

No.

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 8th April, 2025.

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

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

Present: Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby (Chair); Councillors C.E.A. Champion, P. Drake, V.P. Driscoll, A.M. Ernest, M.J. Hooper, J.M. Norman, E. Penn and J. Protheroe.

Also present: Councillors J. Aviet, G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Wellbeing) and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

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”.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors C. Iannucci-Williams (Vice-Chair) and S.T. Wiliam.

MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

QUARTER 3 REVENUE MONITORING 2024/25 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 6th March, 2025 was presented to the Committee by the Operational Manager – Accountancy. The purpose of the reference and report was to advise the Committee of the Quarter 3 Revenue Monitoring position for 2024/25.

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The Operational Manager covered the overall position, the unplanned use of reserves, the continued cost pressures experienced by schools, adult social care budgets and across those services directly within the remit of the Committee, Neighbourhood Services and Place, i.e. due to the impact of market forces for HGV drivers, costs on the maintenance of roads, etc. This was also causing a 'lag' on the delivery of savings.

However, there was some mitigation for Neighbourhood Services regarding the income generated through its waste services, such as recycling and via enforcement. Place was on track to deliver most of its savings within year and some budgetary surplus was being reported concerning the Shared Prosperity Fund and some other schemes. Welsh Government's pay grant had also helped to improve the position across all services' budgets (the differential between the budgeted pay award and the actual pay award agreed).

The school deficit and projected drawdown of reserves were also referred to.

Subsequently, the Chair asked about the status of the Neighbourhood Services' reserves, with the reply that this was not particularly healthy at this time, with significant commitments towards capital schemes. This was due to a move away from a service-based reserve approach to one that matched reserves with areas of 'risk' and transformation, such as digitisation, and those areas which might see a lag on the delivery of savings.

Councillor Ernest asked about the savings linked to the removal of certain waste facilities in the County, and whether this would impact the reserves. At present, no assumptions could be made around this, and this would require further evaluation going into the new financial year.

Councillor Protheroe turned to the work being undertaken to mitigate unplanned uses of reserves in various workstreams, such as the school's budget task force which was looking at school contracts and agency spend. She asked if there were any updates. Due to the broad nature of this, it would fall within the remit of Corporate Performance and Resources, where an update would be going in due course. Some progress had been made in this area however, such as identifying procurement and challenge resources at schools in deficit and movement in developing the workstreams.

There being no further comments or questions, and after considering the reference and report, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Quarter 3 Revenue Monitoring 2024/25 reference and report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the reference and the report, as well as the discussions at the meeting and following consideration by Committee Members regarding the in-year Revenue Monitoring position at Quarter 3.

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CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST DECEMBER, 2024 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 6th March, 2025 was presented to the Committee by the Operational Manager – Accountancy. The purpose of the reference and report was to advise the Committee of the progress on the 2024/25 Capital Programme for the period 1st April, 2024 to 31st December, 2024.

The Operational Manager highlighted various aspects, such as the slippage which had occurred, the total current approved programme being £89.933m, with actual spend to 30th September 2024 being £39m. There was an expectation of a lot more spend to hit the Capital Programme by year end.

Also referred to was the Brilliant Basics toilet refurbishment as an example of a capital scheme that directly came under the remit of the Committee. This had directly benefitted a number of toilet facilities across the County.

The report also made several requests for amendments to the current Capital Programme within the remit of the Committee, such as a number of schemes under the Shared Prosperity Fund.

There were also some carry forward on some schemes, such as the Vehicle Replacement Programme, coast protection and land drainage, Dinas Powys Flood Resilience, retaining wall Windsor Road, among others.

Subsequently, Councillor Ernest asked about the reference to Victorian schools in the Vale and the replacement of residual cast iron rainwater goods within the report, and how many schools this involved. It was explained that as it fell out of the remit of this Committee, a fuller answer would be given outside the meeting and that it did not simply refer to Victoria School in Penarth, but quite a broad range of schools, approximately 23.

Councillor Drake referred to the slippage on the installation of vehicle charging infrastructure and whether some of this was the result of interference or damage, as had been seen at locations such as Birmingham. In response, further information would be sought, but there was no information at this time to suggest that this was the case, or the infrastructure had been targeted in some way.

On Councillor Protheroe's question about the delay in the review of the 20 mph speed adjustments in her local ward, it was explained that there were approximately 83 streets under review within the Vale concerning speed limits and the intention was to provide a report on this to the Committee before the summer recess. The data was being gathered and each of these streets and proposals were being assessed. Money had been granted for this to be actioned in future.

Councillor Ernest felt there had been no consultation with local Ward Members concerning the 20 mph speed adjustments. It was explained that the reason for this was that no decision had been made as yet on what the recommendations would be for those streets that had been identified, commented on by the local residents, and

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subsequently reviewed. These would go through Cabinet and Scrutiny and would be subject to the traffic regulation order process so if the Council needed to change an area from 20 mph to 30 mph or vice versa there was a proper process of consultation, including Elected Members where their wards were impacted. Some Members had already commented on local areas they wished to see speed adjustments.

There being no further comments or questions, and after considering the reference and report, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Quarter 3 Capital Monitoring 2024/25 reference and report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the reference and the report, as well as the discussions at the meeting and following consideration by Committee Members about the in-year Capital Monitoring position at Quarter 3.

ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING AND PLACE DIRECTORATE PLANS 2025/26 (INCLUDING ACTIVITIES, PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND ASSOCIATED PERFORMANCE TARGETS) TO DELIVER VALE 2030, THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN 2025-30 (DEH / DP) –

The report, presented by the Director of Environment and Housing, was intended for Members' consideration of the planned activities, performance measures and associated performance targets in the Environment & Housing and Place Directorate Plans 2025/26 (attached at Appendix A, plus supplementary information provided). The Directorate Plan(s) aligned primarily to the remit of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. The other Directorate Plans were being considered by the relevant Scrutiny Committees and their comments and recommendations were to be considered by the Corporate Performance and Resources Committee to form a composite reference to Cabinet on the five Directorate Plans for 2025-26. This approach broadly followed that taken in scrutinising the Council's Revenue and Capital Budget proposals. A new annual statement would also be developed for the Council which would be informed by the Council's Annual Self-Assessment findings.

The five Directorate Plans had been informed by the Council's commitments in Vale 2030, the Council's approved Corporate Plan (Full Council, 10th March, 2025) for the period 2025-30.

All Scrutiny Committees had considered the draft Corporate Plan (December 2024) and their views alongside that of a wide range of key stakeholders had informed the five new well-being objectives and 50 commitments detailed in Vale 2030 which was a five-year plan.

Progressing the activities and associated performance targets outlined in Directorate Plans would help to meet the Council's statutory obligations under the Local

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Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WCFG). Both pieces of legislation placed specific duties on the Council in relation to reviewing and setting objectives, keeping performance under review and reporting on performance, with a focus on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.

Scrutiny Committee Members were asked to review the Environment & Housing and Place Directorate Plans 2025/26 (planned activities and proposed performance measures and associated targets) and how they would support delivery of the commitments and outcomes in Vale 2030. The Environment & Housing Directorate Plan had 21 actions, with Place having 20 actions which had relevance to the Committee's remit.

Members were asked to refer any comments and recommendations with regards to the Environment & Housing and Place Directorate Plans 2025/26 to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee to form a composite reference to Cabinet on the five Directorate Plans for 2025-26.

Subsequently, the Chair asked for reassurance concerning the reference to the closure of Court Road car park, even though there was no final decision on this at this time and it would not be progressed. It was explained that the savings within the directorate report were lifted straight from the budget report some time ago, and therefore there would be subsequent changes, such as a further report and decision on Court Road. Part of the savings and income for car park charging was linked to on street parking, which would also be reported to the Committee. The need for £2.3m savings was still there, and so these would need to be sought elsewhere, if it could not be achieved via the proposed Court Road closure, etc.

Councillors Champion, Ernest, Norman, Penn, Protheroe, the Chair and others all raised several queries, comments and concerns around the removal of bins and related street cleansing measures, as outlined in the plans. These were addressed as follows:

- There had been a number of bins removed across the Vale, but no significant impact had been seen (i.e. with bin capacity and frequency of use), due to these removing unnecessary duplication in bins and waste or misuse. As part of this approach however, efforts had been made to tackle fly tipping and encourage recycling, utilising both statutory powers / enforcement but also through an educational approach. Volunteers and the voluntary sector were also crucial, including the use of litter 'champions', working with communities, local community councils, Keep Wales Tidy representatives, and working with other partners.
- It was stressed that these measures were around reshaping the service, and, therefore, the need to achieve efficiencies and look at initiatives due to budgetary constraints, whilst ensuring that standards were maintained and that a full service was still provided. Also, to look at the design and positioning of bins to minimise fly tipping, as well as identifying persons responsible for fly tipping.
- The removal of the waste bins would be complemented by replacing these with dedicated ones for recycling. Subsequently, the measures would be

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reviewed and reflected upon before progressing further, in liaison with staff 'on the ground'.

- In terms of waste management and the provision of bins in 'resort' or 'tourist' areas of the Vale, those areas identified as such included Southerndown, Ogmore by Sea, Barry Island, Jackson's Bay etc., particularly those areas with significant footfall in the context of tourism and sightseeing. These areas would not see any reductions or changes in their bin provision, and if Members were asked by residents about the number of bins, etc. in their localities, then a survey could be undertaken to determine any impact on the waste provision following the reshaping activities.
- The role of volunteers was further highlighted, particularly in areas such as Ogmore by Sea and other tourist areas, and the location and rise in use of Keep Wales Tidy 'hubs' in such places and elsewhere was also outlined. As part of improving and expanding the number of volunteers helping with litter management within the Vale, it was important that the Council did everything it could in order to help achieve this through greater support and incentivising residents to engage in this process, such as improving the Council's website i.e. for volunteers to be able to inform the Council that there were red bags of litter to be collected via the website or an online application. The Committee were informed that the Council would be having 'engagement' officers to improve the Council's website by having more pertinent information on waste collection and to download a 'toolkit'. There would be greater contact and engagement with residents and volunteers around litter picking / waste management, including 'open days' for them and rewarding and acknowledging their commitment. There would be greater information sharing on how residents could volunteer and adopt a local street as part of waste management in their local area, as well as who their local litter champion and engagement officer was.
- Reference was made to black / red bags collected by volunteers and what happened to these as they could be a mixture of recycling and non-recycling and whether volunteers could be given dedicated recycling and non-recycling waste bags instead. Also, for dedicated recycling bins that had been fitted in various parts of the Vale, such as Cowbridge, could clearer labelling be added to these in order to stop the comingling of waste and misuse of these. It was explained that the black / red bags collected and co-mixed with general waste went to the waste recovery site in Cardiff to be used as part of creating renewable energy and there was a 20% recycling factor that came back as well. Since last Summer there had been a trial in collecting street cleansing bags and using the new recycling facility in Barry to help with stripping out all the recyclable materials contained therein. This was part of achieving the high statutory recycling rate (70%) and it was believed there was a 72% recycling rate within those street waste bags, although the process to extract this waste was costly. The new recycling bins would help to tackle this, and the aim was to get further funding in order to increase the number of recycling bins (which also had a general waste part), although the issue of incorrectly co-mingling waste would remain a challenge.

Councillor Protheroe asked about the proposed reduction of cleaning of public conveniences and cited the benefits of the recently refurbished coastal toilets. The Chair added whether the reference to the reduction of service standards mentioned

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in the plans related to this or something else. It was explained that this was part of the Reshaping Programme and there was a review of street cleansing services at all public conveniences within the Vale, such as looking at the hours the toilets were open for. This would be subject to scrutiny and evaluation, and there was no plan to shut down toilets, especially in resort and tourist areas. Where those areas experienced high footfall, it was the intention to carry on with keeping the conveniences open later in the summer evenings. The Brilliant Basics works at Llantwit Major, Ogmere by Sea and Southerndown were mentioned. Reshaping service standards may mean a more universal approach, with street cleaning / sweeping only taking place once a week, to be supplemented by, potentially, local volunteers, etc.

Councillor Ernest stated that it would be beneficial that the percentages referred to within the report were quantified or translated into monetary values or other relevant numbers or quantities where that was relevant in order for the report to be as clear as possible in terms of what the Council was trying to achieve (such as with figures concerning fly tipping and the number of the Council's vehicle fleet which had zero emissions).

Councillor Penn referred to the part of the plans around working with regulators on pollution / enforcement. He felt that the Council should be taking a firmer line / discussions and using stronger language with Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Water / Dwr Cymru about river and water quality, and related instances of pollution. The Chair asked when there would be further engagement and updates for the Council and the Committee from Welsh Water. Further engagement would occur at the end of the bathing season. There had been a slight improvement with water quality at Watchtower Bay. Pressure would continue to be applied on the bodies involved to ensure ongoing improvements in water quality and the maintenance of good working relations with these bodies would also carry on, including the attendance of senior representatives from the various bodies to the Committee for further updates on water quality and engagement.

Councillor Hooper raised several matters, including the impact of limited resources on the 20mph review and delays with the car parking review on Barry Island. He asked if there were sufficient resources to ensure that all the points raised in the plans could be actioned and implemented. In response, the 20mph review was explained as being a large undertaking by a relatively small traffic management team and therefore progress would be slow. The Council did look to recruit additional staff at such peak times, but these were posts where the necessary skills were in relatively short supply, with only small numbers of suitably skilled traffic engineers available. At normal periods of activity, the current staffing levels were appropriate, and the budget was not available to support a higher level of staffing. The high workload in the team currently was also cited as the reason for the delays in the review of the current residential parking scheme at Barry Island.

Councillor Hooper followed up by asking about the Barry Making Waves Levelling Up projects and fund (LuF) and specifically about the Plan for Neighbourhoods (PfN) award from UK Government, as well as the reference in the plans about additional resources. He wanted to know about the origin or source of this additional funding, particularly in light of changes to the projects and the review

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of their resourcing. It was explained that additional resources would be drawn from various funding streams, with elements of PfN and LuF being specifically identified for contingency costs and external consultancy, as well as similar specialist resources or expertise to help build up capacity, to work with partners and to help bring these projects forward. A report would be going to Cabinet and Scrutiny explaining the differences between the Plan for Neighbourhoods and the previous iteration of the Long-Term Plan for Towns, once the relevant guidance had been fully received.

The Chair asked about the Long-Term Plan for Towns and what information was available on timescales for developing the Town Board and anticipated delivery of it in its current iteration. It was explained that a meeting had been held around two weeks ago, regarding the Town Board, and how to move forward. There would be further information about what central government intended for this to work in the next 12 months. The main tranche of funding would start to appear in 2026/27, with some funding in 2025/26 also. Further information and reporting would be provided for the Committee in due course.

Following the points and questions raised by the Committee, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Environment & Housing and Place Directorate Plans (Appendix A) and associated measures and performance targets for 2025/26 contained within be endorsed, with the following comments and views made by the Committee to be referred to the relevant Council officers and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee, as appropriate:

- It would be helpful that the percentages referred to within the report were quantified or translated into monetary values or other relevant numbers or quantities where that was relevant in order for the report to be as clear as possible in terms of what the Council was trying to achieve;
- The plans around the support and use of volunteers were welcomed. As part of this, the Council should consider encouraging, supporting and incentivising local residents to become volunteers in order to help with delivering the Council's vision;
- The Committee noted the challenges around resources and the potential impact that these could have on the Environment & Housing and Place Directorate Plans, and, as part of this, Council officers were requested to continue to inform and update Elected Members on progress and delays regarding these through the Scrutiny process.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that the Committee's endorsement of the planned activities, associated measures and performance targets for the Environment & Housing and Place Directorates as detailed in the Plans, and for the comments and views expressed by the Committee on these, to be referred to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee in order for a composite response to be developed and referred back to Cabinet.