

Meeting of:	<b>Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Wednesday, 08 January 2025</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis
Purpose of Report:	To update on work being undertaken to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.
Report Owner:	Tom Bowring – Director of Corporate Resources
Responsible Officer:	Tom Bowring – Director of Corporate Resources
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Due to the corporate nature of this report, no specific Ward Member consultation has been undertaken.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This report provides an update on work being undertaken across the Council and working in partnership to tackle poverty, and to respond to the cost-of-living crisis across the period June 2024 - November 2024</li> <li>• This report illustrates the breadth of work undertaken to support people into employment, help families and young people through financial and wellbeing support including various sports opportunities as well as the developing work within schools to use them as community hubs.</li> <li>• This report highlights the work to tackle food insecurity by supporting projects that improve access to food, reduce loneliness and isolation through supporting the development of community spaces, and provide financial support to individuals through a number of schemes.</li> <li>• This report also provides details about the use of the cost-of-living reserve, which was established as part of the 2023-24 budget, demonstrating how the Council is matching the use of reserves with the Council’s core priorities as set out in the Financial Strategy and Annual Delivery Plan. Shared Prosperity funding is also supporting a number of projects that will be helping to target poverty and address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.</li> </ul>	

## **Recommendations**

- 1.** That Committee consider the work being undertaken with regards to tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis which is a critical challenge within the Council's Annual Delivery Plan 2024-25.
- 2.** That Committee notes the use of the cost-of-living reserve to support those in need.
- 3.** That the Committee refers this report and any comments to Cabinet for their consideration.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 1.** To ensure Committee is aware of the work being undertaken with regards to tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis which is a critical challenge within the Annual Delivery Plan 2024-25.
- 2.** That Committee are aware of the use of the cost-of-living reserve to date.
- 3.** To enable Cabinet to consider the comments of the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee as part of its consideration of progress of work to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1** The Council has identified the cost-of-living crisis as a critical challenge in this year's Annual Delivery Plan. In addition, the Council has set out how tackling poverty is a key driver for our work, reflected in the Public Services Board's Wellbeing Plan, the Council's Corporate Plan and as part of the Financial Strategy.
- 1.2** The Council identified three critical challenges in the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) 2023-24, the critical challenges are Organisational Resilience, Cost-of-Living Crisis, Climate and Nature Emergencies. These challenges have been carried forward to the ADP 2024-25.
- 1.3** In addition to quarterly performance monitoring, progress on Project Zero is reported twice a year to Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet, and there are regular reports on issues relating to organisational resilience including HR and OD issues, risk management, asset management and financial monitoring reports. Work related to tackling poverty and the cost of living is reported twice a year to this Committee and Cabinet.
- 1.4** A significant amount of work is taking place across the Council and in partnership to tackle poverty and alleviate the pressures felt by the current cost of living crisis. This report provides an overview of this work, highlighting the different workstreams and organisations involved across the period June 2024 – November 2024.
- 1.5** As part of the 2023/24 budget, the Council established a cost-of-living reserve of £854K to fund work to alleviate the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis. Details of how this funding is utilised is included in the twice-yearly progress reports.

## 2. Key Issues for Consideration

### Impacts of deprivation and the cost-of-living crisis in the Vale

- 2.1 Our data tells us that there are issues of poverty across the Vale of Glamorgan and that the cost-of-living is continuing to cause hardship, with persisting issues of affordability with regards to food, energy and housing. Three Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the Vale of Glamorgan are identified through the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 as being in the top-10% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wales. A further seven LSOAs are included in the 10-20% most deprived LSOAs in Wales. All ten LSOAs are in Barry. There is a consistent correlation between these areas and higher proportions of people on lower incomes, who are in receipt of Universal Credit and in receipt of unemployment support. There is a recognition that these groups have been identified as most vulnerable to the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and experiences of deprivation.
- 2.2 Since March 2022, there has been a consistent month-on-month increase in the total number of people in receipt of Universal Credit. In September 2024, a total of 12,741 people were in receipt of Universal Credit in the Vale of Glamorgan, 7,839 of those in receipt of Universal Credit were Not in Employment, while 4,907 were In Employment. This represents 7.9% of total number of people in employment in the Vale of Glamorgan. The cost-of-living crisis has been associated with sharp increases in the rates of inflation, driven by growing food and energy prices. Following its peak of 11.1% in October 2022, Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) has slowed, and was 2.6% in November 2024. Some households experience higher effective rates of inflation as they must allocate a higher proportion of their household income to cover essentials.

### Welsh Benefits Charter

- 2.3 The Welsh Benefits Charter outlines the aims for the Welsh Benefits system. Welsh Benefits include Free School Meals, Council Tax reduction scheme, Schools Essentials Grant, and Education Maintenance Allowance. At present, these benefits are separate from each other, and people must make different claims to access the support. The Charter aims to make it easier for people in Wales to claim Welsh Benefits they are entitled to.
- 2.4 The Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip announced the creation of an external steering group, the group is tasked with developing an action plan to streamline Welsh Benefits.
- 2.5 Revenues and Benefits services are currently attending meetings to scope the potential for a single application form for Council Tax Reduction, Free School Meals and School Essentials Grant. Information is being gathered from all Local Authorities in Wales to understand the current process and consider if data can be shared as well as who would process the data. Colleagues will continue to provide updates on progress and further information on this work will be included in future reports.  
[Welsh Benefits Charter | GOV.WALES](#)

## Response to Audit Wales Reports – Cwmpas Programme of Engagement

- 2.6** A report to the [Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee in October 2023](#) set out the Council’s approach to progressing recommendations made by Audit Wales to a number of national studies relating to tackling poverty and the Council’s approach to working with the third sector.
- 2.7** The Council engaged the Cwmpas development agency to undertake a programme of engagement on its behalf, which involved discussions both internally and externally to understand more about its work with the third sector and social enterprises and opportunities for future work including specifically around tackling poverty. The work was a combination of online interviews, focus groups and workshops. Cwmpas also undertook a thorough review of key documentation such as the Corporate Plan, Annual Delivery Plan and the PSB’s Well-being Plan.
- 2.8** The engagement revealed several key findings and Cwmpas produced a set of recommendations derived from these insights for the Council to implement. The report recommended the Council enhance its approach to tackling poverty and Third Sector collaboration by developing a Poverty Strategy with a monitoring framework to align workstreams and plan long-term resourcing. It suggested updating the Voluntary Sector Compact, fostering broader engagement in the Third Sector to engage with new organisations, and mapping the Social Enterprise sector to better understand its scope and promote awareness within the Council of Social Enterprises. Recommendations also included refining Section 16 procurement processes to encourage co-production and reviewing community resilience efforts by defining a clear vision and strengthening relationships with Third Sector partners.
- 2.9** A report to [Cabinet in September 2024](#) highlighted the key findings and recommendations and gained approval for a way forward aligned to the development of the new Corporate Plan 2025-30 and the Reshaping Programme.
- 2.10** In response to these recommendations the Council is embedding anti-poverty commitments into the Corporate Plan 2025-2030 and Reshaping Programme to integrate poverty prevention into core activities, enabling regular monitoring. A new Relationship Statement will replace the Voluntary Sector Compact and will provide a context for work with all community partners including community groups, town and community councils, social enterprises, and third sector organisations and set out some guiding principles. The Council is developing a better understanding of the Social Enterprise sector through a number of the Reshaping themes and web resources for Social Enterprises will be built into the review of the website already taking place through the digital transformation programme. The Section 16 Forum will continue promoting procurement opportunities, co-production, and partnership working, with updates provided to the Regional Partnership Board. Procurement practices will be reviewed, emphasising social value and streamlined frameworks. Definitions of community resilience and self-reliance are being developed within the Corporate Plan 2025-2030.

### Key Activities

- 2.11** The following paragraphs detail a range of activities that are being taken forward as part of the Council’s activities to tackle poverty and respond to the cost-of-living crisis.

These are reflected in the Council's ADP 2024/25 and more detail about many of these activities and their impact is provided in Appendix A. This report covers the period June 2024 – November 2024 highlighting the recent progress and outcomes of the work identified.

- 2.12** Appendix B also details relevant performance measures within the Council's Performance Management Framework for 2024-25 which assists in monitoring progress against this critical challenge and these measures are included in the quarterly performance reports for the ADP.

### **Support with Employment**

- 2.13** The Communities for Work+ (CFW+) scheme continues to provide specialist employment advisory and intensive mentoring to support people into employment. Support has included outreach events to connect people with employers and provide employment advice, Job Clubs, and training courses to enable people to obtain work-related qualifications. New outreach has been explored in Cowbridge and Llantwit Libraries as well as revised outreach at Penarth Job Centre. The Vale Employability Website and monthly Newsletter have gone live, and an engagement event in partnership with the Vale Learning Network took place as part of Adult Learners Week.
- 2.14** The CELT+ programme has been designed to provide full wrap around support for individuals within the Vale of Glamorgan, having provided work placements through QuickStart, and provision through the POD which offers a variety of support on housing, benefits and health and well-being. CELT+ also hosted its first themed drop in coffee morning aimed at bringing together people who are affected by autism to seek advice from employment mentors.

### **Support for Families and Young People (Inc. Work with Schools)**

- 2.15** The Vale Youth Service undertakes significant work to support families and young people through various projects and schemes. These aim to deliver targeted support to different demographics. For instance, those with additional learning needs, as well as help to develop young people's skills in order to set them up for future employment. Financial support has also been an important part of support for young people with several schemes aiming to alleviate financial burdens of activities such as sports, uniformed groups, and Duke of Edinburgh Awards.
- 2.16** Youth service activities reported in Appendix A are now embedded as ongoing provisions with some successful pilots being continued long term.
- 2.17** Work with schools has progressed with significant support for families and young people. Our schools continue to be at the forefront of work being undertaken in response to the difficulties that many people are experiencing. Seven primary schools in the Vale now run a Big Bocs Bwyd and some other schools support food and advice projects that are ensuring children and their families have the knowledge, skills and experiences with food to meet their needs and thrive, linking in with partners such as Citizens Advice, CELT+, FFAL and others. Work has also commenced to expand the reach of Community Focused Schools across the Vale of Glamorgan, reflecting the different community needs and building on an approach where schools are hubs, making connections with other Council departments and other agencies.

- 2.18** The Pencoedtre Cluster: A Thriving Community Project is a piece of work being undertaken within the Pencoedtre Learning Community and showcases an increasing focus on meeting the family in familiar spaces with schools being identified as effective community hubs.
- 2.19** The Vale of Glamorgan Council has also provided support to families through the School Essentials Grant and Free School Meals. The School Essentials Grant is available to assist families on a low income to buy school uniform, sports kit, uniform for enrichment activities, school bags, and stationery. There are currently 3,308 pupils in receipt of Free School Meals and 2,882 School Essential Grants a total of £379,900 have been awarded.
- 2.20** There has been a focused effort to provide period dignity products to young people across the Vale at no cost. Between April 2024 and September 2024, 20 primary schools and 2 Secondary Schools have received funding or products as a result of the period dignity grant. In addition, 39 community-based organisations such as leisure centres, libraries, hubs, and food banks have received period dignity products. A home delivery service is also established with approximately 120 young people registered, receiving 2 months' worth of products once every school term.

#### **Sports and Physical Activity Support**

- 2.21** The Healthy Living Team has provided support to families to access no cost/low-cost play/sports at a time when many are impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. They have supported family engagement and promoted positive health and wellbeing, through providing localised opportunities directly in children's/families communities and creating a sense of belonging. Support has included taking away the barrier of travel and enabling children to participate in a safe, supported environment, utilising the Vale's natural environment, and developing leadership skills amongst young people.
- 2.22** New projects during the period June 2024 - November 2024 include supporting physical activity and active play with Afghan and Ukrainian refugees being resettled into the Western Vale, free inclusive outdoor and indoor play opportunities were developed during the summer holidays as a result of collaborative working between the Vale Play Development Team and voluntary organisation The Bridge Between Community Centre - Barry Uniting Church and Butterflies Playgroup. Work is also progressing with Oakfield primary to develop more free play opportunities with the aim of out of school time provision being developed.
- 2.23** All sports and play projects are subject to external funding, the majority of which is secured on an annual basis, so projects can only be planned and committed to on a year-by-year basis.
- 2.24** Whilst some universal provision is offered by the Healthy Living team, the majority of action focuses on tackling inequality, using insight and research to identify the appropriate areas and demographic groups to target. Those affected by poverty/socio economic factors is one of the key areas targeted.

#### **Housing Support & Council Tax Reduction**

- 2.25** The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact households' ability to access and sustain tenancies in the Vale. Increasing private rents have meant more households joining

the Council's Housing waiting list, which has risen to over 6,500 people. The Housing Income team continue to work closely with tenants to provide support and advice and the specialist Money Advisors within the team manage a growing caseload, offering budgeting advice, help with claiming benefits and income maximisation. The team also assist with grant and loan applications, as well as ensuring people are on the lowest tariffs for utilities.

**2.26** The Money Advice Team have issued 51 fuel vouchers since June 2024 and with the changes to the winter fuel support criteria, expect this number to increase over the winter period. Money Advice has also been running a campaign for pension credits, and all residents have received an information leaflet about claiming pension credits.

**2.27** As of November 2024, there are 8,968 live claims for Council Tax Reduction totalling a spend of £12,325,312.90 for the whole 2024/25 financial year. This compares to 9,069 in June 2024 as those who are migrating from Universal Credit that were not previously on a passported benefit (income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance, or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance) are losing an entitlement to Council Tax Reduction. This is because of the way that their income is now calculated, and it is giving rise to them having more income.

**2.28** The Vale of Glamorgan Council is working in partnership with Cardiff Capital Region and the energy company E.ON to support households in poorly insulated homes through the Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4) scheme, making those households more energy efficient and helping lessen the impact of rising energy bills. As of November 2024, 62 applications have been approved. Information on the Scheme in the Vale of Glamorgan is published on the Home Energy Efficiency webpage [Home Energy Efficiency \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/home-energy-efficiency)

**2.29** The Council continue to provide mortgages (Interest Free Owner-Occupier Loans) to eligible households to undertake essential works (replacing defective roofs, windows, heating systems etc) to make homes safe, warm and secure. These in turn support energy efficiency and lower household bills. 5 have been completed since April 2024.

**Public Services Board (PSB) Project: Your Place – Work to tackle inequities in deprived communities' project**

**2.30** As part of this project a Senior Community Development Officer was recruited and is based in the Council's Community Development Team. The officer has been in post since August 2023 and is working with the 3 areas of the Vale that were listed as being in the top 10 most deprived in Wales according to the 2019 WIMD report: Gibbonsdown 2, Buttrills 2 and Court 3. A comprehensive engagement plan has been created and a steering group made up of representatives of the PSB has been established.

**2.31** Continuous work in line with the engagement plan has seen engagement undertaken with a range of partners and in a variety of community settings including 22 community events, 232 members of the community and 16 professional organisations. This includes Food Banks, Faith Groups, Door knocking in social housing, Community Centres, Christmas events, Schools, Healthy Schools Programme (NHS), Eco Schools Programme (Keep Wales Tidy).

- 2.32** A report on the engagement work to date and findings has been discussed by the steering group who are now sharing with their senior management teams across PSB organisations and wider stakeholder workshops are being planned for the new year to focus on specific elements relating to he

### **Tackling Food Insecurity**

- 2.33** Tackling rural food insecurity continues to be a priority with several rural food support services providing a much-needed service through the two food pantries managed by GVS in Llantwit Major and St Athan and the Wick Food Hub. Rural food projects continue to be represented on the Food Vale Food Insecurity Working Group to share information, insights, identify opportunities for collaborations and support, and help identify common challenges
- 2.34** Work is ongoing to maximise the impact of several grant funding streams provided by Welsh Government to support access to affordable food across the Vale of Glamorgan. Over the summer a small community grant fund between Food Vale and the Council saw 19 projects receive funding for the 2024/25 financial year improving access to healthy, affordable food in the Vale of Glamorgan totalling over £48,000

### **Tackling Loneliness and Isolation**

- 2.35** The Age Friendly Vale team have continued to work with the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum, colleagues across the Council and partners to deliver a range of activities and events integrating social elements to directly target loneliness and isolation. This activity aligns to the Age Friendly Vale Charter's eight commitments, specifically that 'people have a sense of purpose, feel respected and are actively engaged in their communities'. In addition to bringing together older people for the purpose of connecting and socialising, activities provided accessible opportunities to get active outdoors and in nature, learn about new topics and access information and support on ageing well. The Forum's 'Have Your Say' information and social events provide regular opportunities for older people to access befriending support directly from partners such as Age Connects and Age Cymru in a social setting. The most recent event at Murchfield Community Centre, Dinas Powys had a specific 'loneliness and isolation' theme and also offered crafting, musical entertainment and locally baked cakes. Across the Forum's three events this year, more than 30 partners have attended to share information, advice, and support directly with older residents.
- 2.36** Since the decision in July 2024 by UK Government to implement eligibility criteria for older people to receive the winter fuel allowance from winter 2024/25, resulting in the entitlement no longer being universal, a lot of work has taken place across the county to promote the uptake of financial entitlements for older residents. One entitlement focused on has been Pension Credit which will increase the amount of money received each week by those who receive it and unlock access to the winter fuel allowance.
- 2.37** Working with partners in Citizens Advice, Age Connects, the DWP and the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum we have promoted the entitlement by supporting national campaigns, sharing information across networks and encouraging members of the Age Friendly Vale Network to share information more widely, and sharing information directly with residents through attending events such as the Vale 50+



Forum's Annual General Meeting. In addition, a more targeted approach has also been taken with a letter being sent by the Council to over 1,200 households identified as being likely to qualify to receive pension credits. A further 4,500+ leaflets were sent to Council Housing Tenants encouraging them to contact the Council's Money Advice Team to check their entitlement and the leaflets have been placed in the Council's sheltered housing schemes. Information on pension credits has also been included in a letter to all Vale 50+ Strategy Forum members, reaching approximately 300 people.

- 2.38** The Council's libraries also play an important role in providing age friendly environments and promoting social connectivity and inclusion. The libraries are continuously striving towards ensuring their resources, services and activities available are inclusive and accessible to older people. The libraries are facilitating digital inclusion, supporting employability and refugees, providing access to services and warm spaces, addressing period dignity, promoting wellbeing and celebrating diversity. Additionally, across all branches there is an offer of dementia friendly books along with a collection of books to support carers of family members with dementia. For further information on the range of support offered via the libraries: [Libraries Annual Report](#)

#### **Warm Hubs Welsh Government funding**

- 2.39** In 2022-23 the Council developed their Warm Welcome Scheme in response to the rising cost of living, that supported a network of Warm Spaces across the Vale. Welsh Government provided a Warm Hubs grant scheme in 2022-23 that was administered by the Council to establish many of these spaces. These spaces provide a free to access location often providing activities, information, and advice as well as a chance to socialise. A dedicated Council webpage was developed to provide residents with an interactive map and directory of warm spaces. During the period June 2024-November 2024 there were 498 page views, a decrease from the preceding December 2023- May 2024 period of 700 views. This is likely due to the current reporting period covering the summer months which may see less interest for warm spaces.
- 2.40** The Council has continued to support a number of warm spaces through the cost-of-living community support grants scheme (23/24 & 24/25) drawn from the cost-of-living reserve. This funding has allowed a number of warm spaces to remain operational and support the establishment of several new spaces.
- 2.41** The Welsh Government has announced a further £52,189 Warm Hubs grant funding for 2024-25 to be allocated to the Council to distribute to support warm spaces over the winter period. The Council has responded by identifying the most effective way of distributing this funding to support the community, as there is a the need to get funding to those who need it as quickly and efficiently as possible. Initial conversations have taken place with Glamorgan Voluntary Services to explore the possibility of providing £26,094 for them to use to support their community support venues such as the CF61 centre in Llantwit and operate a small grants scheme to provide funding to community venues. Additionally, £26,095 would be allocated to the Council's library and cultural services to support the provision of warm spaces within both Council and community owned libraires and other appropriate venues.

## Cost of Living Support Webpages

- 2.42** The cost-of-living support webpages on the Council’s website signpost to a variety of support. These webpages are updated regularly with the most recent information. [Cost of Living Support \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)
- 2.43** During the period June 2024- November 2024, the cost-of-living webpages have received 19,969 views by 6,231 people. Of the total views, the Grants and Benefits page received the highest views at 3,720, with Households and Energy Bills the second highest at 1,974 views.

## Volunteer Rewards - Value in the Vale

- 2.44** Value in the Vale (VIV) has secured volunteer rewards through partnerships with local businesses and organisations that reward volunteers for their time and has provided support during the rising cost of living. Volunteers have also been given the opportunity to gift their rewards to others who may be more in need. In delivering the 4<sup>th</sup> Gift it Forward Campaign, volunteers at Penarth Food Pod decided to gift their rewards forward to the families at Ty Hafan Hospice providing a selection of rewards from free coffees and carwashes to beauty items, toiletries, seeds and baby items. Further information can be accessed on the dedicated web pages, [Volunteer Rewards | Value in the Vale](#).

## Funding Overview

### Shared Prosperity Funding

- 2.45** Shared Prosperity funding is supporting a number of projects that will also be helping to target poverty and address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. Just under £4million has been committed to Communities and Place projects across the Vale of Glamorgan. Additional funding has been allocated to the People and Skills theme and many projects are supporting the cost-of-living agenda. Information on the outcomes of these projects will be reported at the end of the financial year.

### Cost of Living Reserve

- 2.46** As part of ensuring an effective response to the cost-of-living challenge detailed in the ADP 2023-24, a cost-of-living reserve was established. The total reserve as of April 2023 was £854,000 and the table below sets out how the funding has been utilised to date.

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Opening Balance	854	325.5	100.5
<b>Funding Agreed</b>			
Budget Contribution Free School Meals (FSM)	-200	-100	0
Additional Contribution Citizens Advice	-30	-30	0
Additional support in the school summer holidays to those in receipt of FSM	-220	0	0
Support for community projects	-25	-25	0
Food Bank Contribution	-3.5	-20	0

Discretionary Housing Payment	-50	-50	0
Closing Balance	325.5	100.5	100.5

- 2.47** The Budget Contribution for Free School Meals (FSM) was agreed as part of the budget report in March 2023 to counteract the loss of transitional protection from December 2024. A contribution towards the school's budget of £200k was agreed for 2023-24 and a further £100k in 2024-25 to offset the increased cost of free school meals.
- 2.48** Funding has been awarded from this reserve to Citizens Advice in recognition of the increase in the volume and complexity of the work that is being handled for Vale residents. A contribution of £30k was agreed for 2023-24 and 2024-25 in addition to their annual grant of £157,335 from the Council.
- 2.49** Additional support in the school summer holidays 2023 to those in receipt of FSM was provided to support families with the cost of food during the school holidays following the decision by Welsh Government to no longer fund this. A contribution of £220k was made for that year only.
- 2.50** An additional £3,500 was provided in 2023/24 from the reserve to the Vale Food Bank (in addition to the grant funding provided via Welsh Government). This level of total funding was maintained by a contribution of £20k in 2024-25 recognising, the increase in food bank usage in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 2.51** In 2024/25 £25k was ringfenced to fund community projects. To date £16,469 has been distributed to community projects with the remaining £8,531 in the reserve available to support further work for the remainder of the year or to be carried over into the new financial year 2025/26. The funding focused on supporting organisations that address an urgent need such as food insecurity projects (providing funding to purchase foodstuffs, food vouchers, breakfast/lunch clubs), uniform for schoolchildren and warm spaces. Overall, there was a total of 79 applications with 30 applications awarded funding, these ranged from £55-£1,600. Through making links with officers across the Council and with external partners, extensive signposting to other forms of support and funding was undertaken when communicating outcomes to applicants. Including several food projects awarded additional funding through the Welsh Government Direct Food Support grant administered in partnership with the Food Vale Partnership.
- 2.52** In addition, £50k was allocated to Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to help to manage the impacts of an increasing rent in the private rental sector causing more shortfalls. At present, the reserve money has not been utilised as the number of applications received has been lower than expected partly due to the Local Housing Allowance rates increasing. However, they have been frozen for next year and so this is likely to have a knock-on effect. Work has progressed with Housing associations and the housing team to identify cases with arrears and assist them with a Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) where possible to prevent eviction action being carried out. The majority of DHP applications this year are a result of the awards of Housing benefit or Universal Credit Housing costs being less than the rent charged. As of November 2024, the Council has paid out £134,795.54 and committed to a further £37,571.29. This is 175 awards and 43 applications waiting to be looked at.

- 2.53** The cost-of-living reserve and associated uses for 2025/26 will be reviewed alongside all other Council reserves as part of the budget setting process.
- 2.54** The above information provides an update on the work undertaken during the period June 2024 - November 2024 and reflects work across the Council. During this period work has also been undertaken to draft the Corporate Plan 2025-30 and the new plan includes a range of actions to prevent and tackle poverty. Consultation on the draft plan has included specific reference to this area of work.

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

- 3.1** The activities outlined in this report will assist the Council in contributing to the national Well-being Goals and the Council's own Well-being Objectives as detailed in the Corporate Plan 2020-25. The cost-of-living crisis is a critical challenge in the Council's ADP 2024/25. The work being undertaken also embeds the five ways of working through involvement and collaboration to develop ways forward, to ensure a longer term thinking and more sustainable approach to how we work and with a more integrated programme of activity. In terms of prevention as the work develops officers will be keen to explore the opportunities for a more preventative approach and how the knowledge and experience of other sectors can assist, particularly with work around cost of living and climate change.

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1** There are opportunities to make close links between work on cost of living and also work on climate change, for example on reducing energy use and work around food security. We also know that those living in our most deprived communities are often most impacted by the effects of climate change. We will continue to align activities where possible through the Council and the PSB.

### **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

#### **Financial**

- 5.1** The Corporate Plan 2020-25 and the associated Annual Delivery Plans are key tenets of the Council's Financial Strategy.
- 5.2** This report outlines a range of different funding streams contributing to the Council's response to the cost-of-living crisis and work to tackle poverty, including an overview of the use of the cost-of-living reserve established in April 2023.

## **Employment**

5.3 There are no employment implications as a direct result of this report.

## **Legal (Including Equalities)**

5.4 There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report, however the work detailed in this report aligns with the Council's socio-economic duty and contributes to work to address economic inequity.

5.5 Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as required on particular schemes.

## **6. Background Papers**

[Cost of Living Support \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Cabinet Report December 2022

[Cost of Living Reserve Report \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Cabinet 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023

[Strengthening Communities and Tackling Poverty \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023

[Reshaping Programme: Strengthening Communities - A Response to Audit Wales Reports on Tackling Poverty and Third Sector Working](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) – Cabinet 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024

[Work to Tackle Poverty and COL Crisis \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) – Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024

[Draft Vale of Glamorgan Council Corporate Plan 2025-30](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) – Cabinet 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024

The reporting period is June 2024 – November 2024 and all information is relevant to this period. Where a project is stated as ‘New’, it has started within this period. If a project existed prior to this period, the most up to date information on the projects progress is provided.

Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

## Appendix A – Detailed Project Information

**The reporting period is June 2024 – November 2024 and all information is relevant to this period. Where a project is stated as ‘New’, it has started within this period. If a project existed prior to this period, the most up to date information on the projects progress is provided.**

### Support with Employment

Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Communities for Work+ (CFW+)	Communities for Work Plus provides specialist employment advisory and intensive mentoring to support people into employment.	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach in Cowbridge and Llantwit libraries were explored during the quarter, while Llantwit has been successful, Cowbridge area failed to have any engagement, despite advertisement in the library and online. Therefore, the Llantwit outreach will continue every Wednesday. Revised outreach at Penarth Job Centre has also taken place to increase engagement, there is now a dedicated job club for 25+ every Wednesday and Youth every Thursday, with commitment from Job Centre Plus Work Coaches to book individuals in.</li> <li>• The launch of the new Vale Employability Website and monthly Newsletter took place in this quarter, providing a further overview of the support that CFW+ and CELT+ can offer in terms of employment and training. Individuals can book onto courses directly as well as send enquiry forms for support if required.</li> <li>• A number of areas were identified as priority areas for outreach, which includes St Athan. Within this area mentors now have a dedicated day on the MOD Camp to support the Entitled Person’s that arrive to the area, before they are allocated more permanent accommodation. Mentors work with individuals on their employability skills and develop their skills. There is also a dedicated day of the week to support the St Athan community including individuals that have now settled in the area, that were previously staying in hotels.</li> <li>• Monthly recruitment events have continued, with these being held in Barry and Penarth JCP as well as an event within the CELT+ POD. These events have</li> </ul>	CFW+ is an existing programme of work established in 2016, however, there have been several new projects within the programme. Namely, outreach in Cowbridge and Llantwit Libraries, and revised outreach at Penarth Job Centre, Vale Employability Website and monthly Newsletter, engagement event in partnership with the Vale Learning Network took place as part of Adult Learners Week.

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

			<p>proven to be an effective platform to engage with individuals, but also develop connections with local employers, and enhancing employment opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In September, a large engagement event in partnership with the Vale Learning Network took place as part of Adult Learners Week. This Learning and Employment Event attracted over 400 individuals throughout the day, providing learning and employment opportunities within the community. The event provided individuals with valuable information on adult education, skills development, and employment opportunities. This successful collaboration provided an opportunity to strengthen partnership with the Vale Learning Network, which include JCP, Careers Wales, and CELT+.</li> <li>• Partnership working within the Vale continues to work effectively and positively, allowing for collaboration to ensure that support for the participant is at a high standard. The ongoing partnership with JCP has been very beneficial to ensure a steady stream of referrals into the programme, but also to support with additional training, which may be more costly</li> <li>• The strong collaboration with CELT+ continues to grow, with both teams working effectively together to ensure participants receive tailored support, regardless of their circumstances. This collaborative approach also benefits external referral partners, as they can trust that participants will be directed to the most suitable programme for their needs.</li> <li>• Adult Community Learning continue to provide support for CFW+ with employability courses as well as sector specific courses. This partnership will continue and will look to develop further courses to encourage individuals to upskills and engage with both services. Relationships with Adult Learning Wales continued during the quarter as they have provided the Introduction to Teaching Assistant courses as well as Autism Awareness, which have been very popular with participants and new referrals.</li> </ul>	
CELt+	The CELT+ programme has been designed to provide full wrap around support for		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The QuickStart project provided 11 paid work placements to young adults aged 18-24 within the Vale of Glamorgan with all positions filled and young people gaining valuable experience within the workplace.</li> </ul>	CELt+ established in June 2023, however, the POD opened in November 2023.

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

	<p>individuals within the Vale of Glamorgan.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CELT+ hosted its first themed drop in coffee morning aimed at bringing together people who were affected by autism. The event was supported by the Vale Councils Autism lead and two supported employment mentors. Ten people attended the event all with different support needs, but all affected by autism. The attendees contributed to group discussions and broke off into pairs to share experiences, asked questions, sought advice from mentors and found out what other services were offered from the POD.</li> <li>• The POD which opened in November 2023 provides the opportunity for individuals to drop in for a variety of support. The Pod advisors have engaged with 184 individuals. The support has varied from help with CVs, referrals to employment support and assisting to set up benefit claims. The advisors have also directed to more specialist providers, such as Mind, GPs, Housing and Social Services.</li> <li>• The Pod holds weekly Youth job clubs and 50+ job clubs in partnership with DWP with a focus on getting to know the workplace, employer expectations and understanding working hours and payslips. The Pod holds weekly drop-in CV sessions and continues to hold a weekly food bank. The Pod carries on hosting various partners such as Business Wales, Citizens Advice, Scope and CFW for specialist’s support.</li> <li>• Various courses have been held at the Pod being advertised via social media and partners bringing in new referrals to the services as well as benefiting individuals already engaging with the programme. The Pod advisors also attend outreach venues to offer “Pop Up Pod” services. To compliment being a digital hub, a weekly digital drop-in session is being run and also SIM cards are available to hand out to individuals that do not have internet at home.</li> <li>• The Pod advisors are continuing to engage with the new refugees that have been relocated within the Vale on a temporary basis at the MOD St Athan Camp. The advisors provided several sessions along with an interpreter to develop a CV for the participants and identify any training needs or career plans.</li> </ul>	<p>New themed drop in coffee morning aimed at bringing together people who were affected by autism.</p>
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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

<b>Support for Families and Young People (inc. Work with Schools)</b>				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Vale Youth Service -Joint pilot with Vale People First (VPF)	To deliver a targeted disability/inclusive youth provision for those with additional learning needs.	Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A successful pilot was run for two evenings a week with 30 individual young people being supported to attend the club on Wednesday and Friday evenings (15 per evening).</li> <li>• Hwb Club members have benefitted from 48 youth club sessions during this pilot phase, resulting in a total of 720 contacts being made.</li> <li>• The club has now been continued as an ongoing provision, once a week on Wednesday evenings.</li> <li>• The club has enabled young people to build new friendship groups whilst engaging in a free youth provision, with appropriately trained staff to meet their needs.</li> <li>• All members of the group have also completed nationally recognised qualifications via an Agored Cymru Unit accreditation that contributes to their own skills development</li> </ul>	Existing
Youth Service providing support to uniformed groups.	To provide financial support for young people who are part of local uniformed groups, including Scout groups, Explorer Scout Units, Guides and Rangers.	Youth Service - £15,080	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support with costs related to membership that helps ensure young people are able to continue engaging in these activities, equating to around 40 sessions throughout the year. It was aimed at those who couldn't afford the membership and parents themselves identified if they required support and financial assistance with the membership. Thus, allowing parents to then purchase kit, uniform or other items needed.</li> <li>• In total 224 young people have benefitted from this support, with a contribution of £45 per person being made, which came to £10,080. In addition to this, £5,000 was provided across</li> </ul>	Existing (Funding was provided at the beginning of 2024 and comes to an

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

			<p>the groups involved to contribute towards the cost of resources and for two groups to put towards the cost of international expeditions during the summer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members will have benefitted from 40 sessions during the year, resulting in a total of 8,960 contacts being made</li> <li>• This provision was for the full year and will come to an end in January 2025.</li> </ul>	end in January 2025)
Youth Service provision of DofE Bronze and Silver	To provide financial support to young people undertaking DoFE	Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Youth Service started to deliver weekly DofE Bronze and Silver to 37 young people within Barry this year. Through this provision, there have been financial barriers identified that have been supported through the work of the Service. Alongside working with DofE Wales to explore barrier funding for those most in need, the Service has reduced everyone’s participant fee by £35 to support and ensure accessibility for all to this accredited programme, all young people are on route to achieve their DofE awards across the year.</li> <li>• This is now part of an ongoing youth service provision and will continue into 2025.</li> </ul>	Existing
Sharing the Youth Service area of the YMCA Hub in Barry	Allow groups (local partners) to lower their running costs by providing free usage to this area.	Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides more effective usage of this resource as well as ensuring that young people are not adversely affected by increased activity charges due to having to pay for provision overheads.</li> <li>• This is now embedded as an ongoing practice within the Youth Service.</li> </ul>	Existing
Pencoedtre Cluster: A Thriving Community Project	To tackle the inequalities and inequities across our most deprived communities through a Community Focused	Schools, Youth Service, Community Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Play, Learn, Grow programme is being delivered by Flying Start’s Early Years team and covers toileting/routines. The sessions commenced in September and 7 parents completed the first programme.</li> <li>• Get Cooking sessions continue to be held in the community, delivered by Flying Start and plans to start a Get Cooking programme in Holton Primary School have been agreed for January 2025 (awaiting completion of the community kitchen).</li> </ul>	Existing

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

	Schools and Local Authority Partnership approach	Schools budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Playmakers course was successfully delivered at Pencoedtre High in June bringing together pupils from all of the feeder primary schools (Colcot, Cadoxton, Oakfield, Jenner Park and Holton). Playmakers is a National Sports Leaders UK introductory award for sports leadership for pupils in years 5 and above. It gives pupils the skills and knowledge to be able to assist in leading games and physical activities in school, at break / lunchtimes and after school. The award focuses on developing specific skills such as communication, organisation of people and equipment and safe use of space. The session allowed 5 pupils from each primary school to become more familiar with their future high school and meet likeminded pupils. Once trained the pupils are working to establish an afterschool session with the help of teachers, parents etc. The training was delivered at no cost to the schools thanks to funding from the Council’s Sports Development team. In previous years this course has been provided separately to each primary schools, this was the first time all schools were brought together to complete the training reducing the staff time required and allowing pupils to connect in their future high school allowing them to become more familiar with the building and easing future transitions.</li> <li>• Work continues to encourage families to take up immunisations with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board colleagues attending school café session to engage directly with families to share information and dispel myths. This is allowing families to feel more confident in the information on this topic.</li> <li>• Nasal Flu Vaccinations will be held at all Flying Start childcare settings to encourage take up for the 2-3 year old age range. This is being led by Cardiff and Vale Immunisations team supported by the Flying Start team.</li> <li>• The Nutrition for Your Little Ones (NYLO) 8 week programme was successfully held in Cadoxton Primary School this summer. The programme supports families with children aged 1 – 5 to feel more confident in providing a balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight.</li> </ul>	
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## HEALTHY LIVING TEAM (SPORTS & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT, PLAY DEVELOPMENT, EXERCISE REFERRAL)

Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Active Young People school programme	Free activities delivered through Active Young People school programme targeted at tackling inequalities.	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 festivals and events delivered to inspire through Olympics/Paralympics sports impacting on 706 young people. Multisport event delivered to 30 pupils from 2 Barry autism resource bases (young people with additional needs) with young people trying new sports.</li> <li>• Free extra-curricular provision delivered based on consultation / feedback including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social activities – e.g. girls only volleyball session introduced as a result of consultation undertaken to engage more girls, with 18 girls in regular attendance (who are not part of other PE extra-curricular clubs).</li> <li>- Links with youth wellbeing – facilitating half-termly activity sessions with wellbeing group linked to consultation identifying activities and barriers in targeted school.</li> <li>- A new table tennis club developed at Whitmore High based on more informal and social based activities, with more than 30 pupils attending.</li> <li>- Dodgeball – Young Ambassadors and casual coaches attended leadership course to assist with extra-curricular provision.</li> <li>- Work with the autism resource bases has resulted in some of the pupils accessing extra-curricular provision for the first time.</li> <li>- A series of extra-curricular and community skateboarding sessions delivered to meet demand</li> <li>- Young Ambassadors delivering autism base sessions to help increase activity level</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Existing programme of work containing some new projects.
Golden Pass project	Supporting 60+ age group to be become more active	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Golden Pass programme supports the least active 60+ age residents to become more active through provision of either 2 months free leisure centre membership or 8 free sessions within community activities - with the aim of encouraging them to find an activity that will motivate them to continue participation.</li> <li>• Free taster session for Barry Veterans was organised in partnership with Millwood bowls with 26 veterans attending, providing coaching as well as tea and coffee in the clubhouse which overall contributed to social, chatty and high-spirited day. Chance to promote the Golden Pass scheme with 5 signing up.</li> </ul>	Existing programme of work

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In partnership with Rubicon Dance, two new unpaid carers &amp; dementia classes have been commissioned due to start next quarter. One with Solace, the other with Marie Curie, ten weeks of seated dance will be free for participants and advertised to the local community. If successful, then these classes will look to take payment from participants as a sustainability route.</li> <li>• Free activity sessions have been delivered in Independent Living Schemes to expose residents to a range of activities. Free equipment packs will be provided to the schemes that have committed to the sessions to enable free activity to continue moving forward following the completion of the supported sessions.</li> <li>• Visually Impaired bowls session has been developed at Sully Indoor Bowling club, in partnership with the club, Sight Cymru and Welsh VI bowls coaches. Initial sessions free. Whilst there will be a charge for the sessions moving forward, the aim is for this to be low cost.</li> </ul>	
Supporting families resettling in the Vale	To support physical activity and active play with Afghan and Ukrainian refugees being resettled into the Western Vale.	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated additional providers including football for Afghan families linked into the entitled person project. This project is being led through a national UK partner, with the Healthy Living Team providing the contacts for local providers.</li> <li>• Additional free equipment loan scheme set up in St Athan food hub which has been successful in supporting resettled Afghan refugees.</li> </ul>	New
Energise YOUTH scheme. Healthy Living Team and Youth Service. Project.	To increase the number of young people (11-18 years) regularly participating in physical activity through a referral style scheme.	Sport Wales / Vale Council funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeting the least active 11–18-year-olds with wellbeing issues, in partnership with Youth Service, Child Health and Disability Team and Llamau. 31 young people currently registered on scheme, supported by youth mentors and organisation staff. Access to kit (i.e. clothing) is still presenting as a barrier to some young people becoming more active and where this is an identified barrier, support is given.</li> <li>• Most referrals have been accessing health and fitness sessions in their local gym. There have been sessions carried out at local archery clubs, karate club and tennis facilities. The general feedback from young people has been positive, young people have accessed gym memberships freely, with the initial sessions supported by their youth /support workers then independently throughout their weeks. The young people who have maintained their attendance and dedication to their health and wellbeing have also asked for further support and/or passes to</li> </ul>	Existing programme of work with new additions.

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

			continue attending. This resulted in at least 520 contacts to promote active lifestyle, health and fitness and general wellbeing.	
Youth Take Overs within Leisure Centres	To increase confidence and motivation to participate in activities within leisure centre settings	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>72 young people (aged 11+ years) attended two-hour leisure centre youth take over event within their own leisure time, at a time when the leisure centre was not usually open - to raise awareness of local opportunities available and provide supported access to increase confidence. Activities delivered based on those that young people had previously indicated which are available on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>48 girls aged 11+ attended Girls Only Youth Take Over at Barry Leisure Centre, supporting them to increase their confidence and motivation to continue to participate in activity.</li> </ul>	Existing programme with new additions and new target group
Free sports activities/events delivered during school holidays	To provide free sports activities/events during school holidays to help those affected by cost-of-living crisis.	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>47 free sports sessions, sport with 6 partner events and 28 sport within play sessions delivered as part of summer holiday provision including Mini Olympic festivals and sport specific activities in partnership with community organisations/clubs impacting on 916 participations. Sessions included those targeting pre-school age (family based), primary age and secondary school age. Trialled sessions (Olympic festivals) where all different age groups attended sessions (age /ability appropriate activities) at same time to accommodate families with multiple age children and this was well received. High participation rates for pre-schoolers, and 5-7 years who otherwise have indicated they have less ‘free’ opportunities. 20% of the participants had an additional need highlighting the inclusive approach to both the promotion and delivery of activity.</li> <li>A further 6 events were supported with sports activities and to use as consultation / engagement for less active, which also provided an opportunity to give out free resources – reach of more than 640 participants and these included Youth Service Rights Ambassadors event, Flying Start event, Youth service events, National Play Day and other community sessions.</li> <li>Sports session delivered within Teenscheme summer programme – which is aimed at disabled young people aged 12 – 18 years to expose them to activities they may not have participated in previously.</li> <li>October half term programme delivered (participation numbers still being collated)</li> <li>100% enjoyed summer holiday activities</li> </ul>	Existing with new additions

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of people given feedback into what they want in the future in their community and future holiday provision</li> <li>• 92% felt more confident to take part in other activities following their session</li> <li>• 75% felt more motivated to take part in other activities following their session.</li> </ul>	
Free Sports equipment	Enable families to loan equipment for free.	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free equipment bags continue to be offered within Barry, Rhoose and Dinas Powys library, with an additional library brought onto the scheme (Penarth).</li> <li>• New partnership formed with additional food hub (St Athan) which is pivotal for resettled refugees in local area accessing equipment.</li> </ul>	Existing with new additions
Free Swim Initiative (managed by Legacy Leisure on behalf of the Council)	Under 16s and 60+ age group can access free swimming during identified times	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U16 – increased sessions for U16 free swims over the summer. Offered additional sessions over August in line with the summer holidays across all sites. During Drowning Prevention Week, promoted free swimming and 1 month free upon completing school swims when doing assemblies at schools.</li> <li>• 60+ - between 1st July and September, a total of 153 sessions were delivered across the Vale of Glamorgan with a booking occupancy of 58.5%. Uptake is highest in Barry Leisure Centre with Llantwit Major seeing the most sessions with under 20% uptake. Uptake has slightly increased.</li> </ul>	Existing
Pre-school	Pre-school support	Sport Wales funding	Pre-school sessions organised and community sessions supported during holiday periods to give the best start in life. Feedback from families have indicated that many activities for this age group are high cost and therefore these activities provide an opportunity to be active / develop healthy habits without cost.	Existing and new
Kicks Community Football Sessions	Provision of free social football opportunities in areas of deprivation	Sport Wales/Cardiff City in the Community funding	Free informal football sessions delivered at Colcot Sports Centre with an average of 20 young people per session. Delivered as a partnership project with Cardiff City in the Community Premier League Kicks Programme.	Existing
Young Ambassadors &	Upskilling of young people to add capacity to delivery of	Sport Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Ambassadors and Coaches of the Future volunteer programmes continue, with children and young people actively involved in organisation, promotion and delivery of free activities, as well as supporting consultation and engagement with their peers. Particularly successful in</li> </ul>	Existing with new elements



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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

Leadership programme	free sports and play provision		<p>Whitmore where 43 pupils are actively engaged as Young Ambassadors across years 9 – 11. In addition to the individual benefits to the YA’s, the school is reporting wider benefits within the High School and autism base and also positively impacting on feeder primaries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pencoedtre Cluster Improving the Life Experiences of Families &amp; Communities – Playmakers course (sports activities) delivered to 24 young people from 5 cluster schools to support increased free extra-curricular child led provision.</li> </ul>	
National Exercise Referral Scheme	Supporting residents with medical conditions through low cost 16-week exercise programme	Public Health Wales / Vale Council	Exercise Referral scheme continues to support residents with medical conditions to become active through activity sessions at a lower cost of £2.50 per session.	Existing
Free play activities/events delivered during school holidays	To provide free play activities/events during school holidays to help those affected by cost-of-living crisis.	<p>Welsh Government Playworks funding</p> <p>Welsh Government Families First funding (FF Holiday Club)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 742 children accessed free inclusive outdoor and indoor open access play opportunities delivered during school holidays through projects below. Free healthy snacks provided: (FF in partnership with The Bridge Between Community Centre - Barry Uniting Church and Butterflies Playgroup).</li> <li>- As a partnership between the Vale Play Team and 8 Vale libraries, 8 family-based junk modelling workshops were organised successfully engaging families (145 children, 85 adults). They increased awareness around low / no cost play opportunities families can undertake within their homes, which is particularly relevant with the cost of living impacts many families are experiencing. Also encouraged reuse of waste for play.</li> <li>- New family-based opportunities developed during the summer as a result of collaborative working between the Vale Play Development Team and voluntary organisation The Bridge Between Community Centre - Barry Uniting Church and Butterflies Playgroup. This new opportunity has developed as a result of ongoing development work between the organisation and the Vale Play Development Team, who have supported volunteers from the organisation to undertake their L2APP playwork qualification. The Family Friday’s sessions supported local families during the long summer holidays providing opportunities for all ages with the involvement of Flying Start also. It also provided a mentoring opportunity for the newly qualified volunteers. 287 children and 293 adults attended.</li> <li>- Play Ranger sessions aimed at 5-14 year olds in parks and open spaces throughout the Vale.</li> <li>- Inclusive playscheme offering open access provision alongside provision for disabled children.</li> </ul>	New

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families First Holiday Club (playscheme for disabled children) sessions delivered in school holidays. Healthy Snacks available during the sessions. Demand for FFHC far exceeding the spaces available.</li> <li>Organisation of National Play Day celebration aimed at families. 250 children and 125 adults participated in free sports and play activities. Partners included Families First Advice Line, Family Information Service, Vale Parenting Service, Vale Childcare and Early Years, Flying Start Early Years, Sports Development Team; Vale Domestic Abuse Services; CELT+; Vale of Glamorgan Libraries, all of whom supported play activities and also offered advice.</li> </ul> <p>Approx 500 children and 300 adults attended Flying Start event where a range of open access play opportunities were facilitated by 2 qualified playworkers to support family-based activity. Activities included mud kitchens, den building, transient art. Provided the chance to support families to play together and provide ideas of low cost / no cost play opportunities they can replicate in their own time.</p>	
Play Friendly Schools project	Free play activities within schools	Public Health Wales Prevention Funding	Work is progressing with Oakfield primary to develop more free play opportunities with the aim of out of school time provision being developed. This is a longer-term project so impacts will take longer to achieve.	New
Play To Go Kit Hire scheme	To support community groups to deliver a range of free play opportunities	Existing equipment bought through e.g. Welsh Government Play funding	Play to Go hire kit has been created to support communities to develop sustainable play provision in the Vale of Glamorgan, with the aim of supporting low cost / no cost activity. A Takeaway Play Menu illustrates the wide range of play equipment which is available to hire - there is no charge to community groups for this equipment hire.	Existing
Promotion of free/low-cost play, sport and physical activities	To provide residents with downloadable resources and information to support them in undertaking no cost / low-cost activity	Staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information around free/low-cost sport, physical activity and play opportunities has been included on the Vale Cost of Living hub (website) and Sports &amp; Play section of Council website. Includes a range of free downloadable resources</li> <li>Promotion of Re-create Scrapstore: Cardiff and Vale Play Resource Centre – a scrap store which sells (for very low cost) waste and surplus materials collected from local firms and factories for creative reuse.</li> </ul>	Existing and new

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

<b>Housing Support</b>				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Housing support	To provide housing and additional housing support through the Money Advice Team.	Council Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing private rents have meant more households joining the Council’s Housing waiting list, which has risen to over 6,500 people.</li> <li>Council housing rent arrears remain high with 1,583 Council housing tenants in arrears and average debts rising to £688 (£646 last year). This does represent an increase of tenants in arrears from June 2024 to November 2024, however, a key issue is the migration of people onto Universal Credit from legacy benefits which due to timing issues distorts the data and has shown some accounts in arrears when they are in fact up to date. As such this decrease does not represent an improvement in the picture and those in genuine arrears remain high.</li> <li>The Housing Income team continue to work closely with tenants to provide support and advice and the specialist Money Advisors within the team manage a growing caseload, offering budgeting advice, help with claiming benefits and income maximisation. The team also assist with grant and loan applications, as well as ensuring people are on the lowest tariffs for utilities.</li> <li>From June 2024 to November 2024, the Money Advice Team helped tenants maximise their income through various measures resulting in £153,489.15 being saved by tenants.</li> <li>In the same period 51 fuel vouchers were issued from the Money Advice Team via the Fuel Bank Foundation with a total value of £1,677.00 which is an average of £32.88 per person to assist with their energy costs. With the changes to the winter fuel support criteria, we expect this number to increase over the winter period.</li> <li>The Money Advice Team have processed 87 white goods applications and have several cases of PIP applications awaiting outcomes from June 2024 to November 2024.</li> </ul>	Existing

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money Advice has been running a campaign for pension credits, and all residents had a leaflet about claiming pension credits with the quarterly rent accounts when these were issued. Money Advice have several cases outstanding awaiting pension credit decision's but have so far gained £10,406.76 in pension credits.</li> <li>• Money Advice joined the National Data Bank in August 2024 where they provide sim cards with free calls, texts and internet data. We have provided 15 sim cards with a cost of £2,700 in savings for our tenants</li> </ul>	
The Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4)	To support households in poorly insulated homes, making those households more energy efficient and helping lessen the impact of rising energy bills.	UK Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to raise awareness of the ECO4 Flex scheme through social media, in person events, Town and Community Councils and other routes. As of November 2024, the Council has approved 62 ECO4 Flex applications via E.ON, an increase of 47 since May 2024. These are mainly delivered by 3rd party installers working with E.ON. 13 applications have been approved and the relevant notifications and been submitted to OFGEM.</li> <li>• In addition to ECO4 FLEX, the council is working together with E.ON to boost standard eligibility eco funding across all schemes and also working with NEST and the Energy Savings Trust to offer relevant assistance.</li> <li>• The Council continue to provide mortgages (Interest Free Owner-Occupier Loans) to eligible households to undertake essential works (replacing defective roofs, windows, heating systems etc) to make homes safe, warm and secure. These in turn support energy efficiency and lower household bills. 5 have been completed since April 2024.</li> </ul>	Existing

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

<b>PSB Project – Work to tackle inequities in deprived communities’ project</b>				
<b>Programme of work</b>	<b>Aims of work</b>	<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Outcomes/Impacts</b>	<b>New or Existing Project(s)</b>
Public Services Board (PSB) work to tackle inequities in deprived communities project	To reduce the inequity between our most and least deprived communities’ partners are working together in a new approach to understand the inequities in outcomes for those living in 3 LSOAs in Gibbonsdown, Court and Buttrills, and to use this insight to develop and deliver services in different ways.	Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project was successfully awarded £100k of Shared Prosperity funding split over 2023/24 and 2024/25 to undertake this work.</li> <li>Continuous work in line with the engagement plan has seen engagement undertaken with a range of partners and in a variety of community settings including 22 community events, 232 members of the community and 16 professional organisations. This includes Food Banks, Faith Groups, Door knocking in social housing, Community Centres, Christmas events, Schools, Healthy Schools Programme (NHS), Eco Schools Programme (Keep Wales Tidy)</li> <li>A report on the engagement work to date and findings has been discussed by the steering group who are now sharing with their senior management.</li> <li>Work within the Pencoedre Cluster Learning Community is leading to parent support groups for families with neurodiverse members. Additional Learning Needs (ALN) focus workshops have also been held in all primary schools in the deprived LSOAs</li> <li>Oakfield Beacon Community Hub - this project was helped to secure Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF). The project has strengthened connections between partners and organisations across multiple sectors to enhance shared learning, local knowledge and connections.</li> </ul>	Existing

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

Food Insecurity				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Food Vale Partnership	To support access to healthy food through activities such as cooking courses	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Food Vale Project Support Officer has completed research and engagement (which engaged with over 500 Vale residents in total) and the final Vale Food Insecurity report has now been published.</li> <li>The Vale Food Insecurity Working Group continues to meet every 6 weeks to bring together stakeholders working on food insecurity in the Vale.</li> <li>A further £23,409 has been granted to schools across the Vale for food growing and cooking activities.</li> </ul>	Existing
Rural food insecurity (inc. Llantwit Food Project)	Exploring methods to better understand and tackle food access and food insecurity in more rural locations.	National lottery People and Places community fund  Welsh Government – Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several rural food support services have continued to provide a much-needed service through the two food pantries managed by GVS in Llantwit Major and St Athan, and the Wick Food Hub which established in December 2023. The Wick Food Hub provides food on a ‘pay what you feel’ model to residents including locally grown seasonal produce on a biweekly basis alongside a friendly warm space providing an opportunity for residents to connect over free refreshments. The space offers the opportunity for residents of all ages to come together helping to tackle challenges of social isolation, food insecurity, and access to food in the rural location. Lessons learnt are being shared between the rural projects to maximise future impact and shape future phases.</li> <li>Since its launch in January 2024 GVS’ St Athan Pantry, has seen customers being supported to access affordable food at its biweekly sessions. The impact of this action and wider Project</li> </ul>	Existing programme of work, with new additions.

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

		Partnership Grant	<p>elements were captured through a short Llantwit Food Project survey over the summer to monitor impact and identify areas for improvement. The St Athan pilot project is currently being reviewed over the winter to ensure maximum impact in the next phase of this work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other elements of the Llantwit Food Project include the More Than Food Hub, which following feedback, was rebranded in August 2024 as the CF61 Community Drop In. The Drop In welcomes various organisations to provide free advice and support on the third Thursday of every month in Llantwit Major on topics including benefits and entitlements, employment opportunities, CV development, volunteering, childcare support, physical health and wellbeing, debt management, refugee support and electoral registration. The Drop In has supported over 115 people over the 10-month period of year 2 of the project. The 10 months reflects the short period of time where the project element was paused due to building works in the venue.</li> <li>• Rural food projects continue to be represented on the Food Vale Food Insecurity Working Group to share information, insights, identify opportunities for collaborations and support, and help identify common challenges. The group Chaired by Food Vale meet on a regular basis and include representatives from other food projects, Fareshare Cymru, Hafod Housing and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.</li> </ul>	
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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

<b>Tackling Loneliness and Isolation</b>				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Age Friendly	To deliver a range of activities and events integrating social elements to directly target loneliness and isolation.	Welsh Government - Age Friendly Communities grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Age Friendly Vale team have continued to work with the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum, colleagues across the Council and partners.</li> <li>The Forum’s ‘Have Your Say’ information and social events provide regular opportunities for older people to access befriending support directly from partners such as Age Connects and Age Cymru in a social setting. The most recent event at Murchfield Community Centre, Dinas Powys had a specific ‘loneliness and isolation’ theme and also offered crafting, musical entertainment and locally baked cakes. Across the Forum’s three events this year, more than 30 partners have attended to share information, advice, and support directly with older residents.</li> <li>The ‘Forum Pop Up’ event at Barry Island Beach Hut during the summer provided an occasion for new and long-standing Forum members to connect and share a cup of tea by the seaside.</li> <li>The Forum’s recent AGM attracted more than 60 people including new and existing members and partners. All were invited to share a light lunch and hear from the newly appointed Older People’s Commissioner for Wales.</li> <li>This year the Forum has created a new Climate Change Group where members have enjoyed three get togethers including a field trip in July to learn about the Restore the Thaw project. The new BME Focus Group have also hosted 2 multi-cultural coffee mornings.</li> <li>All age friendly and Forum events have been delivered free of charge offering free warm drinks and light refreshments recognising the cost-of-living crisis and possible financial barriers to accessing social activities and have provided safe spaces for socialisation and connection.</li> <li>Age Friendly funding of £927 has been utilised to support ‘Cycling Without Age -Barry Island’ to secure hire of an annual beach hut at Barry Island (until April 2025). The hut has been used</li> </ul>	Existing



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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

			to store a mobility aid and pilot a brand-new initiative in the Vale of Glamorgan providing opportunities for older people and people with limited ability to participate in a trishaw bicycle ride at the seaside delivered by the Barry Island Chapter of Cycling Without Age. The design of the trishaw encourages social interaction among riders (of which there can be two at a time) and with the volunteer driver. Social interaction with the driver is often intergenerational, creating new and unique social opportunities for both older riders and younger drivers. During the summer, residents from Golau Caredig and Rondel House experienced days out at the seaside and rides on the trishaw.	
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Appendix B

<b>Council Measures Relating to Cost of Living/Poverty</b>				
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Annual/ Quarterly</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>2023-24 Q4 Data and 2024-25 Q2 Data</b>
<b>Council Support</b>				
New 2024	Percentage of residents agreeing that the council is doing enough to support residents through the cost of living crisis.	A	SAG  Data from Let's Talk Survey 2023  COL	10.7%
<b>Education and Training</b>				
CPM/023	Percentage of Young people leaving year 13 who are not in education, employment or training.	A	Standards & Provision	3.6%
CPM/024	Percentage of Year 11 leavers known not to be in education, training or employment (NEET).	A	Standards & Provision	1.2%
CPM/037	Percentage of Young people leaving Year 12 who are not in education, employment or training.	A	Standards & Provision	0.6%
CPM/043 (Amended)	Percentage of adults on community learning courses achieving nationally recognised awards/qualifications.	A	Strategy Community Learning & Resources (Replaces previous wording of - Percentage success rate on accredited courses for priority learners.)	95%
<b>Advice</b>				

Appendix B

New 2024	Numbers accessing the Money Advice Team for support.	A	Housing & Building Services	
<b>Housing</b>				
CPM/046	Number of tenancies maintained six months after receiving Money Advice.	A	Housing & Building Services	290
New 2024	Percentage of tenants in rent arrears	A	Housing & Building Services	
PAM/036	Number of additional affordable housing units delivered during the year per 10,000 households.	A	Housing & Building Services	
CPM/096	Percentage of all households where a positive prevention action succeeded in preventing/relieving homelessness.	A	Housing & Building Services	31.4%
PAM/012	Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless.	A	Housing & Building Services	60.7%
CPM/189	Number of all households in temporary accommodation, by type of accommodation:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Private sector accommodation</li> <li>- Public sector accommodation</li> <li>- Hostels and women's refuges</li> <li>- Bed and breakfast</li> <li>- Homeless at home</li> </ul>	Q	Housing & Building Services	B&B - 77 Private sector - Public sector - 27 Hostel - 21 homeless from home - 120 Refuge - 16 Other HSG funded hostels - 85

Appendix B

CPM/190	Number of households in temporary accommodation which are families with children.	Q	Housing & Building Services	48
CPM/139	The average number of SAP rating for the Council's housing stock.	A	Housing & Building Services	
CPM/199	The number of private rented properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from Shared Regulatory Services.	A	Shared Regulatory Services	44
<b>Business/Economy and Employment</b>				
CPM/053	Average vacancy rate in the Vale's main town centres.	A	Sustainable Development	
CPM/133	Number of local businesses advised in relation to funding, business planning and new start-ups.	A	Regeneration	615
CPM/135	Number of community led organisations that are financially supported.	A	Regeneration	24
CPM/144	Number of businesses financially supported	A	Regeneration	74
CPM/154	Number of jobs created and safeguarded through the Councils SPF programme	A	Regeneration	36
CPM/165	Percentage of C4W+ people engaged against target	A	ALN & Wellbeing	100% (actual figure exceeded target)
<b>Health</b>				

Appendix B

New 2024	Percentage of residents describing their physical health as being fairly or very good.	A	Neighbourhood Services & Transport  SAG will provide data from Let's talk survey 2023	68%
New 2024	Percentage of residents describing their mental health as being fairly or very good.	A	SAG will provide data from Let's talk survey 2023	70%
<b>Arts and Culture</b>				
CPM/069	Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least 3 times a year.	A	Strategy Community Learning & Resources  National Survey of Wales.  SAG provides data.	
<b>Transport</b>				
CPM/068	Percentage of adults 60+ who have a concessionary bus pass.	A	Neighbourhood Services & Transport	72.56%
New 2024	Percentage of residents who use the following public or active travel options in the Vale of Glamorgan:  a) Public transport  b) Walking routes  c) Cycling routes	A	Neighbourhood Services & Transport  SAG will provide data from Let's talk survey 2023	

Appendix B

	f) Community transport			
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