

Meeting of:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 01 April 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Task and Finish Review – On Providing Greater Accessibility to Beaches in the Vale of Glamorgan.
Purpose of Report:	To consider the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Review into providing greater accessibility to beaches in the Vale of Glamorgan. To also establish the next Task and Finish review and for the Committee to agree the size, composition and membership of this.
Report Owner:	Place Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Working Group
Responsible Officer:	Mark Thomas, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Members of the Task and Finish Group (Elected Members and a Tenant Representative from the Place Scrutiny Committee). Head of Neighbourhood Services Neighbourhood Services Manager Various Council officers, staff and external representatives / witnesses.
Policy Framework:	This report is in accordance with the recommendations of the Audit Wales (formerly Wales Audit Office) Democratic Renewal report and follows a review of the Council's scrutiny function.
Executive Summary: • The report asks Members to consider the findings and recommendations of the review into the provision of more accessible beaches to residents and visitors to beaches in the Vale of Glamorgan. • This topic was considered, approved and prioritised by Members of the Place Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 22nd July 2025 as part of the report into proposed Task and Finish activities (Min No 241 refers). At the same meeting the membership of the Task and Finish Group was also agreed to. • Subsequently, the Task and Finish Group was established and met on 9 occasions (7 formal meetings and 2 informal ones to draft the report) in order to review and to undertake a 'deep dive' exercise into the accessibility at local beach locations. The Group has undertaken	

various factfinding work and site visits in relation to this topic (the minutes of the formal meetings and site visits are provided as part of Appendix B to the report).

- Over the course of the review, the Group has also received numerous representations from several internal, Council, representatives and witnesses and external contributors (detailed in Appendix B).
- Following the review, the Group has produced a number of findings, recommendations and actions, as detailed in the report below (para. 2.5)
- As part of the report and findings, an Action Plan has been drafted for Members' consideration (Appendix A to the report), to accompany the recommendations made and in order to have an effective monitoring and implementation framework in place for these recommendations and actions following consideration / approval by Scrutiny and Cabinet.
- The Committee is also asked to establish the next Task and Finish review, as recommended at its meeting on 22nd July 2025 as part of the report into proposed Task and Finish activities (Min No 241 refers). This would consider the interlinked issues of refuse on local beaches and the wider matters around local holiday resorts. This would also include the Committee making an initial agreement as to the size, composition and membership of this new Task and Finish Review Group.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee considers and endorses the findings and recommendations of the report and review on providing greater accessibility to beaches in the Vale of Glamorgan by the Task and Finish Group (para. 2.5 of the report).
2. That the Committee considers and endorses the Action Plan appended to the report (Appendix A to the report).
3. That the Action Plan be regularly monitored by the Committee and for further updates to be provided to the Committee in due course.
4. That, subject to any additional comments or recommendations the Committee wishes to add, the report be referred to Cabinet for its consideration and endorsement.
5. That the Committee establish the next Task and Finish review, as recommended at its meeting on 22nd July 2025 as part of the report into proposed Task and Finish activities (Min No 241 refers). This would consider the interlinked issues of refuse on local beaches and the wider matters around local holiday resorts. Also, for the Committee to make an initial agreement on the size, composition and membership of this new Task and Finish Review Group.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To seek the comments and endorsement of the findings and recommendations of the Group by the Scrutiny Committee.
2. To seek the comments of, and endorsement by, the Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Action Plan as part of an ongoing and effective monitoring and implementation framework for these recommendations and actions following consideration / approval by Scrutiny and Cabinet.
3. To ensure that the Scrutiny Committee (and Cabinet) are kept updated on any progress made regarding the findings, actions and recommendations of the report.
4. For Cabinet to consider the findings, actions and recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group and any additional recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee.
5. As per the recommendations made by the Committee at the meeting in question.

1. Background

- 1.1 The review on accessibility for beaches within the Vale of Glamorgan was considered, with several other proposals, at the meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee on 22nd July 2025 as part of the report into proposed Task and Finish activities (Min No 241 refers).

- 1.2** The Task and Finish exercise in question was initially conceived as being a review concerning greater accessibility to beaches in the Vale of Glamorgan for people with disabilities (such as wheelchair users) and others.
- 1.3** It was subsequently agreed that this topic would be taken forward as part of the Committee's first and Task and Finish activity and the size, composition and membership of the Task and Review Group for the review was agreed as follows:
- Councillor G.M. Ball (Labour)
 - Councillor C.E.A. Champion (Conservative)
 - Councillor P. Drake (Labour)
 - Councillor A.M. Ernest (Conservative)
 - Councillor Iannucci-Williams (Labour)
 - Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby (Labour)
 - Councillor J.M. Norman (Llantwit First Independent)
 - Councillor C. Stallard (Labour)
 - K. Mitchell (Representative from Tenant Working Group / Panel).

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The Task and Finish Group has met on 9 occasions (7 formal meetings and 2 informal ones to draft the report) in order to review and to undertake a 'deep dive' into accessibility at local beach locations, including various factfinding work and site visits in relation to this topic (the minutes of the formal meetings and site visits are provided as part of Appendix B to the report).
- 2.2** A revised scope for the Group's work on this review was subsequently produced (Appendix C to the report):
- 2.2.1** A review on providing greater accessibility to beaches in the Vale of Glamorgan for people with limited accessibility and related issues to these (such as wheelchair users, people with physical disabilities, sight impairment and learning / intellectual disabilities and needs, older people with mobility issues) and for all residents of, and visitors to, the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 2.2.2** The aim was to review the measures in place and those that are needed to enable greater accessibility for members of the public to beach areas in the Vale of Glamorgan (in particular those persons with accessibility issues) and to recommend how these could be implemented effectively and / or improved. This covered the following designated bathing water, and other etc., beaches within the Vale of Glamorgan, which were also under Council control and management:
- Ogmore by Sea
 - Dunraven Bay (Southerndown)
 - Col Huw Beach (Llantwit Major)

- The Cold Knap
- Watch House Bay
- Whitmore Bay
- Jackson's Bay
- Penarth Beach
- Porthkerry.

2.3 The review included both external witnesses and the relevant Council officers who provided representations to, and shared evidence with, the Group, who included the following:

Vale of Glamorgan Council Officers, Staff and Representatives:

- Head of Neighbourhood Services
- Neighbourhood Services Manager
- Waste Project Officer, Neighbourhood Services Operations
- Senior Strategy and Insight Partner- Policy and Performance
- Age Friendly Vale Officer - Policy and Performance
- Senior Community Development Officer for the Creative Communities Team for the Vale of Glamorgan Council
- Day Service Officers - New Horizons team
- Rehabilitation and Mobility Officer for Visually Impaired, Adult Services
- Head of Corporate Landlord
- Operational Manager Corporate Communications, Participation, Equalities & Directorate Development.

External Consultees, Representatives and Witnesses:

- Jo Schup, Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast
- W. Behenna, the Beach Access Project
- R. Lewis (member of the public)
- J. Thomas, Sight Cymru
- M. Collard, Vale 50+ Strategy Forum
- S. Sansome, the CEO and founder of Snowball Community Application
- M. Childs, Lead Lifeguard Supervisor for the RNLI
- J. Bond, Project partner, Deaf Health Wales
- B. Langley, Sensory Support Officer - South Wales, from Deafblind UK
- C. Nelson, Atlantic Crest
- Barney Sanders, Mind in the Vale.

The representations and evidence given to the Group by the above representatives and witnesses provided the Group with a strong baseline of

information and lived experiences which helped to inform this review and strengthen its scope.

2.4 A key element of this review was the Group undertaking site visits to selected beach areas and resorts in order to see the benefits and challenges that visitors faced at these locations in terms of accessibility. A list of these site visits and the observations and points raised about these (with some photographs taken of the Group reviewing the accessibility at these locations) can be found at Appendix D to the report and the findings from these visits form a key part of the subsequent recommendations and Action Plan of this review. A summary of the site visits is also below:

- Barry Island - overall, there were positive steps that had been taken at the site in terms of accessibility to visitors and particularly those with access needs, but Members of the Group and others identified areas that would need improvement, such as raising awareness of the provision and availability of standard sized wheelchairs at the site, improve some of the door / access arrangements at the changing places, review / improvement to signage and highlighting / refreshing steps and curbs with white / yellow paint, plus nonslip surfaces and lighting.
- Penarth Pier, Pavilion and seafront - there were some good aspects to the Pier and seafront, such as wide accessible areas on the Pier itself for wheelchair users and others with access needs to be able to traverse back and forth unimpeded, but several points and areas for improvement were raised, such as the disabled toilets, signage, disabled ramp access to the Pavilion and elsewhere.
- Llantwit Major Beach – points were raised in relation to the disabled toilets (although the toilets were well maintained, some improvement was needed in terms of accessibility), the widening of the ramp under the lifeguarding platform, and the potential use of water quality signage and updates which would be useful here, plus real time updates to the public via the Council regarding these and warnings on any issues caused by bad weather to the accessibility of the beach, amongst others. The location also had CCTV to monitor and prevent potential issues with despondent / suicidal persons.
- Ogmore by Sea - points were raised in relation to the lack of any dedicated disabled car parking bays at the main car park and site, the inaccessibility to certain facilities there, i.e. ticket machines, water font and waste bins for persons with mobility issues or wheelchair users, improvements to signage, highlight edges on steps, improve the ramp(s) and toilet layout for accessibility at the location, etc., for visitors with various access needs.

Due to the geography and other challenges faced by the Western beaches, accessibility and the conditions to support this were not as strong as was seen at the Barry and Penarth site visits. There would need to be an improvement to these through a mixture of ‘quick wins’ that could be done by Council officers at the operational level as well as via the recommendations and actions as part of the Group’s final report and findings.

- 2.5** The subsequent findings, actions and recommendations, as listed below, detail both the general or overall recommendations and actions for the relevant beaches within the County and those specific to the individual beach locations:

General.

- A 'one-stop shop' for beach accessibility on the Vale of Glamorgan Council (VOGC) website.
- A review of existing safety measures.
- An audit of VOGC signage.
- Consideration of using QR codes.
- Regular monitoring reporting / updates on the progress of the Action Plan.
- Accessibility and portability of the beach wheelchairs for different beach locations in the Vale.
- The importance of having people with access needs, disabilities, and similar lived experiences to be involved in the design and monitoring of beach locations.

Barry Island.

- Improve accessibility further.
- Raising awareness of the provision and availability of standard-sized wheelchairs at the site.
- For the Council to purchase more wheelchairs.

Penarth Pier, Pavilion & Seafront.

- Review of disabled toilets.
- Review of the disabled ramp and access to the Pavilion and elsewhere.
- Review / monitoring for ramps / entry points/ strips for steps for Penarth Pier.
- Review limited disabled parking nearby.
- Signage: to look at the use of audible signage and QR codes.

Llantwit Major Beach.

- Review disabled toilets/address disabled toilet doors issue.
- Widening of ramp under lifeguarding platform.
- Look at design and location of flood defences.
- Look at the limited number of benches / potential design issues.
- The use of water quality signage and updates.
- Review of the status of the nearby pathways.

Ogmore by Sea.

- The need for dedicated disabled car parking bays.

- Make ticket machines more accessible to wheelchair users and others with access needs.
- Make bins more accessible to disabled users, as well as the water front.
- Better signage highlighting disabled toilets, etc.
- Improve the layout of the disabled toilet space.
- Improve ramp access for disabled users and others.
- Highlight edges to steps, etc., where paint has worn.
- Use of audio signage and other methods such as BSL.
- Review traffic-calming measures to ensure they support accessibility.

Cold Knap, Barry.

- Review signage.
- Signage could highlight mental health matters and support for people with mental-health issues.
- The use of water quality signage and updates.
- Assess bin provision.
- Better signage highlighting facilities.
- Assess toilet provision.

Porthkerry Beach, Barry.

- Review of signage.
- Assess bin provision.
- Better signage highlighting facilities.
- Assess toilet provision.

Watch House Bay, Barry.

- Review of signage.
- Assess toilet provision.

Jackson's Bay, Barry.

- Review of signage. [
- Assess toilet provision.

- 2.6** As recommended at its meeting on 22nd July 2025 and following the conclusion of the current Task and Finish Review, the Committee should now consider the start of the next designated Task and Finish exercise. This exercise or review would consider the interlinked issues of refuse on local beaches and the wider matters around local holiday resorts as well as the Committee making an initial agreement as to the size, composition and membership of this new Task and Finish Review Group.

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

- 3.1** Task and Finish review activities undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees will form a key part of them meeting their Terms of References which are aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan – Vale 2030, which in turn, is aligned to the Wellbeing Goals for Wales.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** None as a direct result of this report

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The delivery of the proposed Action Plan can be accommodated within existing Neighbourhood Services resources. The majority of actions relate to enhancements in operational practices, signage, and communication, and these are identified within the Plan as part of normal business activities.
- 5.2** Where specific actions require capital investment, these have been clearly highlighted. These elements will be funded through a combination of internal capital resources and longer-term aspirations that may require external grant funding. Opportunities for such external funding will be explored and submitted for consideration as appropriate.

Employment

- 5.3** There are no employment implications associated with this report. The Action Plan will be delivered using existing Neighbourhood Services resources, with input from other Council teams as required.
- 5.4** The work primarily involves officer time for coordination, monitoring, and the facilitation of agreed actions. These responsibilities can be managed within current workloads, and no additional staffing resources are necessary to support delivery of the Plan.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.5** The actions set out within the Plan support the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, specifically in relation to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. Enhancing the accessibility of public spaces also contributes to meeting the Public Sector

Equality Duty and aligns with the Council's commitment to inclusive and equitable service design

6. Background Papers

Cabinet report with new Scrutiny proposal – 10th April 2025:

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2025/25-04-10/Reshaping-Scrutiny.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2025/25-04-10/Reshaping-Scrutiny.pdf)

Task and Finish Action Plan
Place Scrutiny - Beach Accessibility

Action Type	Recommendation / Action	Summary of Details	Responsible Person[s]	Estimated costs (£)	Funding Option	Timescales	Status (RAG rating)	Comments
General	One stop shop for beach accessibility on the VOGC website.	To raise awareness of wheelchair booking, relevant equipment, changing spaces and facilities and other access friendly features for various relevant groups on the site. This would include providing information on how to get to and park at locations, where the disabled parking provision is located as well as provide advance warning for wheelchair users and others with mobility or access needs if a beach location was inaccessible due to bad weather, and when this would be rectified. Also links to charities and support networks such as the Samaritans could be added. The site could highlight the beaches that were less crowded which would benefit those visitors with anxiety or neurodiversity issues. To help visitors with various needs plan their trips to local beaches, it would also be useful to provide information such as having details on the website as to whether car parks at or nearby to the beaches were full or not, ideally updated automatically or in real time. Another key area to include was bathing water quality at beaches via real time updates to the public. As part of this a 'mini-brief' would ideally be developed via the Task and Finish Group which would encompass the information and messaging required to communicate to visitors about accessibility at local beaches and then for Council officers to work with colleagues, Visit the Vale and third sector partners, as well others (such as 'Snowball') to develop and communicate this to the relevant target audience.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	N/A	3-6 months		Dedicated page required
General	A review of existing safety measures.	To review areas such as yellow edges on kerbs, steps, etc.	Neighbourhood Services Officers / H&S Officers	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		
General	An audit of VOGC signage.	To make sure that information such as changing spaces were included and whether there was funding available to add new signs about mental health. Also, the signage audit should include a general assessment of risks associated with each beach, in terms of coastal erosion and rock falls. The inclusion of other messaging on signage (i.e. BSL and braille, contrast, etc.) should also be considered.	Neighbourhood Services Officers	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant based on the outcome of the audit
General	Consideration of using QR codes.	Both audio and video, as well as British Sign Language (BSL) translation for beach signage. Review the signal for such codes / signage at the beach.	Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant based on the outcome of the audit
General	Regular monitoring reporting /updates on the progress of the Action Plan.	Regular updates to the Committee such as at six monthly intervals, in order to monitor progress on the recommendations and actions.	Head of Neighbourhood Services	Officer time - business as usual	N/A	6 months		
General	Accessibility and portability of the beach wheelchairs for different beach locations in the Vale	Consideration could be given around various options on how this could potentially be implemented and managed i.e. to allocate several wheelchairs, beach specific and otherwise, at specific sites. Consideration could also be made around busy periods and seasonality on hiring and allocation of the chairs, which could also help maximise accessibility and which could be considered as an option for any future recommendations connected to this review. (This may not be achievable in the short/mid-term).	Neighbourhood Services Officers	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Note concerns over people taking beach wheelchairs away from the designated resort location
General	The importance of having people with access needs, disabilities, and similar lived experiences, involved in the design and monitoring processes for these types of locations and facilities.	In order for people with various access needs to have an input and feedback in the design and maintenance of beach resorts and facilities therein.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant, based on the outcome of these worthwhile meetings
Beach - specific recommendations / actions:								
Barry Island	Improve accessibility further.	Widen and improve changing place door (e.g., slow-close). Improve signage (colour contrast, placement for wheelchair users, Changing Places logo). Refresh step/kerb markings; improve lighting and non-slip surfaces. Add clearer instructions in the changing place and consider a "Stedy" mobility aid. Highlight outdoor showers and consider e-signs for messages like water quality. To look at the ramps located there as well in terms of wheelchair user accessibility.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	3 months		Many of these works will be completed via Brilliant Basics funding
Barry Island	Raising awareness of the provision and availability of standard sized wheelchairs at the site.	To include this in the new booking system with the beach wheelchairs.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	3 months		
Barry Island	For the Council to purchase more wheelchairs	Such improvements to accessibility would help to encourage tourism and residents/visitors coming to local beaches and resorts.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	3 months		4 additional beach wheel chairs have been purchased (an additional 4 to the 4 the Council have recently purchased so 8 in total) - also - accessible lockers purchased for each individual beach wheelchair have been purchased via Brilliant Basics grant
Penarth Pier, Pavilion and seafront	Review of disabled toilets.	The toilet on the Pier was challenging for disabled users, in terms of accessing and using it. There was no signage indicating the better toilet facilities within the Pavilion itself.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms / Pavillion Manager	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		

Penarth Pier, Pavilion and seafront	Review of Disabled ramp, access to the Pavilion and elsewhere.	There were concerns around the temporary ramps that had been put in place by the Pavilion following recent filming work. Only one of the two doors to the front of the Pavilion were open during the site visit, which could be a challenge to wheelchair users and other visitors with access needs. Other disabled access points, exits and ramps - while the Pavilion had several disabled ramps, access from these to the Pavilion was prevented by the doors being locked at these points, amongst other issues identified. In relation to the Penarth Pavilion / cafe, where there was a ramp on one side, it was suggested that it should be swapped. These will be assessed during the renewal of Pier joists later this year.	Task and Finish Group / Pavillion Manager / Neighbourhood Services Officers /	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		
Penarth Pier, Pavilion and seafront	Ramps/entry points/strips for steps for Penarth pier.	Monitoring responsibility to be confirmed and clarified with the Council department responsible (Education).	Task and Finish Group / Pavillion Manager / Neighbourhood Services Officers /	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		
Penarth Pier, Pavilion and seafront	Review limited disabled parking nearby.	Disabled parking bays should be closer to the dropped kerbs.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Note: Moving of Disabled Bays may not be an option due to Highways regulations etc
Penarth Pier, Pavilion and seafront	Signage: - the use of audible signage and QR codes	To provide people with various disabilities and other access needs with the information they need (such as via audio and video links including those with British Sign Language (BSL), etc.) as part of their visit to the Pier, Pavilion and seafront to provide information on facilities, local history, etc. This would tie in with having a dedicated webpage on the Council website to help people plan their day at these locations and to consider their accessibility needs with possible or potential collaboration with other bodies such as the 'Snowball' application providers and others. Signage – audio or otherwise – could also highlight mental health matters and support for people with mental health, despondency, and similar issues in areas on the coast which were 'hotspots' for such issues.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant, based on the outcome of the audit
Llantwit Major Beach	Review disabled toilets/address disabled toilet doors issue	More helpful if more centrally located in toilet bloc; look at the issues of the disabled toilet doors not opening fully.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Movement of toilet position may not be possible due to plumbing locations? / door issue resolved
Llantwit Major Beach	Widening of ramp under lifeguarding platform	In order to allow for people to sit under the shelter there.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual	6 months		Coastal Asset renewal Funds?
Llantwit Major Beach	Look at design and location of flood defences	To review these at the location; to ensure these are appropriate and adequate.	Neighbourhood Services Officers	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		To be assessed by Neighbourhood Services Engineering Manager
Llantwit Major Beach	Look at the limited number of benches / potential design issues	Review the number of benches and design (no backs on these could be problematic for certain visitors).	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Placemaking team	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Possibly part of "Placemaking process"
Llantwit Major Beach	The use of water quality signage and updates	It would be useful to review these at this site, plus look at providing real time updates to the public via the Council website, etc., regarding water quality, etc., and warnings on any issues caused by bad weather to the accessibility of the beach.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services / Corporate Comms / SRS	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant, based on the outcome of the audit
Llantwit Major Beach	Review of the status of the nearby pathways	To look at the public / privately owned mix of pathways to the beach and related accessibility for visitors and those with access needs.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Manager / PROW (Public Rights of Way) Team	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		The primary issue is that the Public Rights of Way (PROW) pathways cross private land - PROW team to resolve to look at suitability of PROW across the area within the PROW regulations
Ogmore by Sea	The need for dedicated disabled car parking bays	To review this at the main car park and site (currently none at the site)	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officer/ Highways Officers	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		
Ogmore by Sea	Make ticket machines more accessible to wheelchair users and others with access needs	To review the current situation (felt that these were not accessible to such users).	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Manager	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Coastal Asset renewal Funds?
Ogmore by Sea	Make bins more accessible to disabled users, as well as the water font	To review the current situation (felt that these were not accessible to such users).	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Manager	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Coastal Asset renewal Funds?
Ogmore by Sea	Better signage highlighting disabled toilets, etc	To review and improve on the existing signage.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant, based on the outcome of the audit
Ogmore by Sea	Improve the layout of the disabled toilet space	To review and improve on the existing layout.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Manager	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Coastal Asset renweal Funds?
Ogmore by Sea	Improve ramp access for disabled users and others	To review and improve on the existing ramp access for visitors with access needs.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		
Ogmore by Sea	Highlight edges to steps, etc., at the site or refresh these (where paint had worn)	In order to highlight potential risks for those with accessibility issues and visual impairment.	Neighbourhood Services Officers / H&S Officers	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Coastal Asset renewal Funds?

Ogmore by Sea	Use of audio signage and other methods such as BSL, etc	To improve signage for those visitors with visual and hearing impairments.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant, based on the outcome of the audit
Ogmore by Sea	Review traffic-calming measures to ensure they support accessibility	To look at traffic-calming measures at the location to ensure they support accessibility	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officer/ Highways Officers	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		
Cold Knap, Barry	Review signage	To review the use of audible signage and QR codes to provide people with various disabilities and other access needs with the information (such as video) they need as part of their visit to the beach on facilities, local history, etc.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant, based on the outcome of the audit
Cold Knap, Barry	Signage – audio or otherwise – could also highlight mental health matters and support for people with mental health, despondency, and similar issues	A review of signage for areas on the coast which were, or could be, ‘hotspots’ for such issues.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant, based on the outcome of the audit
Cold Knap, Barry	The use of water quality signage and updates	This signage could potentially be useful here, plus real time updates to the public via the Council regarding these and warnings on any issues caused by bad weather to the accessibility of the beach.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services / Corporate Comms / SRS	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant, based on the outcome of the audit
Cold Knap, Barry	Assess bin provision	To ensure they are accessible to disabled users, as well as other facilities.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Manager	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		
Cold Knap, Barry	Better signage highlighting facilities etc.	To improve signage for visitors on the facilities available and to support those coming to the beach with access needs.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Coastal Asset renewal Funds?
Cold Knap, Barry	Assess toilet provision	To ensure they are appropriate for, and accessible to, disabled users, and others.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Manager	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant, based on the outcome of the audit
Porthkerry beach, Barry	Review of signage	To look at the use of audible signage and QR codes to provide people with various disabilities and other access needs with the information (such as video) they need as part of their visit to the beach on facilities, local history, etc. This could also highlight mental health matters and support for people with mental health, despondency, and similar issues in areas on the coast which were ‘hotspots’ for such issues.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Country park Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant, based on the outcome of the review
Porthkerry beach, Barry	Assess bin provision	To ensure they are accessible to disabled users, as well as other facilities.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Country park Officers	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		
Porthkerry beach, Barry	Better signage highlighting facilities etc.	To improve signage for visitors on the facilities available and to support those coming to the beach with access needs.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Officers / Country park Officers / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		
Porthkerry beach, Barry	Assess toilet provision	To ensure they are appropriate for, and accessible to, disabled users, and others.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Manager / Country Park Officers	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Note: toilets are currently being refurbished
Watch House Bay, Barry	Review of signage	To look at the use of audible signage and QR codes to provide people with various disabilities and other access needs with the information (such as video) they need as part of their visit to the beach on facilities, local history, etc. This could also highlight mental health matters and support for people with mental health, despondency, and similar issues in areas on the coast which were ‘hotspots’ for such issues.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant based on the outcome of the audit
Watch House Bay, Barry	Assess toilet provision	To ensure they are accessible to disabled users, as well as other facilities, such as any water fonts, etc.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Manager	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		No toilet provision specific to this site, the nearest toilets would be The Knap Carpark area - these will be audited as above
Jackson’s Bay, Barry	Review of signage	To look at the use of audible signage and QR codes to provide people with various disabilities and other access needs with the information (such as video) they need as part of their visit to the beach on facilities, local history, etc. This could also highlight mental health matters and support for people with mental health, despondency, and similar issues in areas on the coast which were ‘hotspots’ for such issues.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services / Corporate Comms	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant based on the outcome of the audit
Jackson’s Bay, Barry	Assess toilet provision	To ensure they are accessible to disabled users, as well as other facilities.	Task and Finish Group / Neighbourhood Services Manager	Officer time - business as usual	Business as usual / Capital	6 months		Potential need for capital investment / grant based on the outcome of the audit

TASK AND FINISH GROUP REVIEW ON PROVIDING GREATER ACCESSIBILITY TO BEACHES IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Minutes of meeting held on 24th September 2025

Present: Councillors G.M. Ball, C.E.A. Champion, P. Drake, A.M. Ernest, C. Iannucci-Williams, S. Lloyd-Selby, J.M. Norman, C. Stallard and a Representative from the Tenant Working Group / Panel, K. Mitchell.

Officers – C. Smith and M. Thomas

A link to the meeting is [here](#).

(1)	Apologies for Absence –
	None
(2)	Appointment of Chair
	Councillor C. Iannucci-Williams was duly appointed Chair of the Task and Finish Group.
(3)	Appointment of Vice-Chair
	Councillor C.E.A. Champion was duly appointed Vice-Chair of the Task and Finish Group.
(4)	Declarations of Interest
	None
(5)	Brief overview of the review topic - Colin Smith, Head of Service - Neighbourhood Services.
	Members of the group were given an overview and introduction to the topic for review, highlighting the designated beaches, bathing resorts, etc., covered within the Council's remit, their current accessibility, infrastructure in place and the challenges or limitations around these such as the nature/composition of the beaches (pebbles in some locations, such as Llantwit Major beach, accessibility to gateways and slipways, staffing and strong tidal ranges locally, etc.). The structure and set up around managing these locations were discussed, with Bethan Thomas taking a lead with updating annual beach information, and representing the Council at the All-Wales Group that covers beach management. Therefore, it would be extremely beneficial to have Bethan Thomas be part of this review, as well as another Council officer, Adam Sargent, who has experience with his son accessing local beaches, and the challenges around this, such as nowhere to store wheelchairs or a lack of a booking system to facilitate this. This meant Adam and his son going to Barry Island due to there being more specialised equipment and support there to ensure accessibility to the beach. Adam would be happy to share and help advise Members about these challenges as part of the review. It was also noted that Whitmore Bay already had good access/infrastructure in place for those with limited accessibility challenges.

Members raised several comments and queries, with K. Mitchell offering her perspective on her lived experience with mobility and accessibility challenges at local beaches and resorts, referring to accessibility and the need for improvement to beach slipways and ramps for wheelchair users and others, the presence and staffing challenges at some beaches/resorts, the lack of a booking system for some locations, accessibility to changing rooms, the challenges of manual wheelchairs as opposed to powered ones at some beaches, as well as positive examples of work already being done at these locations.

Other comments and actions or recommendations made by Members were:

- Widening the scope and greater reference made to all local residents, tourists and visitors that may have limited accessibility issues as part of the review, covering wheelchair users but also people with other physical disabilities, sight impairment and learning/intellectual disabilities and needs, older people with mobility issues and the wider population.
- The inclusion and invitation of RNLI and Coastal Manager representatives and other local or interest groups as witnesses, representatives, as part of the review, as well as the use of social media or other means to help get this type of engagement.
- The aspiration for the County to have the most accessible beaches/resorts and to be ambitious in putting Brilliant Basics bid(s) to Welsh Government i.e. in terms of accessibility adaptations or storage for beach wheelchairs, etc.
- The review should cover not just the immediate beach locations but also the wider area, to extend to nearby parking, transport, etc. at all relevant local beaches, bathing areas and resorts, such as through desktop analysis and local knowledge, i.e. talking to the Community Councils.
- Wheelchair facilities at Whitmore Bay – whether the existing ramps can be improved, extended or modified.
- To look at including audio descriptions at beaches, bathing areas and resorts.
- To include and consider measures that make beaches, etc., more accessible to people with any kind of mental impairment or similar issues. This could include easy read signage, etc.
- Measures to help children with neurodiversity issues, such as the use of bands or other forms of identification for them at these locations and to train lifeguards and other staff there to be able to identify them and to offer help and support with accessibility and identify if they are experiencing difficulties when needed.
- To look at storage and accessibility adaptations for beach wheelchairs and related funding for these.
- The use of radar keys and locks or similar means for slipway/gateway access to beaches, etc.
- Members also requested a checklist be produced for the related beach areas for areas that should be looked at when reviewing these resorts.
- To share photographs of the various beaches/resorts detailing access points, existing infrastructure, etc.

(6)	Scope and Objectives of Review.
	The scope of the Task and Finish Group as contained in the agenda was discussed as part of agenda item (5), and the Democratic Scrutiny Services Officer also outlined some key points from the scoping document. The various comments, actions and recommendations are covered under agenda item (5).
(7)	Timetable of Review.
	The Group would receive a further updated version of the proposed timetable (with more definitive dates/times) prior to the next meeting. Members also reiterated that a checklist be produced for the related beach areas for areas that should be looked at when reviewing these resorts, to reach out to the Placemaking groups who may have addressed this topic already and to share K. Mitchell's details for possible site visits in order to look at accessibility issues at some of these locations directly. It was agreed to hold the next meeting, (to include testimonies from Adam Sargent and Bethan Thomas (VOGC)) on Monday 6th October at 5.30pm (via MS Teams), and to invite other relevant individuals and groups on this topic to give representations at this or subsequent meetings.
(8)	Any other business/questions–
	None.
(9)	Date and time of next meeting.
	Monday 6th October at 5.30pm (via MS Teams)

TASK AND FINISH GROUP REVIEW ON PROVIDING GREATER ACCESSIBILITY TO BEACHES IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Minutes of meeting held on 6th October 2025

Present: Councillors C. Iannucci-Williams (Chair), C.E.A. Champion (Vice Chair), G.M. Ball, P. Drake, S. Lloyd-Selby, J.M. Norman, C. Stallard and a Representative from the Tenant Working Group / Panel, K. Mitchell.

Also Present: J. Schup (Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast).

Officers – C. Smith, A. Sargent, B. Thomas and M. Thomas.

A link to the meeting is [here](#).

(1)	Apologies for Absence –
	None
(2)	Declarations of Interest
	None
(3)	Minutes/matters arising and updates from the meeting held on 24th September 2025:
	The minutes had recently been cleared with the Chair and the relevant officers and would be going out to the wider group for their consideration after the meeting. A revised timetable of meetings had been sent out to Members of the Group, etc. A revised scoping document had also been distributed. An updated beach access information and checklist had also been redistributed. Further engagement with the public was being sought through various means i.e. the use the Communications Team's public engagement 'bulletin' and looking to get various external bodies to come along and provide evidence and information for the review. Other alternatives, such as social media, could also be looked at, but the bulletin option would be used first. Following the last meeting, K. Mitchell asked for her email details to be shared with the wider Group for possible visits to beach locations and to share her experiences with accessing these. The Group welcomed Jo Schup, Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, who would be helping with the review and offering her insight and feedback. Members of the Group subsequently raised the following points:

	• Councillor Drake: the inclusion of Porthkerry Beach in the scope and beach access information / mapping for the review. • The timetable of meetings was broadly agreed by the Group, with the format of each of these to be remote or hybrid and where required in-person, i.e. potential site visits if required outside of the current timetable. • That the relevant information, etc., be shared with Jo Schup going forward as part of the review process. • It was confirmed that Dunraven Bay was under the ownership of the Dunraven estate, (a similar situation to parts of Ogmore beaches, etc.) but the Vale of Glamorgan Council provided RNLI lifeguards at these locations, as well as having leases on some of the buildings and public conveniences and having some public space protection orders in place. There were therefore some Council involvement, interest, maintenance and 'overlap' with Heritage Coast officers with these locations. • The Vice-Chair would reach out to the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) for any guidance, reports or experience from them that would be relevant to this review. • Councillor Norman stressed the importance of considering older persons and groups as part of this review on their experiences on accessing beaches, as well as parents with young children, particularly ones in prams, as examples of individuals and wider groups who may not have disabilities but have other issues in accessing beaches locally. • Councillor Ball suggested getting in touch with groups such as Age Connect Vale and carers groups, as well as MIND, which he would look to assist with if possible. • Councillor Lloyd-Selby suggested contact with Council officers involved with unpaid carers for any information they could provide in this area. • The Chair asked Members to share any useful contacts with regards to the review. • Jo Schup asked about the scope and clarity on what areas of beaches, etc. were covered by the review scope where accessibility may not be practical for certain groups at all. It was explained that this would vary depending on circumstances at each of the beaches concerned, but the review was trying to make all of these locations as accessible as was possible and practicable, whilst acknowledging the limitations on achieving this at certain beaches where the various terrain at these different locations would not be suitable for all people with accessibility issues. Therefore, other alternatives would be looked at, such as accessing and enjoying a beach or coastal front without going onto the beach, such as at Porthkerry, where there was disabled parking etc., available nearby. This may entail smaller scale, incremental type changes or improvements such as extending the existing ramps at Whitmore Bay. It was also outlined that Limpet Bay was not covered by the review as this was privately owned, with no Council management there. • Regarding the beach access checklist, questions were raised about its format and submission, with the suggestion that these be accessed and submitted via Google Forms, with the option of a word version for Members who prefer to use this and print off. The relevant Council officers would then be able to collate the results, etc. B. Thomas (Waste
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	Project Officer) would reach out to all the Welsh Authorities who manage coastlines to look at the best practice that was discussed in the first meeting. Discussions could also be had with the Royal National Lifeguard Institute (RNLI), Cardiff Safety Partnership and Welsh coastal / beach managers. • Councillor Champion referred to the Beach Access Project website which could be useful in terms of auditing the review and for questions for the checklist process. The hyperlink to the website was shared with Members and the officers concerned. • The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that the suggestion about liaising with Placemaking colleagues was progressing. • K. Mitchell suggested adding details regarding transport links, etc., to the beach access maps, which would be actioned as notes underneath these. • Councillor Lloyd-Selby suggested reaching out to those bodies involved in the Beach Access Project website or had been involved in it to look at the results and reviews that had been undertaken as part of this.
(4)	Representations from VOGC officers and others on the review.
	A. Sargent (Neighbourhood Services Manager, Vale of Glamorgan Council) shared with the Group his experiences of this topic both through his involvement with, and management of, local beaches and resorts, but also his experience with his son accessing local beaches, and the challenges around this. He emphasised that people with disabilities or other accessibility needs could have a variety of visual, sensory and physical challenges. A key area for people accessing and being able to enjoy beaches, etc., was to have appropriate changing facilities. At Barry Island and Cosmeston there were changing places in situ, which were not the regular changing / disabled toilet facilities but a much larger version. This ensured that a user / family member / carer had the peace of mind that whatever happened, they could spend the day and be able to access the beach areas, etc., because they knew they would be able to get to such a changing space. The one at Barry Island had totally changed the visitor experience for those users who may have disabilities. He also referred to the point previously raised around extending the slipways and access points to beaches such as at Ogmore by Sea for wheelchair users and others due to the ever-changing tidal range at these locations. However, it had to be based on the practical benefits of doing these improvements at beach locations, where there maybe limits on the adaptations that could be made due to the terrain and particular features at these sites. Other important factors were access to disabled parking at beaches and resorts, as well beach wheelchairs, citing the example of Barry Island where these could be hired, with four having recently been purchased via 'Brilliant Basics' funding. This would ideally be something that should be extended to other beaches locally to improve accessibility for residents, tourists and others who may need these.

Following the representation, Members of the Group and others raised several points, with the following responses provided:

- On the new beach wheelchairs being attendant or self-propelled, it was confirmed they would all be self-propelled, with two having the larger type of wheels. The booking system would also be reviewed and improved to ensure these wheelchairs could be booked out in a more appropriate way to users. The Barry Island site was staffed but others like Ogmore by Sea were less so and with little storage capacity for wheelchairs so there needed to be a booking system and storage / maintenance capacity extended out to other sites.
- On the new wheelchairs being suitable for larger sized people, the adult size was the largest specification on these, and the exact limitations were not known at this time.
- It was explained that changing places / toilets were a specific type of changing room / toilet, which needed to be audited by the appropriate body (Changing Places) to confirm that they complied with the required size and specific items that should be in these. With regard to the accessibility to these facilities, such as at Barry Island and the use of Radar Keys (and their potential misuse), there had been a move away from reliance on those keys to having staff accessing the keys there only, as the facilities were manned seven days a week throughout the year and therefore they could give people access to the facilities quickly and securely. Radar Keys could still be used for changing rooms / places, but this would be more suitable for those locations that were in a more secure, less open or freestanding setting such as shopping centres, etc., that were locked up after opening hours ended. At Barry Island the changing rooms were available 7 days a week, whilst manned, during Summer (7am – 8pm) and in Winter (between 8am and 4pm). Similar manned changing facilities were at Cosmeston.
- On booking wheelchairs at Barry Island, the intention was to move away from the previous method and work had been undertaken with the Council's call centre team to adopt a more straightforward model similar to the one used to book out beach huts, through answering a few questions and maybe some proof such as a disabled blue badge or other evidence for requiring a free beach wheelchair, possibly with a small fee to ensure the booking was secured and honoured. The Chair raised a concern about the impact of a non-refundable deposit or fee and Councillor Lloyd-Selby and Norman felt that if there was a deposit used at all, this should be a refundable deposit or fee once the booking had been honoured and so not to disadvantage people with disabilities. K. Mitchell did suggest possible alternatives such as using 'Value in the Vale' points for those persons who volunteer to secure a booking. C. Smith, the Head of Service - Neighbourhood Services, suggested looking at alternatives or best practice in other local authorities in relation to this and the possible use of documentation / declaration as part of the hiring process for wheelchairs at beaches and resorts. This would help to remove the possible issues or barriers that deposits and fees may cause and avoid the additional costs and challenges to the

	Council in managing such payments. Further research on these options would be undertaken and shared with the Group in due course. • On the accessibility and portability of the beach wheelchairs for different beach locations in the Vale, there could be the potential for a central type 'hub' for hiring out the beach wheelchairs. Another option would be to allocate several wheelchairs, beach specific and otherwise, at specific sites. Considerations could also be made around busy periods and seasonality on hiring and allocation of the chairs, which could also help maximise accessibility and which could be considered as an option for any future recommendations of this review. • On whether the changing places facilities were compulsory in Wales, as they were in the England for new buildings, following a query around the new buildings near the Beach in Southerndown, this could not be confirmed at this time but there was an expectation that these facilities should be included in new public facing buildings, although this may not be the case for all such instances. It was suggested that a briefing on the legal framework on new public buildings to have disabled access, toilets, etc., could be helpful. It would also be useful for the Group to use its findings and final report to help highlight where changing places and other disabled, etc., facilities were in the County and share that information publicly, and to make organisations such as Mencap, Changing Places, aware of the various facilities across the Vale, particularly beaches and the coast, that people could access. The Council's website could also be used as part of this. • On the possibility of having one safe, secure 'hub' in order to hire and pick up wheelchairs to use at the various beaches within the Vale, this could be a challenge for wheelchair users and their families who may not have motor vehicles or the capacity to fit in these in a vehicle. • The Head of Service - Neighbourhood Services, referred to previously trying to get grant funding for mobile changing units for beaches and resorts in the summer period and other key times of the year. This could be something, with storage facilities, etc., that could be looked at again, if potential grant applications turn up. Other options cited were larger mobile vans that could be used as changing facilities for beaches and other events. • The Waste Project Officer would pick up any relevant actions with colleagues and other relevant officers and share any updates with the Group in due course.
(5)	Any other business/questions–
	Councillor Drake asked about the level of insurance on the beach wheelchairs managed by the Council and if this was an additional cover and cost. It was explained that this was covered by the Council's general public liability insurance in terms of theft, damage and accident cover. This would also require a good maintenance regime to be in place.
(6)	Date and time of next meeting.
	Tuesday, 21 st October 2025 at 5.30pm (MS Teams).

TASK AND FINISH GROUP REVIEW ON PROVIDING GREATER ACCESSIBILITY TO BEACHES IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Minutes of meeting held on 21st October 2025

Present: Councillors C. Iannucci-Williams (Chair), C.E.A. Champion (Vice Chair), G.M. Ball, P. Drake, A.M. Ernest, S. Lloyd-Selby, J.M. Norman, C. Stallard and a Representative from the Tenant Working Group / Panel, K. Mitchell.

Officers – J. Anderson, F. Harding, C. Smith, A. Shand, B. Thomas and M. Thomas.

A link to the meeting is [here](#).

(1)	Apologies for Absence –
	J. Schup (Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast).
(2)	Declarations of Interest
	None.
(3)	Minutes/matters arising and updates from the meeting held on 24th September 2025:
	The minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2025 were approved as a correct record. Matters arising/updates: (i) Revised beach access information (including Porthkerry Beach, and transport links) had been shared with the Group. (ii) Updated beach access checklist had been shared with the Group. Councillor Champion raised recent training that Cowbridge Council had via Sight Cymru who raised, in terms of towns, etc., having clear signage and identifying / mitigating trip hazards. This could also be applied to beaches and the checklist. Sight Cymru would be invited to attend or give representations to future Group meetings and incorporate trip hazards / obstacles as part of the beach checklist. (iii) Beach Access Project. B. Thomas, Waste Project Officer, had spoken to Will Behenna, who was leading on this project, who would be happy to come along to the Group meeting to provide initial feedback, responses, findings, etc., from the survey. M. Thomas, the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer, would reach out to Will and invite him to the next meeting. The Waste Project Officer stated that the findings from the survey would be formally published in the New Year. Councillor Lloyd-Selby welcomed Will attending and the elements within the survey relating to the impact of social deprivation and poverty, which noted the impact these could have on accessibility, and this could be something that could align with the Group's work and the Vale of Glamorgan Council's work around tackling poverty. K. Mitchell referred to the benefits of implementing greater access to paddleboards / paddleboarding at Barry Waterfront, even if this could not be applied to the beach.

	(iv) Public engagement. The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer stated that a bulletin would be sent out by the Communications Team imminently, this would go out to members of the public, etc. who had registered an interest to engage with Council consultations. Following the Chair's suggestion, a link to the bulletin would be shared with the Group, to share with constituents, other networks, etc. The exact makeup of the bulletin groups, individuals, etc. would also be cross checked. The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer would also be reaching out in terms of third sector organisations such as MIND and Sight Cymru. On Councillor Ernest's comment about the importance of suitable parking near to beaches locally, such as disabled parking / access for cars, the Chair explained that this had been included in the checklist and was being considered as part of the review. The revised beach checklist had been sent out, and any completed checklists by Members of the Group should be submitted via the Google Form version online or via the word document that had been shared and could be returned to the Waste Project Officer. C. Smith, Head of Neighbourhood Services, stated that the Welsh Beach / Coastal Managers Group had been contacted around best practice on accessibility, etc. This Group would be meeting in December where this would be discussed and the results reported back to the Group.
(4)	Representations from VOGC officers and others on the review.
	Alec Shand, Senior Community Development Officer for the Creative Communities Team for the Vale of Glamorgan Council outlined the work that had been undertaken in terms of Placemaking plans across the County and where this touched upon local beaches and locations, such as at Llantwit Major, Barry and Penarth. This had been particularly acute at Llantwit Major, where accessibility to the beach there had been an issue raised regularly as part of the placemaking engagement. But that did not mean that the Placemaking plans were not promoting improved access to the beaches in Barry and Penarth. There appeared to be more of a disconnect between, especially in Penarth, the beach front and the town, where people did not necessarily visit both areas. The Senior Community Development Officer raised the comments and points made about accessibility to Llantwit Major beach, such as people not feeling safe travelling down the single carriageway (marked as 60mph / national speed limit) to the beach and challenges accessing it through alternative routes, such as nearby fields which were partially privately owned, but with rights of way across them. This impacted people with accessibility issues, dog walkers, families pushing prams, etc. Councillor Norman referred to the difficulties that she and her colleagues had to try to get signage on the road to restrict the speed limit to 20mph. However, they had been more successful, through Section 106 monies, getting signage put up warning drivers of pedestrians in the road. The Senior Community Development Officer and

Head of Service - Neighbourhood Services would reach out to the Councillor and investigate this. The Chair asked if any correspondence on this matter also be shared with the wider Group.

As part of the Placemaking planning process, greater connectivity between the relevant towns and their beaches was being investigated to see how this could be improved, i.e. in Penarth to look at improved signage to show the proximity and routes between the town, train centre and the beach. Similarly with Barry Island, the Council could potentially look at options such as park and ride schemes.

K. Mitchell raised her concerns as a wheelchair user in using the main road down to the Llantwit Major beach, which the Senior Community Development Officer sympathised with, and suggested possible solutions to address visitor and tourist concerns and fears, such as incremental improvements, sleeping policemen, traffic calming measures, signage, etc.

Councillor Stallard asked about the footpath leading down to Llantwit Major beach; it was explained that approximately three-quarters of the path leading to the beach was tarmac and falls under Council ownership. However, the initial section of the path crosses private land and, while it had a public right of way, it was not tarmacked. This area was often used for grazing animals, such as horses, which could make access difficult. Because of the terrain and grazing animals, this first section was not suitable for prams or wheelchairs, it was simply not accessible. Ideally, the tarmac would extend all the way to the beach, but since that portion was not Council land, options were currently limited. The farmer who owned it had shown some interest in this, and over time, there may be opportunities to improve access, but this had not progressed as yet.

Regarding Councillor Stallard's other question on the field immediately behind the car park at Llantwit Major beach being owned by the Council, this was confirmed to be the case, but any developments to improve accessibility, etc., would need to start at the upper end of the access route to the beach. K. Mitchell suggested that the space by the car park could be developed for improved changing places and storage for wheelchairs, etc., which would accord more with what Councillor Stallard was suggesting.

The Waste Project Officer also pointed to the possible location of 'kissing gates' or similar on the path down to Llantwit Major beach, which would be difficult or impossible for wheelchair users and others to access. The Senior Community Development Officer would investigate to see if this was the case.

Councillor Norman referred to the pathway mentioned by the Waste Project Officer (by the pumping station off the road) and suggested this could be developed so that visitors, etc., would no longer need to access the main road down part of the way, and would improve accessibility and pedestrian safety. On the space by the car park next to the beach, Councillor Norman stated that this area was prone to flooding and so was unlikely to be suitable for building facilities there. On the development of the path / access to the beach, the

Senior Community Development Officer would look at this as part of the Placemaking process.

The Senior Community Development Officer would reach out to K. Mitchell concerning her lived experience in being a wheelchair user and the challenges of accessing beaches covered by placemaking, such as Llantwit Major.

J. Anderson and F. Harding, the Day Service Officers from the Council's New Horizons team next provided their representations to the Group. They were a day service which worked with people who had physical disabilities and took them out to various locations such as local beaches and further afield. They had had to go to Caswell Bay due to the availability of a sea chair there which would help services users go into the sea. The team had since raised money and funding to get their own sea chair to use.

With reference to Barry Island beach this had good facilities overall, but the Service Officers and their service users had encountered issues in the changing rooms. The door to the shower area, bed and hoist was too narrow for large beach or sea chairs, making it impossible to move someone in for a shower after swimming. It seemed like the wrong door was installed — possibly the disabled access door on a cleaning cupboard instead. This could be a simple fix that would make the facilities fully usable. They were also unaware that these changing facilities existed until another day service informed them. Better signage would help, and beach wardens — although very helpful — needed training on what was inside and how to assist. Finally, beach access could be improved. A roll-out mat near the RNLI hut during summer would allow wheelchair users and people with walkers to reach the sand more easily.

Regarding the door to the shower area, the Head of Service - Neighbourhood Services would review this and reach out to the New Horizons team in order to resolve this and then report back to the Group. The Neighbourhood Services Manager who covers this area would also be consulted with regarding the changing rooms and look at tracks being placed on the beach if this was now more feasible. Consideration would also be needed around training for staff and the limitations of this i.e. in training to use the disabled equipment, such as the hoist in the changing area. Better signage outside the changing facilities and information on the website on accessibility would help make sure that people who were visiting the resort were more aware of the facilities available. On training, the Chair suggested that staff should at the very least be aware of what equipment was available even if they were not trained to use it themselves. The Waste Project Officer also referred to the Brilliant Basics funding, and this may be used around improving the signage at Barry Island for the changing facilities, hoist, etc.

Regarding the differences between the sea and beach chairs, the newly purchased beach chairs were similar in width to the sea ones; however, they were not suitable for larger adults with limited mobility. In contrast, the sea chair was designed to accommodate users of all sizes, providing full support and comfort. Their feet laid out and were buoyant, enabling safe use in the water. Beach chairs, by comparison, could not be used in water because their

large wheels caused them to float and become unstable. They were primarily designed for movement across sand, whereas sea chairs offered greater versatility and functionality when it came to use in water.

A site visit would be arranged with the Group, the New Horizons Team and the relevant Neighbourhood Services Manager to look at the facilities and the issues raised.

On the Chair's question on grant funding and additional provision of sea chairs and the challenges in terms of the Council's responsibility for the use of these, the Day Service Officer explained that the sea chairs would need to be handled and supported by persons who had competency and training in handling persons with various disabilities and aware of the local tides, etc. This would have to be appropriately risk assessed and be in the vicinity of lifeguards.

Councillor Norman also cited the accessibility of hireable sea chairs in nearby coastal locations adjacent to the Vale of Glamorgan, such as at Porthcawl.

K. Mitchell suggested the use of QR codes / signage that visitors, etc. to Barry Island could access tutorials via YouTube or similar on using the equipment there, which the Head of Service - Neighbourhood Services would investigate and this could be incorporated into the findings / recommendations of this review with other suggestions made at this meeting and others.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby picked up the Chair's point about the need for joined-up thinking, clarity on responsibilities and reaching out to other social services teams and relevant third-sector organisations to draw on their expertise. There may be specialist equipment already in use elsewhere that could improve accessibility, and the relevant Council services might not be aware of it. It also felt like the Council was moving toward making Barry Island, particularly Whitmore Bay, its centre of excellence in this area. That was understandable given limited resources and the physical challenges of some locations. However, the Council should still do everything possible to improve accessibility at the other beaches identified, even if that meant focusing on different needs in different places, such as wheelchair access in one area and support for visual impairments in another. Ultimately, there would need to be clarity on what the Group would be saying about accessibility at each beach, where the best facilities were and what support was available. Should Whitmore Bay become a centre of excellence, it would be worth engaging traders later in the process to explore how they could contribute to enhancing the experience for visitors with disabilities.

Councillor Ernest highlighted accessibility at Penarth. The area attracted a significant number of visitors with disabilities, particularly during peak season. Penarth Pier was free to access and remained a popular destination, alongside the Pier Pavilion, which was owned and operated by the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The Pavilion offered an excellent opportunity for providing visitor information during its regular opening hours. However, access to the beach via the slipways presented challenges, they were steep and required assistance for wheelchair users to avoid potential hazards. Additionally, while

	toilet facilities were available on the pier, they closed after dusk, limiting accessibility outside normal hours. He suggested that the Group considered a future site visit to review access points, facilities, and information provision at Penarth. Subsequently a site visit / visits to some of the local beach locations was suggested, with the use of Greenlinks services to be explored to take Members of the Group and officers / service users from New Horizons to visit and consider these. The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer would help to arrange these.
(5)	Any other business/questions–
	Councillor Stallard raised a clash between the scheduled meeting of the Group on 20 th November 2025 and a Member Refresher Session Training around the same date and time. An alternative date would be looked at.
(6)	Date and time of next meeting.
	Tuesday, 4 th November 2025 at 6.00pm.

TASK AND FINISH GROUP REVIEW ON PROVIDING GREATER ACCESSIBILITY TO BEACHES IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Minutes of meeting held on 4th November 2025

Present: Councillors C. Iannucci-Williams (Chair), C.E.A. Champion (Vice Chair), G.M. Ball, P. Drake, S. Lloyd-Selby, J.M. Norman and C. Stallard.

Officers – C. Smith, A. Sargent, B. Thomas and M. Thomas.

Also Present: W. Behenna, R. Lewis and J. Schup

A link to the meeting is [here](#).

(1)	Apologies for Absence –
	Councillor A.M. Ernest and K. Mitchell (Representative from the Tenant Working Group / Panel).
(2)	Declarations of Interest
	None.
(3)	Minutes/matters arising and updates from the meeting held on 6th October 2025:
	The minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2025 were approved as a correct record. The minutes for the 21st October were being finalised / signed off and would be shared with Members of the Group shortly. Matters arising/updates: • On the query regarding the Llantwit Major beach access road speed limit and signage, the Head of Neighbourhood Services, had emailed Cllr Norman on his findings, which had been shared with the Group prior to the meeting: ○ This matter had been raised concerning the Llantwit Major beach access road speed limit with the Highways team and there were no plans to currently change it. The recent 20mph review only applied to certain built-up areas and this road did not meet the review criteria issued by Welsh Government to allow the Council to change it. However, there was pending legislation being considered that potentially could allow Highway Authorities to set their own speed limits in certain areas, but as yet, this was not available to the Council. ○ In terms of warning signs, the team advised that these were fitted a few years ago. ○ There were also in situ warning signs as you approached the bends and slow markings on the road. The Head of Neighbourhood Services would also look to arrange for the hedge

	rows to be assessed and trimmed as necessary and also check the road markings and refresh the paint if required. ○ As an authority, the Council only instigated traffic measures based on collision data. The Head of Service had asked the Traffic Management Team (TMT) to run a collision report for the last 5 financial years. There had only been one incident where an animal ran into the road and caused a car to swerve. There had been no reportable highway safety accidents. ○ Lastly, the Council could offer an assessment of the speed by installing Automatic Traffic Counters (ATC's) which measured volume and speed along the road, in order to understand the problem better. This could be something for the spring when the volume of visitors increased. Councillor Norman had subsequently met with other Members of her party group where this information was shared with them and they acknowledged the limitations on legislation currently to change this or measures such as traffic calming furniture, which could not be used due to the need for emergency services to access the beach quickly. The speed of some vehicles travelling down to the beach was still of concern and this was something that should be revisited in future to make the beach much safer and more accessible to visitors who were on foot. ● Information concerning changing places at public buildings and legislation, policy, etc., around this, had been shared with the Group from the Operational Manager – Property for the Council. Further information and representation would be sought from the Council's Planning Department. ● Councillor Ball had reached out to a representative from MIND, with the following initial response from them on potential issues or challenges for people with access needs entering beaches: ○ Lifeguards – if any and when ○ Video location – a lot of anxious clients liked to go online to see how exactly they got there. ○ Popularity – were these beaches crammed with people on a sunny day. ○ Toilets ○ Transport – what if any public transport to access these ○ Tide time of said beaches – this would impact not only on available space but distance needed to go for a swim. Further information and possible attendance at a future meeting from MIND would be confirmed in due course. ● The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) had not yet provided a response. In line with Councillor Champion's suggestion, the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer (DSSO) had engaged with Sight Cymru to contribute to the review. Written representation and / or arrangements for a potential verbal presentation at a forthcoming meeting were currently under consideration.
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	• The Waste Project Officer had met with Matt Childs from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and lead lifeguard for local beaches and had discussed the work of the Group, which he could contribute to based on his role and experience. It was suggested that he be invited to the future site visit(s) and provide input at future meetings, which the DSSO would help to arrange. • Councillor Stallard had contacted Beach Academy Wales to get their input, which was pending. • Regarding the proposed site visit(s) on the 20th November this was being organised, and the Group considered various proposals for the visit(s), agreeing the following: ○ 20th November – Barry Island and Penarth Seafront; and ○ Date TBC - Western Vale beaches / seafronts. The site visits would enable Members to consider the various locations and landscapes, their varying accessibility issues for residents, tourists and visitors (for a broad range of access needs) and what quick wins could also be achieved at these locations, whether on the beaches themselves or, if this was not achievable or practical, to improve the accessibility of the adjacent seafront(s) and viewpoints. A timetable and itinerary would be drafted and shared. • The Group welcomed R. Lewis, a local resident, who had responded to the bulletin sent out encouraging public engagement with the task and finish review. He highlighted several points around beach accessibility due to his lived experience with disabilities and access challenges: ○ Having access to toilets and similar facilities nearby to beaches and seafronts, particularly for those residents or visitors who used electric powered wheelchairs or needed fast access to toilets, and if not able to access the beach itself, should still be able to take full advantage of the views as near to the beaches as possible with family and friends. ○ Having better surfacing by beach parking, access and toilets. ○ Barry Island beach was very good in terms of accessibility, with some other beaches across the Vale less so, which should be improved if possible and practicable to do so. • There were discussions on viability for wheelchair use and greater accessibility to all residents and visitors on various Vale beaches, who may have various access needs such as visual impairment, etc. Dunraven had challenges due to the rocky surface with shifting sands, but there may be more potential around Ogmore as the Council had control over the slipway access which could have scope to be improved. Although Ogmore also had its own challenges, such as the poor water quality and strong sea currents. It would be useful to get the RNLI's perspective on this, whilst acknowledging the importance of the principle that residents and visitors should have the possibility of accessing these areas as safely as possible i.e. if not accessing the sea, then at least the beach of seafront areas.
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(4)	Representations for the review from:
	W. Behenna, from the Beach Access Project, shared with the Group his experiences and his background with sports development and inclusion, as well as working with people with a wide range of disabilities and medical conditions in outdoor and beaches / blue spaces environments. From the challenges faced by people in these circumstances accessing U.K. beaches and his experiences of access and support provided at beaches in Europe, Australia and the United States he launched a beach access survey in June to gauge what people with disabilities and medical conditions felt about accessing U.K. beaches. The data had now been obtained and was being collated; to be reviewed by the University of Brighton and then a report published at the end of 2025 / early 2026. He summarised the key findings by stating that: • Most respondents with disabilities, medical conditions or other accessibility needs liked going to beaches and wanted to go into the water or be able to go nearby on the beach. • However, 25% of the respondents struggled to do so or had no access. Respondents had difficulty getting to the water due to various impairments and challenges. • The data helped to inform what people with disabilities and other challenges or needs, wanted or needed to be able access beaches and blue spaces. • The aim was to use and analyse the data collated to encourage beach providers to consider ways to make the beach environment more accessible. Any improvements should benefit everyone. For example, if providers introduced changes to support wheelchair users in terms of accessibility, etc., these should also accommodate families with young children, older adults, as well as individuals with mobility or medical conditions. By designing for those with the greatest needs, you then created beaches that were accessible and inclusive for the entire community. This approach was important to him because accessibility was about enabling everyone to enjoy and access blue spaces. R. Lewis agreed it was important to make beaches and the relevant facilities accessible to all, and for people to be as close to the beach as possible, as not all people with various needs would be able to go into the sea, which could also be compounded on many Welsh beaches having high tides and riptides. The Chair and R. Lewis also suggested the installation of benches for those people who may not be able to access the beaches but wish to be as close to them as possible or look over them and their sea views, including the use of 'memorial' type benches. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that installing memorial and dedicated benches were something that the Council undertook in several areas including parks, coastal areas and highways. A link to the relevant website page would be shared with the Group. On the installation and use of benches, Councillor Champion suggested that the design should consider both looking out over the sea and the beach, but also allow for conversation, such as putting them at right angles.

Councillor Champion wanted to ensure that this review was finalised in such a way that there were no unresolved or 'half finished' findings or recommendations. The Chair for Place, Councillor Lloyd-Selby stated that a key aim of the final report for this review should be how the recommendations could be taken forward and for the Place Scrutiny Committee to monitor this and to measure progress made. The DSSO suggested that the Group or the wider Place Scrutiny Committee recommended setting up a monitoring regime for the Group's findings.

On Councillor Lloyd-Selby's query about best practice elsewhere, W. Behenna cited several examples of best practice at French and Spanish beach and blue space locations such as:

- The use of an interconnected promenade set up, with boardwalks and platform areas for beach access and seafront views for people with a whole range of different mobility challenges, learning difficulties or neurodiversity challenges that wanted a space that was quiet and protected.
- Clear accessibility to parking and pathways.
- Beach wheelchairs that were designed specifically to go over sand and to go down to the water's edge and to enable people to go into the water, where they might stay in the beach wheelchair when they were in the water or they could get out of the beach wheelchair and go for a swim.
- The stationing of lifeguards at key points along the beach who helped to manage the space and support visitors.

French and Spanish beach locations had clear guidelines on accessibility to beaches and blue spaces which was not seen as much in the U.K. where there had been more attention to greenspaces instead. Due to the specific challenges faced at British beaches, such as higher tidal ranges, there needed to be different solutions for different beaches, and the need to undertake a feasibility study on these, to help understand what needs and factors should be considered and prioritised in each one. Residents and visitors needed to feedback on this as well, on how best to give people access to blue spaces in a way that addressed their various needs and choices. This would also require investment and improved infrastructure, if possible, on a gradual basis, in conjunction with local authorities and others. W. Behenna would share video clips of his experiences on Spanish and other beaches with the Group.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby asked if there could be some research done into how the Senedd's establishment of a national coastal path for Wales considered accessibility for people with disabilities or other accessibility needs or challenges and any linkages to accessing beaches and blue spaces. It would be important to see what was being done in this area at an all-Wales level and whether accessibility issues had been recognised and what was being done to address these. This could be part of any future recommendations made by the Group and potential linkages with Welsh Government to help action these. R. Lewis and J. Schup noted that accessibility did remain challenging for wheelchair users and other users on certain parts of this path, where there

	were practical limits to accessibility. Councillor Lloyd-Selby emphasised that this was about accessibility and linkages to beaches and blue spaces as part of the pathway project. Councillor Drake informed the group that Spanish lifeguards were funded by the local municipal governments, which was different to the local model of funding, recruitment, etc., here and so this needed to be looked at carefully. W. Behenna stated the final report on the survey, at the end of the year or early 2026, would be circulated, including at a governmental level, with the aim of tying into other, similar, initiatives for beach - and blue – space access. He would also be developing beach access projects in Cornwall, Dorset and connect with similar projects in France on the northern coast, which also had high tidal ranges. Any information would be shared with the Group.
(5)	Any other business/questions–
	The DSSO shared (via a suggestion from J. Schup) details on the ‘Snowball’ application with Members of the Group, which provided a mapping system for people with disabilities on local facilities and whether they could meet their needs. Councillor Ball shared the relevant link: Leicestershire entrepreneur's life-changing Dragons’ Den pitch - BBC News which could be considered as part of beach access.
(6)	Date and time of next meeting.
	To be confirmed; the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer would look into a suitable date and share this with Members.

TASK AND FINISH GROUP REVIEW ON PROVIDING GREATER ACCESSIBILITY TO BEACHES IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Minutes of meeting held on 20th November 2025

Present: Councillors C. Iannucci-Williams (Chair), C.E.A. Champion (Vice Chair), P. Drake, S. Lloyd-Selby, J.M. Norman, C. Stallard and a Representative from the Tenant Working Group / Panel, K. Mitchell.

Officers – J. Anderson, A. Sargent, C. Smith, B. Thomas, J. Thomas and M. Thomas.

Also Present: M. Collard and J. Schup

A link to the meeting is [here](#).

(1)	Apologies for Absence –
	Councillor G.M. Ball and A.M. Ernest.
(2)	Declarations of Interest
	None.
(3)	Minutes from the meetings held on 21st October and 4th November 2025:
	The minutes of both meetings concerned were approved as the correct record for each.
(4)	Matters arising, updates:
	• Following reaching out to the RNLI, a representative was keen to attend a future meeting of the Group or to provide a written representation concerning beach accessibility within the Vale of Glamorgan. • A briefing note concerning the National Coastal Path and beach accessibility (as raised at a previous meeting) would be shared with Members of the Group following this meeting or as soon as possible. • A query had been received via email from Councillor Ernest, concerning a resident's question about St Mary's Well Bay Beach (Lavernock / Sully) and whether this could be added to the review. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that the Council did not manage that beach, therefore it and the slipway could not be included in the review. The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer would contact Councillor Ernest to update him on this so that the enquirer could be informed. • A response from the Beach Academy had been shared with the Group prior to the meeting, for their consideration. • A query was raised by Councillor Drake, following a previous meeting of the Group, about the funding / payment for beach lifeguards in the Vale of Glamorgan, and whether this was at least in part covered by the Council (as seen in beach resorts in Portugal and Spain). The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that the Council had a contract with the RNLI concerning lifeguards at beaches within the County. Previously this had been managed by the Council directly at five locations, such as Whitmore Bay, Llantwit Major, Southerndown and Ogmore by Sea. The Council did still provide some funding to this service, but it was largely

	subsidised by the RNLI itself. On the follow up question regarding increased funding, it was explained that any such demand would require a risk assessment and the Council possibly approaching the RNLI to see if they could increase the amount of funding.
(5)	Representations for the review from: Julie Thomas, who worked in a dual capacity as a Rehabilitation and Mobility Officer for Visually Impaired, Adult Services, Vale of Glamorgan Council and a representative (Vision Rehabilitation Specialist) from Sight Cymru. She had undertaken mobility training at both Barry Island and Whitmore Bay regarding accessing the beach, as well as Nelson's Point, around the train station leading on to Jackson Bay at the top and the walkway. Similar training had been done at Penarth, walking down to the Pier and nearby gardens with visually impaired people. This was well detailed, and people with visual impairment would go down the ramp rather than the steps, which was beneficial. Regarding Barry Pier, the edging on the steps from the main promenade and going up the middle to access the sand had to be painted to help visually impaired visitors. This had subsequently worn and faded, so needed to be refreshed and repainted. She also highlighted the steps by Marco's Cafe. Other issues raised by Julie concerned the lack of auditory signage across the beach at Barry Island, such as with maps. Accessibility to toilets around the site was, generally speaking, excellent. Lighting at certain points at the site could be improved / made brighter. The use of the colour purple in the new signage at the site was mentioned, which could be challenging for users who were visually impaired. The ramp at O'Shea's Café was also highlighted. The Chair asked if these points could be addressed, to which the Head of Neighbourhood Services replied that some of these could be addressed quite quickly, with the other areas to be looked at in due course (signage (renewal of beach signs) / lighting (LED infrastructure)). Due to carbon considerations, etc., the lights were generally dimmed remotely but certain areas could be illuminated further if required. On lighting on the coastal path, (i.e. for visually impaired persons with guide dogs) between Jackson's Bay and Whitmore Bay, it was explained that there may not be any sources of power / infrastructure at the location, or there may be other limitations on having lighting in place there, so this would be referred to the relevant Council team to review if anything could be done. On the Vice Chair's suggestion about solar powered lighting, this would be investigated, but it may not be practicable to illuminate the whole path. Mark Collard, an Executive Member from the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum outlined the membership, etc. of the Forum (which included a cross section of people from across the County, including those with access needs and other challenges to using beaches, etc.) and agreed with the comments previously made by MIND to this Group, i.e. availability of lifeguards, transport, video / online location details, etc. He also was not aware of the availability of wheelchairs at Whitmore Bay, which may require changes to the signage used there in order to address this. It was suggested that the beach access

	checklist / survey, drafted for the Group, could be shared with the 50+ Forum in some form, to get their feedback and an invite be sent to members of the Forum to attend future site visits. This would be arranged in conjunction with the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer. Regarding the Vice Chair's query on when the 50+ Forum would next be meeting, this would be in January, but contact was maintained regularly via email, so the survey could be shared with members before the meeting and to get their feedback in December instead.
(6)	Site Visit – 20th November. Discussion and feedback. Regarding the site visit – the following were points raised either at the visit or at this subsequent debrief / meeting: • Barry Island – Overall, there were positive steps that had been taken at the site, but members and others had identified areas that would need improvement: ○ Improve accessibility further. For example, to improve the door arrangement, width (i.e. widen it), design (i.e. make it slow closing) and access for the changing place. To improve signage and other measures to help visitors with visual impairments and other challenges access the beach safely, i.e. using the right colour combination on signage, highlighting / refreshing steps and curbs with white / yellow paint, plus nonslip surfaces and lighting. Using the changing places logo in signage would highlight the changing facilities available to people with access needs. Other signage measures that could be included were lowering signage for wheelchair users and others, as well as yellow or other markers on the outdoor beach showers, the use of e-signs for messages such as water quality and more changing rooms on the promenade. For the changing place, it was suggested to have additional signage and instructions on how to use the changing bed. The inclusion of a 'steady' mobility aid in the changing place would also help those users that did not need a hoist to go to the toilet area. ○ Raising awareness of the provision and availability of standard sized wheelchairs at the site. To include this in the new booking system with the beach chairs. ○ For the Council to purchase more wheelchairs. Such improvements to accessibility would help to encourage tourism and residents / visitors coming to local beaches and resorts. • Penarth Pier, Pavilion and seafront - There were some good aspects to the Pier and seafront, such as wide accessible areas on the Pier itself for wheelchair users and others with

	access needs to be able to traverse back and forth unimpeded, but several points and areas for improvement were raised, which included: ○ Disabled toilets. The toilet on the Pier was challenging for disabled users, in terms of accessing and using it. There was no signage indicating the better toilet facilities within the Pavilion itself. ○ Disabled ramp, access to the Pavilion and elsewhere. There were concerns around the temporary ramps that had been put in place by the Pavilion following recent filming work. Only one of the two doors to the front of the Pavilion were open during the site visit, which could be a challenge to wheelchair users and other visitors with access needs. Other disabled access points, exits and ramps - while the Pavilion had several disabled ramps, access from these to the Pavilion was prevented by the doors being locked at these points, amongst other issues identified. ○ Ramps / entry points / strips for steps for Penarth pier. Monitoring responsibility to be confirmed and clarified with the Council department responsible (Education). ○ Limited disabled parking nearby. Disabled parking bays should be closer to the dropped kerbs. ○ Signage: - the use of audible signage and QR codes to provide people with various disabilities and other access needs with the information (such as video) they need as part of their visit to the Pier, Pavilion and seafront to provide information on facilities, local history, etc. This would tie in with having a dedicated webpage on the Council website to help people plan their day at these locations and to consider their accessibility needs with possible or potential collaboration with other bodies such as the 'Snowball' application providers and others. Signage – audio or otherwise – could also highlight mental health matters and support for people with mental health, despondency, and similar issues in areas on the coast which were 'hotspots' for such issues. A key point also raised was on the importance of having people with access needs, disabilities, and similar lived experiences, more involved in the design and monitoring processes for these types of locations and facilities. Furthermore, improved communications were needed to inform and engage with visitors to the Vale of Glamorgan beaches and coastal areas and resorts. The above would be included in subsequent 'quick wins', further developments (such as through various funding streams, i.e. 'Brilliant Basics' or collaboration with partners) or form part of the subsequent recommendations, findings and action plan for the final report of this review. Other actions / points included:
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	• J. Schup would share the Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast poster for the seawall at St. Donat's Bay for support for despondent people. • M. Thomas to organise a second site visit to the Western Vale beaches (to tie in with the next meeting, if possible). • The Communications team of the Council would be contacted to see if they could attend a future meeting of the Group. • Contact Snowball Community to see if they could attend or provide written representations for the next Group meeting. • Share with members a list of points raised around the site visit.
(7)	Any other business/representations/questions.
	None.
(8)	Date and time of next meeting.
	To be confirmed; the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer would investigate a suitable date and share this with Members.

TASK AND FINISH GROUP REVIEW ON PROVIDING GREATER ACCESSIBILITY TO BEACHES IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Minutes of meeting held on 8th December 2025

Present: Councillors C. Iannucci-Williams (Chair), C.E.A. Champion (Vice-Chair), G.M. Ball, P. Drake, A.M. Ernest, J.M. Norman, C. Stallard and a Representative from the Tenant Working Group / Panel, K. Mitchell.

Officers – R. Jones, A. Sargent and M. Thomas.

Also Present: S. Sansome.

A link to the meeting is [here](#).

(1)	Apologies for Absence –
	Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby and J. Schup (Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast).
(2)	Declarations of Interest
	None.
(3)	Minutes from the meetings held on 20th November 2025:
	The minutes of the meeting was approved subject to the following details, which had been omitted, being included: On the site visit to Penarth, Councillor Lloyd-Selby raised an issue in relation to the Penarth Pavilion / cafe, where there was a ramp on one side and it was suggested that it should be swapped. The ramp came from the Pavilion itself, going back towards the cafe, where there were steps up to the entrance and then a ramp down from the right-hand side which was situated where customers were queuing.
(4)	Matters arising, updates:
	• Written representations had been shared with Members from the Vale 50+ Forum and the RNLI. • In addition, the 50+ Forum received a condensed version of the beach access checklist for feedback. So far, a small number of responses had only been received. • The Group agreed that a RNLI representative should come to the next meeting of the Task and Finish Group, if possible, to provide greater details in relation to this topic and to build upon the written representation already provided. • A written response from N. Hinton, the Council's Equalities Officer, concerning accessibility to local beaches would be shared with the Group

	shortly. Many of the points raised had already been addressed as part of the Group's review.
(5)	Representations for the review from:
	Simon Sansome, the CEO and founder of Snowball Community, outlined the Snowball digital application to the Group. He explained that this was the world's largest disability app, used by thousands of people, and described it as 'TripAdvisor for the disabled community'. The application allowed users to add places, leave reviews and say if they would return to a business, other organisation (including the public sector) or location with reference to its accessibility, inclusivity and suitability for various types of disabled users. Snowball also carried out assessments on businesses and locations for a fee, with the assessors coming from the disabled and neurodiverse communities, who would carry out the assessment and give the location a snowball rating on the app, including a neurodiversity / stimulation rating as well. The app was free for users to access / download. The app gave users vital information on accessibility and inclusivity for persons with various disabilities or other access needs, etc. at various locations. The app had appeared on Dragon's Den and had been successful in getting backing from them, as well as being signed up by Google. They also were working in partnership with Leeds Council, Barclays and Santander, and were in talks with several public and private bodies, as well as their equivalents in continental Europe and globally. Simon subsequently demonstrated the app and its relevant features to the Group, highlighting its use in identifying disabled friendly and accessible facilities at various towns and cities in the U.K. such as car parks, fuel stations, toilets and changing facilities, recreation / tourist destinations, etc. Facilities were colour coded on the app / mapping system used as follows (such as Google, with the relevant mapping symbols too): • Red – inaccessible to disabled users / access needs; • Yellow – accessible, but there could be potential issues for some users; • Green – wholly accessible for the users concerned; • Blue – services; and • Light blue - toilets; dark blue - either changing places or parking. Also, following any assessment undertaken at a facility, that organisation would receive a recommendation report on how to improve its facilities for various disabilities and access needs. Following the presentation, Simon addressed the queries raised by the Group: • Users of the application could only leave review(s) for the services and facilities they had used, not undertake a formal assessment, which was a paid service offered to businesses and public bodies by Snowball. This was undertaken by trained assessors and which looked at all types of disabilities, impairments and similar access needs; • The name 'Snowball' was a way of showing the app as being something that covered all types of disabilities and impairments;

	• The trained assessors already covered parts of Wales as well as the wider U.K.; such as the Cardiff and Swansea areas. The assessors included Paralympians from Team GB who could bring their experiences to this and support the app. Due to this, there was potential coverage for adjacent areas, such as the Vale of Glamorgan, and for assessors to be deployed to businesses and organisations that may sign up in the Vale; • The framework for the assessments undertaken were based upon the Community Care Assessment model and working in partnership with any relevant charities to ensure that these were not missing any key disability / impairment / access issues or needs. This was a flexible, 'living' framework, which could incorporate any new or previously unidentified issue, disability or consideration if required; • Due to the volume of reviews on the app, no figures could be given currently on how many beach resorts and facilities had been reviewed by users. On formal assessments, no such site had been assessed professionally as yet. Beach reviews, etc. could be accessed by individual users via the app; currently there were only a handful of reviews for the Vale of Glamorgan, none of these directly linked to beaches or their accessibility. It could not be confirmed what numbers of users of the app were based locally at this time. In order to build up such a picture, it would require cooperation between Snowball, this Group, the Local Authority, local businesses, etc. to encourage people to engage and use this app locally and be part of this online community. The Group then welcomed Robert Jones, Operational Manager, Corporate Communications, Participation, Equalities & Directorate Development, Vale of Glamorgan Council who presented to them the work being undertaken by Communications, Marketing and Tourism colleagues (and others) within the Council regarding this topic on accessibility for beach resorts and the promotion / awareness raising of this. The promotion of the County's beach resorts as tourist friendly destinations, etc., was done primarily through the 'Visit Wales' website, 'Visit the Vale' webpage and the Council's regeneration arm. There was a focus on content regarding accessibility to beach resorts, such as Barry Island, as a top-level accessible destination, using marketing and the Visit Wales website. There was a lot of information already on this website about the availability of wheelchairs and general accessibility at Barry Island. There was also work going on in the background around a new booking system for wheelchairs to be made accessible to visitors that could be advertised and marketed as well in due course. In terms of communications and marketing around local beaches and their accessibility, support / staff available and facilities they offered, there was always more that could be done to help promote these to the public and to produce related content, but it was important to target or focus this communication by understanding exactly who the Council was trying to reach, and who the key audience was, in trying to raise awareness of accessibility
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and the facilities available at local beaches. Any additional work or recommendations in this area needed to consider these factors and context, in order to focus this promotion to those citizens, visitors and local residents who would benefit from this information and marketing rather than take a 'spray and pray' approach.

Following the presentation, the Operational Manager addressed and endorsed the suggestion of a 'one stop shop' website or page for specifically beach accessibility and related facilities and support. This would include providing information on how to get to and park at locations as well as provide advance warning for wheelchair users and others with mobility or access needs if a beach location was inaccessible due to bad weather, and when this would be rectified. Also links to charities and support networks such as the Samaritans could be added. The site could highlight the beaches that were less crowded which would benefit those visitors with anxiety or neurodiversity issues. To help visitors with various needs plan their trips to local beaches, it would also be useful to provide information such as having details on the website as to whether car parks at or nearby to the beaches were full or not, ideally updated automatically or in real time. Having a single webpage or online information 'hub' for accessibility to local beaches and linked resources was a good suggestion, which could also benefit from the input and partnership coming from charities, third sector organisations and other bodies such as MIND. These bodies would also help to structure this information properly and design the page around the relevant users, as well as help inform improvements to signage at beaches locally such as around mental health.

One caveat raised however was about the Council considering signposting information from external bodies, such as water quality at beaches (from Welsh Water), which it did not have overall responsibility for, and how this should be appropriately managed.

There was also potential to look at 'dynamic' and other forms of signage (including audio, QR codes, etc.) for water quality, etc., and if this technology could be used at local beaches.

Attention was also drawn to the limitations of signage; for the visually impaired it was important that their attention could be drawn to the relevant signage, QR code and so on and that the correct format was used. Also, it was important to not 'overuse' signage which could unintentionally cause clutter and potential confusion for users, and the sheer volume meaning that they were not taken notice of or read. Furthermore, water quality could vary greatly from day to day at a resort so that information may not be sufficiently up to date. In response, it was suggested that enhanced signage could be kept to a minimum but still be impactful by using and maximising existing signage posts and notice boards already in place at local beaches. For water quality, etc., QR codes would link users to the relevant third part websites (such as Welsh Water or Natural Resources Wales) to get information which could be updated in real time.

	There was also potential for building into the partnership with bodies such as MIND access to the links to this webpage and related information from the Council on its website about beach accessibility on their social media. A point was raised about staffing at Penarth Pier and at the beaches within the Western Vale of Glamorgan during both the summer and winter periods. The role of Pier Master had been removed at Penarth Pier due to cost savings (although this may have been retained in some form at Barry) and there was possibly little or no staff present at the Western sites, such as Llantwit Major, Southerndown, etc., who could support visitors with accessibility and other related issues. This meant the Council should look at funding and resourcing staffing and support at these locations, which could be a possible recommendation that this Group took forward and would help ultimately to implement, at a practical level, the other substantive recommendations and actions the Group would put forward to improve accessibility at beaches. It was explained that although the position of Pier Master at Penarth had been removed, there was still a smaller scale Council staff presence at the Pier, at least through the summer holiday season, all day up to dusk, who undertook litter picking, monitoring the public toilets, and keeping these facilities clean and tidy. As with signage it was also suggested that using existing resources in place and upskilling staff already deployed in these areas to be able to advise and support visitors with access needs and similar would be beneficial, and to help inform visitors prior to their trips (via the proposed single webpage / site) could also lessen pressure on existing staff and resources. Following the above recommendations and suggestions, the Operational Manager stated he would pick up the online one stop shop for beach accessibility once this had been formally recommended by the Group. As part of this a 'mini-brief' would ideally be developed via the Task and Finish Group which would encompass the information and messaging required to communicate to visitors about accessibility at local beaches and then for Council officers to work with colleagues, Visit the Vale and third sector partners to develop and communicate this to the relevant target audience.
(6)	Site Visit – 8th December. Discussion and feedback.
	The following were points raised either at the visits and / or at this subsequent debrief / meeting: <u>Llantwit Major Beach.</u> • Disabled toilets – more helpful if more centrally located. • Disabled toilet door does not open fully – possible issue with the hinges, etc. Could impact accessibility for wheelchair users and others. However, toilets were well maintained and there were baby changing and disabled facilities available. • Widening of ramp under lifeguarding platform – to allow for people to sit under the shelter there. • Constant erosion / damage caused by weather / waves at the location i.e. wear and tear and potholes on tarmac and surfaces at the beach car

park (inc. disabled bays), pebbles and other rubble strewn across pathways and access points, such as to toilet facilities, which could be impassable for some people with access needs.

- Possible issue with design and location of flood defences.
- CCTV utilised at location to monitor and prevent potential issues with despondent / suicidal persons.
- Limited number of benches / potential design issues (no backs).
- Impact to local café / economy / tourism if the nearby toilets were closed due to bad weather and the inaccessibility this causes.
- The use of water quality signage and updates would be useful here, plus real time updates to the public via the Council regarding these and warnings on any issues caused by bad weather to the accessibility of the beach.
- Issues with the nearby pathways leading to the beach; i.e. only partial accessibility for wheelchair users and others; mixture of private and Council owned land impacted access to these as well.

Ogmore by Sea.

- Does not appear to be any dedicated disabled car parking bays at the main car park and site. But you could register for disabled car users / blue badge users separately. (A. Sargent would look into this to see if some dedicated disabled car parking bays could be demarcated there or clarify why no bays were marked up, etc).
- Some ticket machines were not wholly accessible to wheelchair users and others with access needs.
- Bins could be inaccessible to disabled visitors due to the steps / raised area where the waste bins were located.
- Water font could also be inaccessible to wheelchair users due to layout (i.e. due to the sharp paved corner which juts out).
- No clear signage highlighting disabled toilets, etc.
- Disabled toilet space was good overall, but the layout and its location did not make it easily accessible to disabled users.
- Ramp for access for disabled users and others, had an uneven surface / edge that could make it difficult to travel over.
- Highlight edges to steps, etc., at the site or refresh these as paint had worn, in order to help and protect visually impaired users and other visitors.
- Use of audio signage could be beneficial and to highlight mental health support and other important updates or general information.
- Regarding the possibility of small scale improvements or modifications to make the RNLI slipway more accessible for persons with access needs in order to be closer to the beach and the sea in a safe way was discussed and discounted, due to safety concerns and the cost in order to address this, as well as its primary use as an access point for RNLI and emergency vehicles.

Due to the geography and other challenges faced by the Western beaches, accessibility and the conditions to support this were not as strong as was seen at the Barry and Penarth site visits. There would be a need to improve these

	through a mixture of 'quick wins' that could be done by Council officers at the operational level as well as via recommendations and actions as part of the Group's final report and findings.
(7)	Any other business / representations / questions.
	M. Thomas, the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer (DSSO), in response to the Chair's question, explained that there was no set number of recommendations that the Task and Finish Group should make for the final report following this review. The Group could make as many or as few recommendations as they deemed appropriate and felt covered all of their findings and concerns, as well as the scope of the review. The report and its recommendations would go on to the full Scrutiny Committee for their review and then (with any additional or modified recommendations from Scrutiny) to Cabinet for their consideration. Councillor Ernest enquired as to whether any survey or research had been undertaken to establish the number of visitors to local beaches with disabilities and access needs. If not, then perhaps this should be considered and undertaken and presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet as part of any final proposals for this review. The Vice-Chair felt that the exact number of visitors with access needs / disabilities to the beaches in the County was not pertinent to this exercise as such, as the key principle was that all local beaches should be accessible as possible (and practicable), whether they had one or five hundred visitor(s) with a disability and / or access needs. The Vice-Chair added that prior to closing the review, further representation should be sought, such as from Sight Cymru and from a relevant hearing charity to seek their views on accessibility. The DSSO clarified that a 'twin hatted' representative for both the Council and Sight Cymru had attended and participated in the review already, but a representative from a hearing charity or similar body would be sought to attend a meeting of the Group or provide a written representation on this matter. The Chair agreed with the Vice-Chair's point about not fully closing the review but rather have an ongoing mechanism in place to revive the Task and Finish Group to revisit this topic and be updated on how the recommendations from the review were being addressed. The DSSO advised that, as part of the final report and recommendations, the Group could put in a requirement for a regular update and monitoring report to go to Scrutiny to assess the progress being made on implementing the recommendations and actions suggested by the Group and Scrutiny. The Chair and Vice-Chair suggested that as part of this regular monitoring / reporting, this Group be revived as part of this further review process (such as on a six – or nine – monthly basis).
(8)	Date and time of next meeting.
	To be confirmed; following discussions at the meeting, two possible dates suggested were:

	• Thursday 8th January at 6pm; or • Tuesday 13th January, at 6pm. The DSSO would reach out to members to confirm which date would be more suitable. There was a discussion on whether this should be an in-person or hybrid format (to be confirmed). This meeting could be used for either holding any outstanding representations or to start to draft the findings and recommendations for the Group's report back to Scrutiny and Cabinet.
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TASK AND FINISH GROUP REVIEW ON PROVIDING GREATER ACCESSIBILITY TO BEACHES IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Minutes of meeting held on 8th January 2026

Present: Councillors C. Iannucci-Williams (Chair), C.E.A. Champion (Vice-Chair), G.M. Ball, P. Drake and C. Stallard.

Officers: A. Sargent, C. Smith and M. Thomas.

Also Present: J. Bond, M. Childs, B. Langley and C. Nelson.

A link to the meeting is [here](#).

(1)	Apologies for Absence –
	Councillors A.M. Ernest, J.M. Norman, S. Lloyd-Selby, J. Schup (Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast) and the Representative from the Tenant Working Group / Panel, K. Mitchell.
(2)	Declarations of Interest
	None.
(3)	Minutes from the meeting held on 8th December 2025:
	The minutes of the meeting were approved.
(4)	Representations for the review from:
	Representations were given by the following persons: Matt Childs, Lead Lifeguard Supervisor for the RNLI spoke to the Group about accessibility at the beaches within the Vale of Glamorgan covered by the RNLI: - Whitmore Bay, Barry Island, was one of the busiest beaches for lifeguards locally, and had a good level of accessibility for tourists and visitors, such as multiple ramps on to the beach, as well as steps and sufficient toilet facilities. However, lifeguards were regularly asked about changing facilities by the public, especially for people who were looking for private changing facilities for religious and other reasons. There was access for visitors to the beach wheelchairs at Whitmore Bay, but these needed to be advertised more, as the lifeguards stationed there often had to direct people to where these were available. - Llantwit Major beach. This offered a significant contrast to Whitmore Bay, with lower visitor numbers, consisting of more local visitors and surfers, as well as cold water dipping groups, and with a very different topography. This impacted on the accessibility to the beach and

	surrounding areas, with two ramps leading on to the beach, and with a very rocky terrain before you reached the sandier parts. This meant it was tricky to access this by foot, etc. The toilet facilities were good and sufficient for the number of people who visit beach. It was believed they had recently been refitted, and there were showers on the outside of the Life Saving Club building as well. Lifeguards based there had previously encountered despondent individuals on the cliffs at Llantwit, displaying concerning behaviour. The primary risks at this location included strong coastal currents and unstable cliff faces, which were highlighted by existing Vale of Glamorgan Council safety signage. • Southerndown / Dunraven Bay. This had more visitors than Llantwit Major beach, although primarily these were local residents and some people from further afield. Access onto the beach was generally good. There was a long slipway which was in relatively good condition when the sand levels were lower, it sometimes was difficult to access the beach from the bottom of the slipway due to rocks being uncovered, but this was generally only observed in winter and early season time. In the summer the sand tended to come back and then allow reasonable access onto the beach for a wheelchair user or someone who does not want to walk over rocks. That was only the case at mid to low tide when you could use the slipway to access the beach; at high tide, there was no access onto the beach. The toilets were refitted last year and were sufficient for the number of visitors. There was a water fountain installed there last year as well. It had been a hotspot for despondent individuals in the last 10 or so years. • Ogmore by Sea. Access onto the beach was generally very good. The slipway was in good condition. You could generally get straight onto the sand from the bottom of the slipway, and that was really the one access point that that would give you easy access onto the beach. There were other informal access points onto the beach down by the river and the other end of the car park, but they would be more for people who were able to negotiate the pebbles and rocks, etc. The toilets had been revamped over the winter or pre last season and a water fountain installed, which appeared to be sufficient for the number of people who were visiting that beach. Generally, the biggest challenges that the lifeguards had was on the water quality classification and the car park on busy days being extremely busy and over full. Members of the Group raised questions and comments on the following: • On the possibility of having additional signage at the top of the cliffs in order to provide help, contact details and support to despondent persons that might attend the Heritage Coastal areas, this was considered a good idea and would help supplement existing signage at these locations, and an example of such signage, designed by the Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast would be shared with Matt for his consideration. C. Smith also advised that the Samaritans had undertaken a big campaign some time ago on these issues, and they installed all the signs along the Cliffs at Southerndown / Dunraven Bay.
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	The Council could look to review such signage and involve organisations such as the Samaritans as part of this. • On the wider point of safety signage, Matt advised that the RNLI undertook an audit of safety signage of the beaches it helped to manage (plus others), with this information referred on to the Council. The signs were subsequently produced and put up at main beach access points. This did not however include information for despondent persons; these were more concerning hazards and prohibitions for the beach areas instead. • Regarding any issues, risks or hazards with the overfill car park at Ogmore by Sea, it was explained that the potential risks were around limited access for emergency services to get on to the beach front should an emergency occur, as well as members of the public being 'blocked in' due to the car park being over capacity. • On the follow up question on how the barrier system in place could help address these issues, C. Smith explained that the barrier / ANPR system at Ogmore by Sea would be reviewed to see if the issue of the system in place being overwhelmed by the numbers of visitors in cars coming on busy days could be addressed effectively. However, this could be a significant challenge, due to the impact of the barriers effectively coming down and preventing further car-based visitors from entering if the car park was full. This could lead to cars backing up and queuing up to the main road and potentially the Council having to then implement a 'one in, one out' system. • On laying out defined car parking spaces at Ogmore by Sea to help address inappropriate parking, it was explained that this may not be sufficient to address car users / visitors who would remove stone barriers and park on common land in order to get around this. The barrier / ANPR system would probably be the most effective means of managing this, plus at busy times of the year (such as July and August) staff deployed to the site could also be involved in car parking duties and oversight. This could be built into the action plan as part of the future report on this matter from the Group. • Regarding the suggestion and feasibility on having signage at the top of the road leading to the car park at Ogmore by Sea beach, to indicate the car parking spaces available / whether it was full or not, various options could be looked at in relation to this which could be added to the action plan of the Group. • A Query was also raised about the signage at Hardy's Bay, which was subsequently described as a safety sign advising people if they were in trouble to ring the Coast Guard. • A suggestion was made about having a QR code for safety and other signage reasons at local beach locations for people with various disabilities, impairments or access issues, such as visually impaired so they could access the messaging on the signage via the internet or app on their smartphones. C. Smith explained that the use of QR codes had been discussed as part of this review, and there was the potential to set up those QR codes, and load information as necessary, whether it's audible or visual and this was worth adding to the action plan of the final report.
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Subsequently, the Group heard from **Jacqui Bond, Project Partner, Deaf Health Wales**, who provided representation for individuals and groups who were deaf or had hearing impairments:

- She referred to the discussion earlier about QR codes and suggested that these would need to include videos concerning key information translated into British Sign Language (BSL). This would work by providing a link to a video that would translate the warning sign, etc., into BSL, with another audible iteration for people with a visual impairment, etc.
- In terms of having pre-loaded information and frequently asked questions (FAQs), etc. on the videos (in Welsh and English in a BSL format, an audible format for people who had visual impairment, etc.), via QR codes on beach signage and similar, Jacqui felt these were achievable, and could be done relatively economically (approximately £350 per 4 hour video recording) and value for money.
- Jacqui explained that deaf / hearing impaired persons could find challenges in simply reading the wording on a sign. Some deaf people who gained no benefit from hearing aids cannot hear speech sounds at all. Hearing ability exists on a spectrum: some may detect loud sounds like a baby crying at around 90 decibels but still be unable to hear the lower or different frequencies that make up speech. Without access to speech sounds, it became extremely difficult for them to learn written language because they could not hear and match spoken language to text. Hence, the use of BSL, and other measures, such using an emergency 999 service which they could register with by text message should they get in trouble, would help deaf and hearing-impaired users access local beaches more safely, and be fully alert to any risks and dangers there. Other potential services which could be utilising this would be Mountain Rescue and the Coast Guard.
- The Chair suggested that details about how to register with such services could be on the proposed 'one stop shop' or 'hub' that the Group had suggested to house all the key accessibility information for visitors to the Vale of Glamorgan's beaches, on the Council's website to help people plan their days out to local beaches and offer support and reassurance.

The Group also heard from **Bethany Langley, Sensory Support Officer - South Wales, from Deafblind UK**, who raised several points for the Group's consideration including:

- In terms of accommodating people with various impairments, which included people with single sensory loss issues but also those with dual loss, there was no 'one size fits all' approach. The Council and other bodies could only try their best to be as accessible as they could be but could not do everything.
- In terms of providing appropriate information regarding accessibility to beaches, the Council needed to consider the possibility of providing this in as many formats as possible, such as braille, in an audio format,

	translated into BSL, etc., on the Council website, to help inform visitors about each of the local beaches, their terrain, any hazards, etc. to help people prepare their trip to these locations in the format most suitable and beneficial for them. • For busier beaches, such as at Barry Island, consideration should be given to a designated, more accessible area of the beach that could be provided for visitors who feel anxious about busy spaces. This area would be flatter, with ramps instead of steps, and have more staff support nearby—such as lifeguards or coastguards—so people could get assistance accessing the beach if needed. • In terms of beach signage, it was important to consider the efficacy and appropriateness of the make-up of such signage for people with visual and hearing impairments, such as font size, colours / contrasts used. • For those visitors who required the use of a walking stick, white cane or use of guide dogs, suitable terrain needed to be considered at beach locations. For example, inside buildings, steps were often marked with high-contrast tape—such as black-and-yellow stripes—to make level changes clearly visible. Outdoors this was harder because tape wears away, but coastal areas with concrete promenades could use high-contrast coloured concrete along edges to highlight drops or changes in level. Because concrete and sand often appeared similar in colour, people with limited vision may not detect the change and could fall. Using strong colour contrast on edges—and at the top and bottom of ramps—would make these areas far more accessible and safer for visually impaired visitors. The same principle could also be applied to ramps at such locations. • Regarding accessibility to toilets at beaches, it was important to consider if this accessibility extended to accommodating, for example, wheelchair users and for visually impaired persons who had a guide, so that they could walk in side by side if needed and turn around in a changing room. • To also include, if this was not already done, a designated area on beaches, for guide dogs and their users, to avoid distractions caused by other dogs, etc. • To look at the provision of shelter for more extreme types of weather i.e. heavy rain and wind, hailstorms, etc., which could overwhelm and disorientate visitors with sensory loss and impairment, for ‘out of hours’, when cafes, shops and other facilities were closed. • Accessible public transport links to the beaches, etc, would also be beneficial for those visitors with accessibility and other issues. On the Chair’s query about guide dogs being exempt from the summertime restrictions on dog access to local beaches, it was explained there had been some queries on this previously, and informally there had been an understanding that they would be allowed on the beaches as service animals. However, this could be formally reviewed, following the points raised at this meeting, i.e. signage could be used to highlight that guide dogs were exempt from the ban on the beach between 1st May and 30th September. On signage at Barry Island, following contact with the relevant Council officers, it had been confirmed that the various factors around accessibility, including font size,
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	height, colour contrast, etc., had been considered and this information would be shared with the Group separately. On Councillor Stallard's query about making buses and other public transport more accessible to those visitors to beaches locally with hearing and visual impairments, Bethany suggested measures such as having 'talking buses' to verbally indicate or announce next stops, and other measures which could help such users and others, for example, older persons who may have recently had sight or hearing loss, to navigate and use buses more effectively and to use adaptations and the relevant phone apps. Bethany also invited Members of the Group to attend a deaf blind social group in order to ask them about their experiences, including access to beaches, such as those in the Vale of Glamorgan. Finally, the Group received a representation from Cliff Nelson, Atlantic Crest, which specialised in water safety, consultancy and training. Cliff had worked in the Council as a Coastal Manager for several years previously and was involved with the Whitmore Bay Surf Life Saving Club. He had been involved previously with the Samaritans and the design of their signage for the Southerndown Coast and stressed the importance of such signage fitting in with the natural ethos of the coast. He felt that the wheelchairs for hire at Barry Island should be better advertised. A. Sargent explained that this would be undertaken in conjunction with the introduction of the new online wheelchair booking system and new wheelchairs purchased. The Chair thanked Bethany, Cliff, Jacqui and Matt for their contributions, and the key points they raised could potentially be incorporated into the final report's action plan, such as a review or audit of beach signage for visually impaired persons, etc.
(5)	Discussion and feedback i.e. regarding the initial findings and recommendations from the Task and Finish Review and for the final report.
	Key points raised included: • The recommendations should include both general ones and those pertinent to each beach covered in the scope of this review. • In terms of general recommendations, those suggested included: ○ One stop shop for beach accessibility on the VOGC website. ○ A review of existing safety measures i.e. yellow edges, etc. ○ An audit of VOGC signage regarding beaches. ○ Regular monitoring reporting / updates on the progress of the action plan (i.e. six monthly). • An action plan should be appended to the report to detail and track key actions and recommendations from the Group's final report. • That the Council officers primarily involved with the Group's review look through the recommendations, actions, etc, raised by the Group and

	bring these together as part of the draft recommendations and actions for the Group's final report. • Ensure that the Cold Knap and Porthkerry beaches were considered as part of the recommendations, such as the beach specific ones and any needs addressed i.e. improvements to local toilets for better disabled access, as well as other specific areas and issues identified such as modifications required to the ramp used at Penarth Pavilion. • For information, there were currently issues at Penarth Pier with the joists that support the deck, and a significant number now needed replacing. This was work typically undertaken every five or six years. Around 40 joists required renewal, and the Council were experiencing difficulties securing fixings to the decking. As a result, they had submitted a capital bid of £300,000 for the next financial year. Once that work begins, they intended to address the accessibility issues identified at the back and side of the pavilion. It was planned to incorporate this into the same scheme, as the additional accessibility work would only amount to a few thousand pounds. Given they expected to spend up to £300,000 on improvements to the pier, it was an ideal opportunity to include it within the wider project and ensure this work was carried out as part of the scheme in the new financial year. Issues around accessibility there, such as door access and ramps, also involved working with the Pavilion's management team. • The aim was for the Group's review / final report to be collated and submitted in time for inclusion in March's agenda for the Place Scrutiny Committee.
(6)	Any other business / representations / questions.
	None
(7)	Date and time of next meeting.
	To be confirmed – M. Thomas to reach out to Members of the Group with another meeting date in due course.

Task & Finish Working Group Project Brief

Relevant Scrutiny Committee(s):	Place Scrutiny Committee.
Originating Scrutiny Committee Meeting(s):	Agenda: 25-07-22 Minutes: Minutes
Supporting Democratic Services Officer(s):	Mark Thomas.

Task & Finish Project Name:	Review on providing greater accessibility to beaches in the Vale of Glamorgan for people with limited accessibility and related issues to these (such as wheelchair users, people with physical disabilities, sight impairment and learning / intellectual disabilities and needs, older people with mobility issues) and for all residents of, and visitors to, the Vale of Glamorgan.
Working Group Chair and Vice Chair:	Agreed at the first meeting of the Task & Finish Working Group: Chair - Councillor C. Iannucci-Williams; and Vice-Chair - Councillor C.E.A. Champion.
Working Group Members:	• Councillor G.M. Ball (Labour) • Councillor C.E.A. Champion (Conservative) • Councillor P. Drake (Labour) • Councillor A.M. Ernest (Conservative) • Councillor C. Iannucci-Williams (Labour) • Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby (Labour) • Councillor J.M. Norman (Llantwit First Independent) • Councillor C. Stallard (Labour) • K. Mitchell (Representative from Tenant Working Group / Panel).
External Witnesses and Council Officers:	Representatives, officers from the Vale of Glamorgan Council (VOGC), other Local Authorities and any other stakeholders, VOGC and Town / Community Councillors, RNLI, Coastal Managers, as well as experts, witnesses and third-sector partners identified as part of this

	exercise. This would include residents with lived experience of the issues raised, such as people with physical disabilities, sight impairment and learning / intellectual disabilities and other limited accessibility issues and their representatives.
Project Aim(s):	To review the measures in place and those that are needed to enable greater accessibility for members of the public to beach areas in the Vale of Glamorgan (in particular those persons with accessibility issues) and to recommend how these could be implemented effectively and / or improved. This will cover the following designated bathing water, etc., beaches within the Vale of Glamorgan: • Ogmore by sea • Dunraven Bay (Southerndown) • Col Huw Beach (Llantwit Major) • The Cold Knap • Watch House Bay • Whitmore Bay • Jackson's Bay • Penarth Beach • Porthkerry
Project Objective(s):	The review would look at existing measures in place and assess whether these could be improved and built upon or whether more wide-ranging changes were required. This would also involve looking at 'quick wins' which could be achieved in the immediate future to help the public access the beach areas more effectively, as well as looking at measures and solutions which may need to be established and implemented in the more medium and longer term. Actions, areas of scope and proposed measures to help address accessibility were proposed at the first meeting of the Group, to include:

	• Wheelchair facilities at Whitmore Bay - whether the existing ramps can be improved, extended or modified. • To look at including audio descriptions at beaches, bathing areas and resorts. • To include and consider measures that make beaches, etc., more accessible to people with any kind of mental impairment or similar issues. This could include easy read signage, etc. • Measures to help children with neurodiversity issues, such as the use of bands or other forms of identification for them at these locations and to train lifeguards and other staff there to be able to identify them and to offer help and support with accessibility and identify if they are experiencing difficulties when needed. • To look at storage and accessibility adaptations for beach wheelchairs and related funding for these. • The use of radar keys and locks or similar means for slipway / gateway access to beaches, etc. The review would need to look at alternative approaches undertaken by other local authorities, as well as examples of best practice which could be built on, and complement or improve upon existing initiatives, i.e. the Wheelchair Scheme at Barry Island. The review needs to consider resourcing and funding, with a look at potential sources for these both within local governance and other alternative sources for funding and support i.e. central and national government, third sector funding, the use of volunteers, collaboration with various partners, etc. The review will cover not just the immediate beach locations but also the wider area, to extend to nearby parking, transport, etc. at all relevant local beaches, bathing areas and resorts, such as through desktop analysis and local knowledge, i.e. talking to the Community Councils.
Project Timescales:	TBC at the first meeting, but the intention is that the review would be completed within approximately 12 weeks. Democratic Services will prepare a schedule of meetings, based on the following:

	Week	Stage	Stage Description
	Pre	Initiation	Identification of topic based; sourced from areas such as performance, Reshaping, Corporate Plan, audit reports and Members interests
	1	Start up	Appoint Members, agree meeting dates, Members ways of working and Terms of Reference
	2-3	Planning and Scoping	Agree key outcomes, action points, evidence collation, including wider stakeholders
	4-9	Delivery	Delivery of content of T&F receiving, challenging and sharing information to support direction of travel
	10-12	Concluding Report	Production of final report by T&F Chair, including recommendations, to be considered by the relevant Cabinet Member(s), commissioning Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
Resources and Budget:	VOGC officers and Elected Members' time, plus that of other external representatives, etc.		
Working Methods:	• Meetings. • Visits. • Interviews. • Research and analysis. • Discussions with external witnesses, people with lived experience of the issues raised and council officers. • Drafting a report with findings, conclusions and recommendations with an action plan to help implement any proposed changes or solutions to the issues addressed in this review.		
Evidence Formats:	• Briefing reports.		

	• Presentations. • Background information – current policies and legislation both current and future. • Site visits. • Consultation. • Interviews with service users, experts and external witnesses.
Relevant Research Information:	• Current policies and measures that are in place to help visitors, residents, etc., at the Vale's beaches to access these should they have any issues in doing so. • Look at policies and measures undertaken in this area by other local authorities as a point of comparison and consideration. To look at any examples of best practice. • Possible consultation with charities, third sector bodies, local community groups, tourism representatives and others to gain their views, other information on the issues covered and to share best practice.

Desired Outcomes:	• To review, and to gain a fuller understanding of, the measures in place and those that are needed to enable greater accessibility for members of the public to beach areas in the Vale of Glamorgan and to provide the Group's findings, conclusions and recommendations to Scrutiny and Cabinet in order to achieve the desired actions to improve accessibility for residents, tourists and visitors to the Vale who may not be able to access such locations at this time. • To illustrate the benefits to all residents, tourists and visitors of the suggested courses of action recommended by the Group and how these could benefit both the groups mentioned and the Vale and Council as a whole. • To find and collate examples of best practice and innovative practices from other and / or similar local authorities, public sector bodies and other sectors, which could help inform and improve the Council's policies and measures in place around accessibility to beaches.
Relevant Corporate Plan Well-being Objective(s):	Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit.
Relevant Corporate Plan Well-being Action(s) and Outcome(s):	• Make sure there are affordable and accessible ways for people to participate in leisure, play, sport, cultural and heritage activities.

	• Work with the voluntary and social enterprise sectors, valuing their role in delivering services and supporting residents in their communities. • Deliver our Age Friendly commitments and ensure older people have access to services, support and opportunities locally and have a strong voice. • People are more empowered and feel connected to their communities. • People are easily able to access local facilities and services. • People feel safe in the Vale. • Private, public and voluntary organisations are working in partnership with the Council and communities across the Vale. • Residents and visitors are able to access a range of arts, leisure and cultural opportunities. • There is a range of volunteering and other opportunities for people to get involved in within their communities.
Corporate Reporting Outcomes:	That the subsequent report and the actions, recommendations, comments and suggestions produced by the Task and Finish Group be submitted for consideration to Scrutiny Committee and, if appropriate, be forwarded to Cabinet for their review and endorsement.

Barry Island – Key Findings & Improvements

✓ Overall Summary

Overall, there were positive steps that had been taken at the site, but members and others had identified areas that would need improvement:

Accessibility Improvements Needed

- Improve accessibility further. For example, to improve the door arrangement, width (i.e. widen it), design (i.e. make it slow closing) and access for the changing place.
 - To improve signage and other measures to help visitors with visual impairments and other challenges access the beach safely, i.e. using the right colour combination on signage, highlighting / refreshing steps and curbs with white / yellow paint, plus nonslip surfaces and lighting.
 - Using the **Changing Places** logo in signage would highlight the changing facilities available to people with access needs.
 - Other signage measures that could be included were **lowering signage** for wheelchair users and others, as well as **yellow or other markers** on the outdoor beach showers.
 - The use of **e-signs** for messages such as water quality and more changing rooms on the promenade.
 - For the changing place, it was suggested to have **additional signage and instructions** on how to use the changing bed.
 - The inclusion of a **“Stedy” mobility aid** in the changing place would also help those users that did not need a hoist to go to the toilet area.
-

Wheelchair Provision

- Raising awareness of the provision and availability of **standard-sized wheelchairs** at the site.
- To include this in the **new booking system** with the beach chairs.
- For the Council to **purchase more wheelchairs**. Such improvements to accessibility would help to encourage tourism and residents / visitors coming to local beaches and resorts.

Penarth Pier, Pavilion and Seafront – Key Findings & Improvements

✓ Positive Points

There were some good aspects to the Pier and seafront, such as **wide accessible areas** on the Pier itself for wheelchair users and others with access needs to be able to traverse back and forth unimpeded, but several points and areas for improvement were raised, which included:



Disabled Toilets

- The toilet on the Pier was challenging for disabled users, in terms of accessing and using it.
- There was **no signage** indicating the better toilet facilities within the Pavilion itself.



Access Routes, Ramps & Doors

- There were concerns around the temporary ramps that had been put in place by the Pavilion following recent filming work.
- Only one of the two doors to the front of the Pavilion were open during the site visit, which could be a challenge to wheelchair users and other visitors with access needs.
- Other disabled access points, exits and ramps – while the Pavilion had several disabled ramps, access from these to the Pavilion was prevented by the doors being **locked** at these points, amongst other issues identified.



Pier Steps, Ramps & Monitoring

- Ramps / entry points / strips for steps for Penarth Pier. Monitoring responsibility to be confirmed and clarified with the Council department responsible (Education).



Disabled Parking

- Limited disabled parking nearby.

- Disabled parking bays should be closer to the **dropped kerbs**.
-

Signage and Visitor Information

- The use of **audible signage** and **QR codes** to provide people with various disabilities and other access needs with the information (such as video) they need as part of their visit to the Pier, Pavilion and seafront.
 - This would tie in with having a **dedicated webpage** on the Council website to help people plan their day at these locations and consider their accessibility needs.
 - Possible or potential collaboration with other bodies such as the **‘Snowball’ application providers** and others.
 - Signage – audio or otherwise – could also highlight **mental health matters** to support people with mental health, despondency, and similar issues in coastal ‘hotspot’ areas.
-

Cross-Cutting Themes

Inclusive Design & Lived Experience

A key point was also raised on the importance of having people with access needs, disabilities, and similar lived experiences, more involved in the **design and monitoring processes** for these types of locations and facilities.

Improved Communications

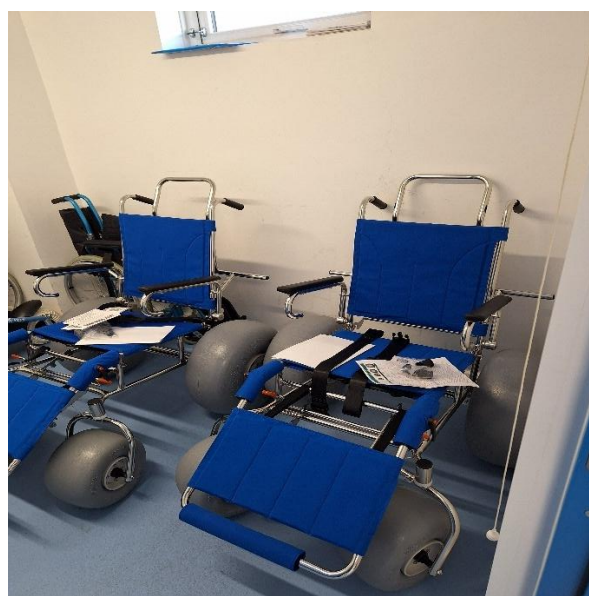
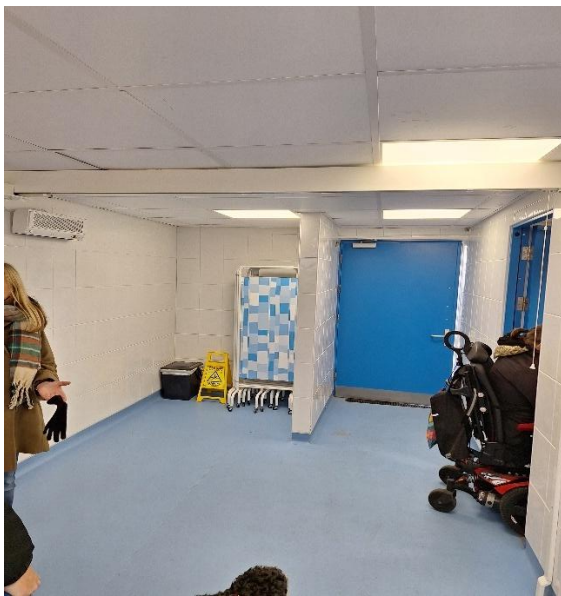
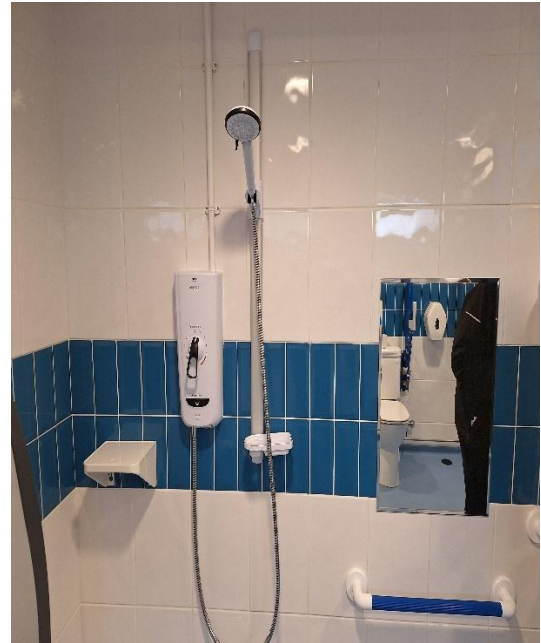
Furthermore, improved communications were needed to inform and engage with visitors to the Vale of Glamorgan beaches and coastal areas and resorts.

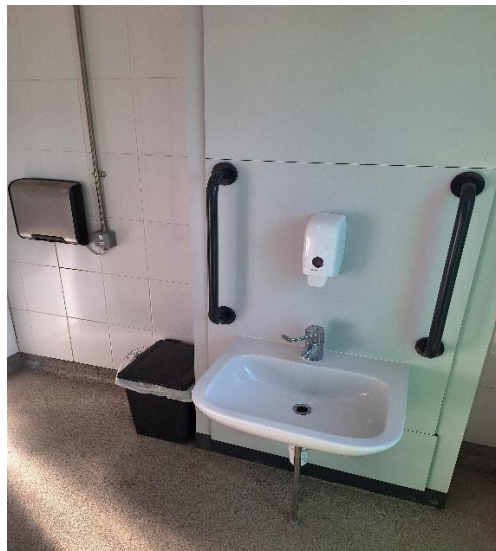
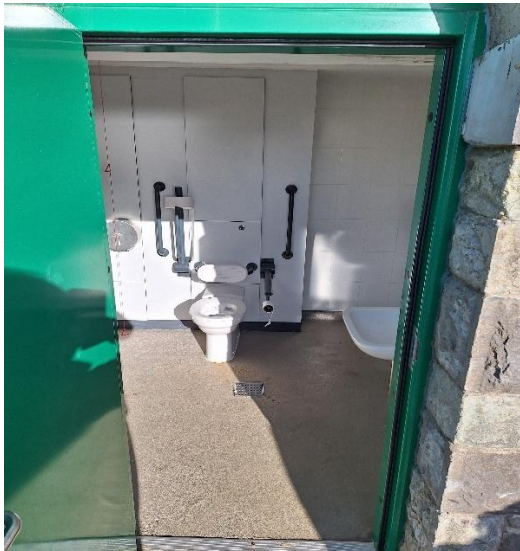
Future Development & Recommendations

The above could be included in subsequent **‘quick wins’**, further developments (such as through various funding streams, i.e. ‘Brilliant Basics’ or collaboration with partners) or form part of the subsequent **recommendations, findings and action plan** for the final report of this review.

Site Visit photos:

Barry Island





Penarth Pier, Pavilion and Seafront



Llantwit Major Beach – Key Findings & Improvements

Disabled Toilets

- Disabled toilets – more helpful if more centrally located..
- Disabled toilet door does not open fully – possible issue with the hinges, etc. Could impact accessibility for wheelchair users and others.
- However, toilets were well maintained and there were baby changing and disabled facilities available.

Ramps, Pathways & General Access

- Widening of ramp under lifeguarding platform – to allow for people to sit under the shelter there.
- Constant erosion / damage caused by weather / waves at the location i.e. wear and tear and potholes on tarmac and surfaces at the beach car park (including disabled bays), pebbles and other rubble strewn across pathways and access points, such as to toilet facilities, which could be impassable for some people with access needs.
- Possible issues with the design and location of flood defences.
- Issues with the nearby pathways leading to the beach; i.e. only partial accessibility for wheelchair users and others; mixture of private and Council owned land impacted access to these as well.

Monitoring & Safety

- CCTV utilised at location to monitor and prevent potential issues with despondent / suicidal persons.

Facilities & Seating

- Limited number of benches / potential design issues (no backs).

Weather Impact & Visitor Experience

- Impact to local café / economy / tourism if the nearby toilets were closed due to bad weather and the inaccessibility this causes.
 - The use of water quality signage and updates would be useful here, plus real time updates to the public via the Council regarding these and warnings on any issues caused by bad weather to the accessibility of the beach.
-

Ogmore by Sea – Key Findings & Improvements

Parking & Access

- Does not appear to be any dedicated disabled car parking bays at the main car park and site, but you can register for disabled car users / blue badge users separately. (Council officers to review whether some dedicated disabled car parking bays could be demarcated there or clarify why no bays were marked up, etc).

Ticket Machines & Facilities

- Some ticket machines were not fully accessible to wheelchair users and others with access needs.
- Waste bins could be inaccessible to disabled visitors due to the steps / raised area where the waste bins were located.
- Water font could also be inaccessible to wheelchair users due to layout (i.e. due to the sharp paved corner which juts out).

Toilet Access

- No clear signage indicating disabled toilets.
- The disabled toilet space was good overall, but the layout and its location did not make it easily accessible to disabled users.

Ramps & Surfaces

- Disabled access ramp had an uneven surface / edge, making it difficult to traverse.
- Step edges require refreshing or highlighting to support visually impaired and other visitors.

Signage & Visitor Support

- Audio signage could be beneficial and highlighting mental health support messages as well as other important updates or general visitor information.

RNLI Slipway

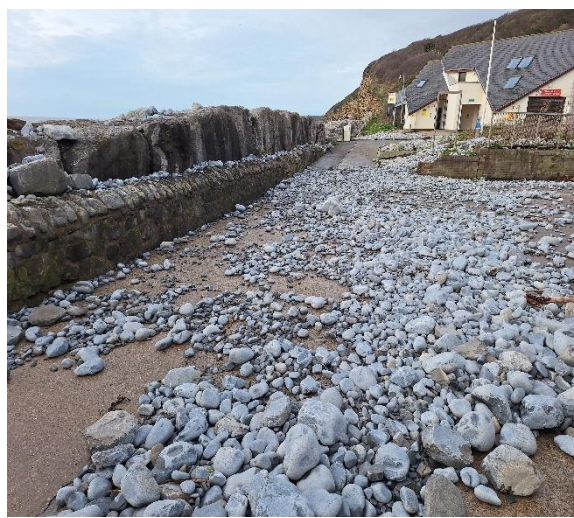
- Potential small-scale accessibility improvements to the RNLI slipway were discussed but discounted because of safety concerns, cost considerations, and its primary function as an emergency access point.

Western Beaches – Overall Accessibility

- Due to geography and other local challenges, accessibility at the Western beaches is not as strong as at Barry Island and Penarth.
- Improvements will require a mix of operational “quick wins” and longer-term recommendations and actions within the Group’s final report.

Site Visit photos:

Llantwit Major





Ogmore by Sea



