

RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 17th September, 2025.

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

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

Present: Councillor J. Protheroe (Chair); Councillor E. Goodjohn (Vice-Chair); Councillors G.M. Ball, S. Campbell, G.D.D. Carroll, P. Drake, R. Fisher, E.J. Goodjohn, Dr. I.J. Johnson, B. Loveluck-Edwards, J.M. Norman and N.J. Wood.

Also present: Councillor L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources).

294 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chair read the following statement: “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing”.

295 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

296 VALE OF GLAMORGAN PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD (PSB) ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25 (CX) –

The report was presented by Operational Manager for Corporate Strategy and Insight along with the Executive Director of Public Health for Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. The Public Services Board (PSB) had to publish an Annual Report outlining the progress made against the Well-being Objectives and Priority Workstreams set out in its Well-being Plan 2023-2028. The work that had been delivered in partnership in the last year 2024-25 had been captured in an Annual Report in the form an online report using Microsoft Sway. The Annual Report gave an overview of the progress that had been made by partners in implementing the three Well-being Objectives, 19 steps and against the PSB’s Priority Workstreams.

The Annual Report complemented progress reports on PSB projects that had been reported to Scrutiny Committees as part of the rolling programme of providing updates on the work of the Public Services Board.

The Annual Report had been considered by the PSB on 9th July, 2025 and was available as links within the report (together with an executive summary report) and had also been published on the PSB website.

Following presentation of the report, Officers advised as below, in response to questions from the Committee:

- The PSB contained four statutory partners: The Council; the Health Board; Natural Resources Wales and the Fire Service. A range of senior officers from within each organisation attended meetings, with the Leader of the Council being the current Chair. Other members invited to attend included the Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and representatives from Welsh Government; Cardiff and Vale College; Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) and the Probation Service. There was also a place for a Town and Community Council representative. Additional representatives were invited to meetings to add expertise on particular topics.
- Committee's concerns relating to policing resources within communities and feedback on the content of the report could be fed back to the PSB.
- Next year's version of the report would include information on the impact of the various projects undertaken by the PSB, once their work had been embedded.
- Whether a child's weight was healthy was measured using their age and their BMI. A very small percentage of children were under weight, approximately 20% of children were in the 'obese' category, and much smaller numbers of children were categorised as living with 'severe obesity'.
- Obesity levels in children increased in more deprived areas. It was very important to address such health inequalities, and the PSB was aiming to do so through its Good Food and Movement Plan and also with its Food Vale work and Travel Charter. It was an aim to make healthy options the easy options for residents.
- During the pandemic there had been an increase in levels of obesity and severe obesity among children and adults, but these had since decreased again.

With no further questions or comments, Committee subsequently:

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board's Annual Report for 2024-25 and the progress partners have made in delivering the priorities set out in the Well-being Plan be noted.

(2) T H A T the following recommendations be relayed to the Public Services Board (PSB), via the Director for Corporate Resources:

- That the PSB consider setting up a Food Subgroup to focus on issues around healthy and sustainable food.
- That the PSB be made aware of the Committee's concerns regarding a need for greater visible policing resources in our communities, to provide safety and reassurance to residents, and to deter crime and anti-social behaviour.
- That the following feedback from Committee on the format of the report be passed to the PSB:

- While it was clear from the report that a broad range of work was being undertaken by PSB partners, Committee would welcome a clearer picture of the overall direction of the PSBs work over the next 5 years, and how the work underway links back to the original Wellbeing Plan for the PSB. For example, the inclusion of clearer aims, particularly aims for the end of the 5-year period, and also monitoring of progress against the board's aims would be welcomed. The inclusion of Key Performance Indicators and evidence of the outcomes and impact of the already work carried out would be helpful. In addition to this, the inclusion of details of the work carried out by Town and Community Councils, as well as information on the level of investment that the PSB has to achieve its aims would also be useful.

(3) T H A T the report be circulated to all Elected Members via email, so that all Members could consider if there were any matters in the report that should be included in the future work programme of Scrutiny Committees, and also to members of the Community Liaison Committee and Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee, for their information.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report and to discussions at the meeting.
- (2) To provide Committee's feedback on the report to the PSB.
- (3) To continue to scrutinise and to keep Members updated on the PSB's work, and for Members' information.

297 FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026/27 TO 2030/31 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 17th July, 2025 as contained within the agenda was presented by the Operational Manager for Accountancy. Following its presentation, the Officer advised as per below, in response to questions from the Committee:

- Some of the additional time Officers had hoped to have for clarity around funding for budget setting had been eroded slightly by the budget being proposed by the UK Government.
- Welsh Government were working on how they could get a provisional settlement out to Local Authorities earlier, and were currently reviewing options. Officers hoped for more clarity on this shortly.
- There was a mixed position among the Budget Working Group around how realistic the Medium-Term Savings Strategies outlined in table 6b would be to fully achieve.
- It was difficult to achieve savings at the same level as previous years, but Officers' ambition was to target reshaping savings which transformed services to make savings while also aiming to improve outcomes for Service Users.
- Officers were having discussions regarding savings earlier in the year to improve chances of achieving the targets.

- A number of procurement savings had been identified within education in recent weeks. Initial feedback from the Schools Procurement Officer was that the additional focus on cluster working and consistent procurement across schools had identified some opportunities and potential savings. Further detail could be provided with the Quarter 2 financial monitoring report.
- To resolve the overall schools position, further measures would need to be put in place, due to the significant size of some of the schools' deficits, and the fact that a very high proportion of schools' budgets were staffing costs.
- There was still uncertainty around, for example new legislation and the levels of funding coming in to Local Authorities, and although significant work had been undertaken to better predict financial pressures, there was still work to do on this.
- Officers welcomed the approach the Council was taking to look to reduce the medium-term financial gap, however, financial pressures had increased.
- Since publication of the report, the grant for National Insurance (NI) contributions had been received by the Council. Prior to publication of the report there was a figure of £624k shortfall for NI across the Council Fund as of July 2025. There were related pressures particularly in relation to suppliers of contracted staff (these were reflected in the report as 'Provider Fees'), and also the Housing Revenue Account.
- The assumed pay award was contributing to some of the current shortfall. In the past two years the Council had not fully funded the Pay Award, however, since services were now carrying significant vacancy factor against their budgets, the Council would be looking to fully fund the Pay Award for 2026/27.
- A breakdown of how much of the pay award was funded and how much was covered through vacant posts could be provided to Committee.
- Posts had not been kept vacant to prevent cost pressures, but rather this was an attempt to reflect the natural turnover that would be seen within a Council's workforce, and also to ensure that salary budgets were as lean as possible and not overstated.
- What procurement savings would look like was still being worked on. The new Procurement Officer for Schools position was currently the only investment specifically allocated to making procurement savings in the 2026/27 budget, although this could change in order to look to achieve the procurement savings targets.
- The latest 'Lets Talk About Life in the Vale Survey' and other participation methods would feed into key decisions on budget-setting and shaping services.

With no further comments or questions, Committee subsequently:

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the reference from Cabinet and the Financial Strategy and assumptions made on costs and funding in the Medium Term Financial Plan refresh be noted.

(2) T H A T Officers be requested to provide data to Committee which would illustrate a breakdown of the Pay Award differential and vacant posts.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents of both the Cabinet reference, and the Cabinet report on the Financial Strategy, and to discussions at the meeting.

(2) To clarify this area of the Council's budget and finances for Members.

298 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 30TH JUNE 2025 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 4th September, 2025 was presented by the Operational Manager for Accountancy. Following presentation of the report, the Officer advised the following, in response to questions from the Committee:

- The use of capped price tenders would be actively explored and kept under review.
- Officers received mixed levels of justification for asking the Council for additional funds.
- There was strong governance around increasing capital costs. Unless an emergency arrangement, requests for additional funds would be subject to a new capital bid and would be reviewed by the Insight Board, the Budget Working Group and by the Senior Leadership Team.

With no further comments or questions, Committee subsequently:

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the reference from Cabinet and appended Capital Monitoring report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of both the reference from Cabinet and the Cabinet report, and to discussions at the meeting.

299 QUARTER 1 REVENUE MONITORING 2025/26 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 4th September, 2025 was presented by the Operational Manager for Accountancy. Following presentation of the report, the Officer advised the following:

- There had been a reduction in the overall school budget deficits last year;
- Recovery plans usually sought to recover school deficits within 3 years, although 5 years had previously been allowed in certain circumstances;
- Schools were being encouraged to submit a recovery plan by the forthcoming October half term;

- There was a significant discrepancy across schools that had and schools that had not been able to set a balanced budget;
- Schools with a higher level of unrecoverable deficit were being prioritised for Officer support;
- There was a national problem with school deficits. The Council sat on various national education groups and fed Vale of Glamorgan school deficit data into their work;
- It initially appeared that the issue of school deficits was slightly more severe in the Vale of Glamorgan than other Local Authorities, but further benchmarking work needed to be undertaken;
- Opportunities for economies of scale in procurement and sharing expertise between schools were ideas currently being looked at. Peer review between schools was on offer where appropriate;
- The overall schools' deficit was currently being set against the Council's reserves, which was a significant risk to the Council, particularly if the deficit was to be realised in full.

With no further comments or queries, Committee subsequently:

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the reference from Cabinet and appended Revenue Monitoring report be noted.
- (2) T H A T a further report on the plan and measures taken to recover school budgets be provided to the Committee.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of both the Cabinet reference and the Revenue Monitoring report, and to discussions at the meeting.
- (2) To provide Committee with further detail on this, as an important area of concern within the Council's finances.