas. This related to the market part because it was heard frequently at the Planning Committee and in other forums about the needs of communities, of people, whether it was for smaller

units, units for older people that did not meet the definition of affordable housing, etc. Therefore, such a policy would hopefully work towards that. The Plan could not address all the housing need locally but would help to address as much of it as possible and the viability testing ensured that the relevant percentages were being delivered as high as they could be in the context of the other things that these sites needed to deliver.

- On the comments and queries around the consultation, it was explained that there would be seven in-person events held, with similar events having been held already at previous stages of the RLDP process. Attendance levels varied, but every effort was made to publicise these and encourage public participation and attendance. These involved Council officers answering questions from local residents, addressing concerns, etc. This was done in conjunction with social media and broadcasting details on the Council's website. On liaising with local Town and Community Councils as part of this process, that would be looked at, in conjunction with using the most efficient means of communicating to the local communities around the consultation process, including the suggestion of advanced notifications and use of posters. This would help to avoid some of the more costly and less effective means of communication.
- On the earmarking of parts of the proposed sites, such as St Athan, as areas for community, healthcare and retail use facilities, there was scope in the allocations for these, but it was not possible to be prescriptive on what the community facilities would be or could be used for, and this required an assessment of, and a conversation on, what was needed with the Health Board, and the local Community Council in conjunction with Section 106 policies and viability limits.

The below recommendation was voted on by the Committee, following its scrutiny and discussions on the reference and the report. Following a request from a Committee Member for a Recorded Vote on this recommendation, the vote took place as follows:

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain
G.M. Ball	√		
C.E.A. Champion			√
P. Drake	√		
V.P. Driscoll		√	
A.M. Ernest		√	
M.J. Hooper		√	
C. Iannucci-Williams	√		
S. Lloyd-Selby	√		
J.M. Norman	√		
E. Penn	√		
I.A.N. Perry		√	
S.T. Wiliam		√	
TOTAL	6	5	1

Therefore, the vote, and recommendation, was carried, which recommended the following:

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Committee agree and approve the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan and supporting documents, including the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy and draft Healthy Placemaking Supplementary Planning Guidance being referred for public consultation.

Reason for recommendation

To enable public consultation of the Deposit in accordance with Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 (as amended) and, due to there being no comments or recommendations to be referred to Cabinet, to enable the report to be referred to Full Council (12th January, 2026) for their consideration and approval.

544 FINAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET PROPOSALS 2026/27, RENT SETTING 2026/27 AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2026/27 (EL/PR) –

The report, presented by the Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer, in conjunction with the Head of Housing and Building Services, detailed the final Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals for 2026/27. The purpose of the report was to set the HRA budget for the financial year 2026/27, set the rents and service charges for the forthcoming rent year beginning on 1st April, 2026 and present the 30 Year Housing Business Plan starting financial year 2026/27. Subsequently, the Committee was asked to review the report and make any recommendations on the Recommendations (2) to (7) of the report, which were being considered by Cabinet on 8th January, 2026.

A presentation was given to the Committee, highlighting key points of the report, including:

- The HRA was a ring-fenced account that was self-funded mainly by dwelling rents and the expenditure consisted of staffing to manage the provision, repairs and maintenance of the housing stock, capital financing to service the debt and revenue contributions towards the Capital Programme, including decarbonisation and new developments;
- The report also set out the proposed rents and service charges for the coming financial year 2026/27; as part of the Renting Homes Wales Act the Council was required to give 2 months' notice of any increase in Council Rents to Council Tenants;
- The report also set out the annual 30 year Housing Business Plan which was in Appendix A and was supported by a detailed 30-year financial model. The submission deadline for the Housing Business Plan was the 31st March, 2026;
- Key updates were shared in relation to the HRA, including Welsh Government policy and the initial draft process around this;
- An analysis of the 2026/27 budget for the HRA was provided;
- It was proposed that rents were increased by 4.3% which was the maximum allowable. The rents had been set in line with the Council's existing rent policy, which considered the number of bedrooms, type and size of property

along with location, whilst still ensuring that the current Housing Business Plan commitments were achieved;

- Proposed service fees and charges were also referred to;
- Rent affordability had also been considered, with the Council comparing favourably with private landlords, and other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The majority of the Council's own tenants considered its rents to be affordable;
- The Money Advice Service was available to all Vale Council tenants which had enabled households to reduce financial hardship and sustain tenancies;
- A summary of capital expenditure and its component parts in relation to the HRA was given;
- The Housing Improvement Programme reflected ambitious proposals to invest in new build accommodation to address the acute shortage of social housing in the area. The Improvement Programme also sought to decarbonise the existing housing stock through investment in alternative energy sources, insulation and other energy efficiency initiatives;
- Next steps and the timetable for progressing the HRA, rent setting and Business Plan were outlined and discussed, which included further consideration and a decision made on these through Cabinet and Full Council over the coming months.

Subsequently, the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources and the Cabinet Member for Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement spoke to the Committee in order to endorse the report and its proposals, including the importance of the HRA and the proposed rent increase in maintaining, renovating, and expanding the Council's housing stock and providing safe secure homes at an affordable rent. This was a separate budget setting process, supported by a business plan, and could be considered a social enterprise because the income derived from the Council housing rent helped to provide further housing and maintenance and improvement of existing stock. The rent increase proposed still compared favourably to the equivalent rates seen in the private sector. Following a request for clarification from Councillor Hooper, it was confirmed that the proposed rent increase was the maximum of what was allowable as set by Welsh Government, but was still lower than the private rental sector, etc.

A non-Committee Elected Member, Councillor Hennessy, asked how much was owed by tenants in unpaid rent currently; also, how many Council properties currently had had no Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) work done at all. It was explained that the amount owed by tenants in terms of rent was approximately £800k, or roughly 2% of the rent roll. Much of this could be attributed to the move for tenants from Housing Benefit (paid in advance) to Universal Credit (paid in arrears). On WHQS, if a Council property already reached this standard, then there would be no need to undertake additional works to it. Different properties would require different component parts to be maintained or replaced during the lifecycle of the buildings and in line with WHQS requirements, which were indicated in the Business Plan.

Councillor Hooper raised several comments and queries, including an update on the risks referred to in terms of the Renting Homes Wales Act, on the changes to the percentage of tenants who considered Council rents to be unaffordable over the last

5 to 10 years, and on the rating of the Council in relation to other Welsh Local Authorities in terms of rent affordability. In response to these, it was explained that with the Renting Homes Act, there had been some testing of the legislation, not within the County Council owned sector, but across the wider Registered Social Landlord (RSL) sector. Those tests had generally worked in the Council's favour. Around 12 to 18 months ago, this posed a significant risk, but the direction of travel was now more positive. When the Council closed the 2024/25 accounts, it included a contingent liability. However, it was not expected that would be necessary when closing the 2025/26 accounts. On rent affordability and tenant perceptions, data was regularly collected as part of the STAR survey and would be forwarded to Committee Members. On rent affordability in comparison to other Welsh Authorities, the ranking and metrics also included RSLs as well as Local Authorities and so covered all forms of social housing not just Council owned ones (with 11 Welsh Councils having housing stock). Councillor Hooper suggested that the measures and metrics should be made clearer and be improved in order to remove any ambiguity, etc.

Councillor Hooper raised further questions around capital expenditure on new builds, which were set in or at risk in the Business Plan and the greater use of energy efficiency / energy generation on Council housing. In response, the new builds were covered in the forward delivery programme for new housing and had sites within the new Cardiff and Vale Housing Partnership. The Plan allowed for sites that may come forward which the Council was not yet aware of. The Council was currently working with consultants to review housing managed Council-owned land and assessing potential sites that could be used for modular accommodation, in the form of new modular units or relocated modular units. This work was ongoing. On energy efficiency / generation, social landlords were undertaking target energy pathway work as part of WHQS. This was a much more holistic approach in relation to retrofit measures for Council housing stock and achieving the appropriate Energy Performance Certification. This work would provide a baseline and a more accurate indication of costs based on what had been done to date. A fabric-first approach had been taken to the Council's energy-efficiency measures. As outlined in the Housing Business Plan, this included measures such as external wall insulation (EWI), internal wall insulation (IWI), and other improvements. The Council was also carrying out some solar PV installations. However, rather than taking a piecemeal approach to retrofit measures, the aim was to adopt a whole-house approach to offer better value for money and to manage the work more effectively within the Business Plan. The Council had several pilot sites and it had installed battery storage on some of its flatted blocks. In addition, when installing solar PV, the Council had chosen not to take back any generation credit from the energy supplier. Instead, all the financial benefit went directly to tenants, helping to improve affordability.

Councillor Ernest was concerned that large increases in demand for Council housing could be in part due to the lower rents as compared to the private sector. He queried why the Money Advice Service was not available to private sector tenants. It was explained that the demand for Council housing was identified in the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) and was previously referred to in the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) report and highlighted what was driving the demand for social housing. Reference was made to large numbers of people on the waiting list on Homes4U, the numbers of people in extreme housing need and in temporary housing, where local private housing and rental prices were extremely

high. Work had been done with the private sector however, through the Assisted Tenancy Scheme to improve access to those on low incomes and it was noted approximately 70% of Vale tenants received some form of housing subsidy which would help them meet any increases in their rents. The Council's house building programme would also help address demand and affordability. The Money Advice Service was paid for by Council tenants which was why it was only available to them to use. Work was being undertaken with the Housing Benefit Service and Citizens' Advice to offer advice and support to private sector tenants as well.

On the Vice-Chair's and Chair's queries around notification of increased tenant rents and the joint campaign to encourage tenants to speak to their landlords about financial hardship, it was explained that the joint campaign would involve the Council and Welsh Government, who would contribute to the campaign. The Council had helped to reinstate a regular, quarterly, tenant newsletter in the County, which could be used to highlight the rent increases and encourage / signpost tenants to seek advice and contact the Council if they encountered financial difficulties concerning their rent. The Council was required to provide a minimum of two months' notice to its housing tenants regarding any rent increases. If the proposed increase was approved, measures would be in place to inform tenants and provide advanced notice as early as possible.

Councillor Perry raised questions on how much more other RSLs were charging in terms of rent, compared to the Council, and why this was the case; also, why was rent collected from the most vulnerable persons, and tenants, in our society to help provide new housing when significant amounts of money were also being collected from Section 106. On RSL rental rates, this was the result of previous legislation and policies on rent banding and currently on the different business plans, budgetary decisions and aspirations of the various RSLs, including the Council, which meant that rental rates varied. This information would be provided with the other items requested and shared with Members in due course. On Section 106, this was in addition to funding via HRA and not an alternative or replacement to this. There was also between 30 to 40% affordable housing requirement on certain sites as part of these agreements with private developments. The income in relation to new builds and their rental also contributed to the repairs, maintenance and investment of existing housing stock. Viability proposals for new build ensured that those new build properties paid back over 40 or 50 years depending on the viability of a particular scheme.

On Councillor Perry's follow up question as to whether the building cost of a one bedroom new build flat exceeded that of the purchase price of an existing two bedroom flat or home locally, which could be bought instead, it was explained that new builds were necessary to increase housing supply, not just change of tenure, but this was being complemented by the Council acquiring existing housing stock in the private sector as well.

Councillor Wiliam referred to the areas of deprivation within Barry and the Vale of Glamorgan, which featured in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, and the potential negative impact of the proposed rent increase to Council tenants in these areas. He asked what measures the Council would be putting in place to support these tenants. It was reiterated that there were several measures, etc., in place to

help tenants with the rent increase, and that many of these tenants received Housing Benefit or Universal Credit which would meet the increased rental costs. However, those people who were on the margins of this could see an impact, but the Money Advice Service was available to offer support and advice on financial and income issues and opportunities to them.

Subsequently, Councillor Hooper proposed a recommendation to be referred to Cabinet in order to reconsider the proposed 4.3% rent increase and to look at a lower rental increase instead which would be considered more affordable for tenants. This was seconded and a Recorded Vote also requested on the Motion (that Committee request that Cabinet consider a review to reduce the level of the proposed rent increase), which went as follows:

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain
G.M. Ball		√	
C.E.A. Champion	√		
P. Drake		√	
V.P. Driscoll	√		
A.M. Ernest			√
M.J. Hooper	√		
C. Iannucci-Williams		√	
S. Lloyd-Selby		√	
J.M. Norman			√
E. Penn		√	
I.A.N. Perry	√		
S.T. Wiliam	√		
TOTAL	5	5	2

Due to there being a 'tied' vote, the Chair gave her casting vote as against the Motion / recommendation (on the basis that the report set out clearly the rationale for the 4.3% increase), which meant that it was not carried. Subsequently, Committee

RECOMMENDED – T H A T, with regard to Recommendation (3) of the report (that Cabinet recommends to Council that it approves an average rent increase of 4.3%), the Committee asked for the report to clarify the affordability criteria set within it, in relation to the proposed rent increases and that the information should include details on the average rent increase levels set by Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners in order to further clarify the rationale for the decision making around the level of rent increase proposed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Reason for recommendation

In order that Cabinet and the relevant Council officers consider the recommendation made by the Committee and to help provide clarity on the decision making process around the level of rent increase proposed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.