

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2022

REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2022

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

The recommendation from Cabinet of 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2022 as contained within the agenda was presented by the Director of Corporate Resources and which, in summary, included:

- The Annual Self-Assessment report was a new requirement for Welsh Local Authorities under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which required the Council to keep its performance under review, consult on and then publish a report setting out the conclusions of its self-assessment once every financial year.
- A panel assessment for peer review needed to happen at least once during an election cycle and that would be determined in terms of timing by the Council's Cabinet and the Council also then had a duty to respond to the panel performance assessment as well.
- The Act also introduced a requirement to demonstrate the provision of value for money, i.e. were resources being used economically, efficiently and effectively as well as reflecting on how well the Council ran in terms of governance and what it could do better.
- The Committee were informed how this self-assessment fitted within the overall performance process of the Council, and how it fed into these various streams, i.e. the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) as well as it entailing engagement and consultation, including Directorate self-assessment (including the 'five ways of working'), internal peer review and the Annual Governance Statement and the Internal Audit Opinion, as well as the Scrutiny Committees, the public, trade unions and partners.
- The self-assessment process had helped to identify emerging areas of focus for the Council, including those areas within the remit of the Committee for the coming year i.e. workforce, skills, diversity, mental health and recruitment and retention challenges, as well as Project Zero, how the Council used its assets, changes to procurement policy, the development of an investment strategy and Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- With regard to Consulting on the Self-Assessment Findings and Performance judgements, this included the dovetailing of the Council's existing duties and the need to test the Council's well-being objectives for their relevance every year as part of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

- The final draft of the Self-Assessment Report would be presented to Cabinet, the Governance and Audit Committee and Full Council; from there it would inform the ADP for 2023/24 and associated Service Plans for the same period.

Following the presentation of the report, the subsequent comments and questions were raised by the Committee:

- The Vice-Chair referred to the 'Year in Numbers' section of the report (Appendix A) and asked about -
  - The Council's difficulties in obtaining national benchmarking data. In response, the Director stated that there had been a move away by Data Cymru to publishing such data, but there was still some information available that the Council could benchmark against, but it also looked at using proxy measures where it could build those into the framework for performance reporting.
  - On Wellbeing Objective 1, the reference to those relevant age groups known 'not to be in education, training or employment' ('NEET'); the data provided three different sets of figures broken down by the specific age groups of school leavers involved (16-, 17- and 18-year old's respectively). He asked if it was appropriate to break these figures down in this way, due to the interlinking nature of the age groups and the impact this had on the overall figures. This query would be taken back to the relevant officers for a response.
  - On Wellbeing Objective 4, the reference to the additional area of parks, open spaces and highways land sown with wildflowers and whether the figures used were correct. The figures would be looked at again in order to ensure their accuracy.
  - Also, he discussed the possibility of using metrics from the National Survey for Wales in order to help with benchmarking, because it involved noting how well residents believed that the Council were doing as opposed to its own perception of how well it was doing with services for residents of the Vale. It was explained that the Council did use certain metrics from the National Survey for other pieces of work, and there was the potential opportunity to expand their use to this area. The Performance and Consultation teams had been asked to develop proposals for undertaking a revised public opinion survey for the Authority in in 2023, which would provide the kind of evidence and benchmarking the Councillor had suggested.
- Councillor Dr. Johnson referred to section 7 of the report, which he felt was the most pertinent part as an Elected Member, due to its coverage of use of resources, achievements, the challenges, risks and opportunities. This gave Councillors a 'short, sharp' appreciation of where the Council was in terms of these areas, as well as offering areas of focus for Elected Members. The Councillor also referred to the data used, citing several examples, and the need to remove any potential ambiguity about what the data was informing people about, to ensure that all information was 'proofread' prior to final publishing and to ensure this data was presented as effectively as possible. It was important to make the information 'relatable' to the readers of the report (for example, to quantify the areas sown with wildflowers by the number of

football pitches it would cover, or similar). It was also vital to review the use of abbreviations and 'jargon' within the report, in order to ensure greater accessibility and understanding for readers. The Director of Corporate Resources replied that the Councillor's comments would be taken on board to ensure that the information within the report was as meaningful to people as possible so they could visualise and fully comprehend the impact of the data / performance being presented.

Having considered the reference and report and all the issues and implications contained therein, Scrutiny Committee

**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:

- The need to revisit and review the use of language, wording, abbreviations, and 'jargon' within the Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report 2021/22 (Appendix A);
- The need to revisit and review the use of some of the data within, and the means of 'measuring' or 'quantifying' this in order to give more context for readers of, the Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report 2021/22 (Appendix A);
- The need to revisit and review the classification of those relevant age groups known 'not to be in education, training or employment' ('NEET') referred to separately, by their specific age group, within the Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report 2021/22 (Appendix A), with consideration to be given on these groups being interlinked and forming part of the same overall category.

#### Reason for recommendation

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