

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 20TH OCTOBER 2022

REFERENCE FROM HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 5TH OCTOBER 2022

“ DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT
2021/22 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 8th September, 2022 was presented by the Director of Environment and Housing who firstly outlined the legislative background to this process (the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021), which in essence, was a requirement from Welsh Government (WG) for Local Authorities to look at their performance retrospectively and to ‘test’ this via an annual assessment. The legislation also required the Council in any political term to do the same assessment and use a peer / panel process (including business and voluntary sectors).

The process involved the Council self-reflecting and asking itself ‘how well are we doing?’, ‘how well are we spending public money?’, ‘how well are we run?’ and ‘how we can do better?’, with input from Elected Members and stakeholders.

He went on to outline the process itself, and how this self-assessment fitted and fed into the overall Council Business Plan process and into the Annual Development Plan (ADP) for 2023/24, as well as the individual Service Plans, etc., and the timetable for the self-assessment process itself. In addition, both the Council’s internal and external audit governance fed into the assessment as well.

In terms of emerging areas of focus for the Council, these were challenging times for the Council and its residents, with the next ADP’s focus to be on the vulnerable, issues around residents feeding and housing themselves and the impact of the war in Ukraine (i.e. handling refugees from the conflict), as well as the Council’s need to address the long-term challenges associated with Brexit, the pandemic and the cost of living crisis.

The self-assessment document was incomplete at this time, due to the need to collate and process the responses provided by Town and Community Councils, residents and other stakeholders recently around the Council’s performance i.e. regarding the ADP. Following on from any comments and recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committees, the self-assessment would be referred back to Cabinet for their consideration prior to the final Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report being considered by the Governance and Audit Committee and approved by Full Council.

Following on from the presentation of the report, the Vice-Chair referred to the key issues and challenges highlighted as part of this (such as Brexit, the pandemic and

the cost-of-living crisis) and asked whether the objectives of last year's ADP were still fit for purpose, in order for them to be considered for the new ADP, or would they require some changes or adjustments to be made to them. The Director explained that due to the very 'broad' nature of the Council's Corporate Plan, it still remained relevant, whereas the current ADP objectives and actions would require work, due to the significant challenges that had emerged over the last 12 months and the fact that this was a 12-month plan. The new ADP would therefore need to provide greater attention to the cost-of-living crisis and vulnerable residents, as well as deal more with the housing crisis, with asylum seekers, Ukrainian refugees and Vale of Glamorgan residents all looking for housing. The advantage of the ADP was that it gave the Council an opportunity every year to look at where it wanted to be in terms of its objectives, actions, tackling issues etc. and was therefore quite a fluid document, which meant it could move quickly to pick up and meet the challenges of all of the Vale's residents. The other challenge was the Medium Term Financial Plan which would be aligned to the ADP and the funding and resources the Council had available to deliver those actions as a result.

Scrutiny Committee, having considered the report, subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Committee's views and recommendations be referred to Cabinet for their consideration prior to the final Vale of Glamorgan Council Annual Self-Assessment report being considered by Governance and Audit Committee and presented for endorsement by Full Council, namely:

- That the key, emerging, challenges around housing and related issues within the Vale of Glamorgan are given due consideration when formulating the Council's Annual Delivery Plan and general performance priorities / areas for future focus, in order that these can be addressed effectively.

Reason for recommendation

For Cabinet to consider the comments and recommendation(s) of the Scrutiny Committee in order to help inform the Council's approach to meeting the new performance requirements."