

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 10TH OCTOBER, 2024

REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT
2023/24 (REF) –

The Director of Corporate Resources, in presenting the reference and the report, stated that the Draft Vale of Glamorgan Council self-assessment findings would enable the Council to identify how it could further enhance its internal processes and use of resources to support achievement of the Annual Delivery Plan commitments and the Corporate Plan wellbeing objectives. The Director drew particular attention to the engagement section of the report which had been strengthened following responses received from Elected Members. The section incorporated an overview of key Council decisions taken throughout the year, the work of the Member Champions and collaborative working. The Director highlighted that evaluation of a wide range of performance, engagement and other data insights had informed the Council's three main annual self-assessment judgements.

The report highlighted that the Council judged that it had made good progress in delivering its Annual Delivery Plan commitments as aligned to the Corporate Plan 2025. The Annual Governance Statement also provided a reasonable assurance judgement from the Head of Internal Audit on the Council's governance, risk management and internal control effectiveness, which indicated that from a governance perspective the Council's systems and processes were generally sound and that an overall judgement of good had been attributed to the Council's use of resources.

Councillor Franks, in referring to page 16, having regard to the statement "to work with voluntary and community organisations to deliver and shape local services, encourage people to get more involved in their local communities and support them to seek funding", considered that the loss of support for community events, in particular for Dinas Powys was disappointing and in his view would be a disadvantage to the communities.

The Director commented that he was aware that the loss of support may not be welcomed, however the Council had to consider its priorities, for example Social Services and Education, which were symptoms of the financial situation that the Council found itself in and difficult decisions were having to be made.

Councillor Carroll considered that the report was overestimating the Council's performance drawing attention to the Barry Interchange and Bus Station with no buses, which he said was not a good use of resources. In his view the statements

did not give an accurate reflection of the current situation. He also considered that the Council's view of the Eagleswell site being a successful project was inaccurate.

The Leader in response said that a well-developed case for the use of the Eagleswell site had been made. The Council had been required to provide homes for families in need, which in her view was a success. Discussions in relation to the site had been considered in detail by the Planning Committee and the project she said provided good quality temporary homes.

In response to Councillor Carroll's comment regarding the Council's planning process the Leader offered to meet with Councillor Carroll to discuss the process if he so wished. Furthermore, with regard to the bus interchange, this was a regional project which had taken some time to set up however buses were now running.

Councillor Dr. Johnson said that he too did not agree with Councillor Carroll's comments in relation to the Eagleswell site and subsequently referred to the actions contained within the report commenting that out of the 591 actions 85% were noted as Good, which left 15% unachieved. The financial and engagement insights had also been downgraded from Good to Fair and he asked the Director for an explanation.

In response the Director advised that the financial situation was preventing the Council from succeeding in every aspect and the self-assessment needed to reflect the under-funding situation. Furthermore the Director said that the requirement within the self-assessment was for the Council to show a level of performance and under-performance. The peer assessment process was intended to supplement the process with the two processes needing to complement each another. With regard to the 90 actions noted as not achieved these he said would feed into the following years' Service Plans. The Director also took the opportunity to refer to the pockets of good practice advising that the report showed the breadth of engagement work the Council undertook and their outcomes. There were also comments received from the Life in the Vale survey which would be taken forward.

Councillor Dr. Johnson thanked the Director of Corporate Resources for the honesty presented in the report in relation to engagement work and considered that all departments should be making statements in this honest way.

Councillor Loveluck-Edwards referred to the references throughout the report regarding the continued financial pressures the Council was facing, but she said that she wished to see "starker" language in the document being used as the way in which the Council acted now had fundamentally and significantly changed as a result of the current financial situation. In recognising that the Council wished to encourage debate and communication from its residents the Councillor enquired as to whether the Council would focus on the challenge of recruitment and selection in care provision. The Director stated that as a Local Authority the Council was actively considering what the Local Authority looked like now and what it would look like in the coming years, which would be addressed within the Corporate Plan. He also commented that the recruitment and selection challenges had also been reported to the Governance and Audit Committee and Cabinet as part of the risk register.

The Leader said the report was a retrospective report and Cabinet were aware of the shortfalls but that it was important to move forward with the Council confirming its commitment to the most vulnerable as well as noting that the “Let’s Talk about Life in the Vale” survey had informed the Council’s budget.

The Chair, in conclusion, in referring to a more honest assessment of public engagement having regard to previous comments made by the public in previous consultations and it being acknowledged that there had been some failures in public engagement, how these could be improved upon needed to be considered and addressed further going forward.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the document be approved and the Committee’s comments as outlined above referred to Cabinet for consideration.

Reason for recommendation

Following consideration by the Committee with comments referred back to Cabinet.