

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 28TH NOVEMBER, 2024

REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 23RD OCTOBER, 2024

“526 RESHAPING PROGRAMME: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES – A
RESPONSE TO AUDIT WALES REPORTS ON TACKLING POVERTY AND THIRD
SECTOR WORKING (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet (and appended report, as well as a presentation) was outlined to the Committee by the Operational Manager, Corporate Strategy and Insight. The purpose of this was to enable the relevant Committees to have sight of the development of this body of work and to provide an opportunity to feed back their comments to Cabinet.

This report set out the key findings and recommendations contained in reports produced by Cwmpas following a programme of engagement undertaken on behalf of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, in response to four Audit Wales Reports, focused on tackling poverty and working with the Third Sector.

The engagement focused on the recommendations outlined in these reports and looked at the Council’s current work on tackling poverty as well as working relationships with Third Sector Organisations, Social Enterprises and Town and Community Councils to explore opportunities for development.

The report highlighted the results of extensive engagement with both internal Council officers, and representatives from external organisations, namely, Third Sector, Social Enterprise and Town and Community Councils.

The report also considered the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the engagement and the Council’s proposals to address them as part of the development of a new Corporate Plan and the Reshaping Programme of transformation.

The background methodology on strengthening communities and work to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis was also shared with Members.

Subsequently, a number of comments and queries were raised at the meeting, which included the following.

The Chair welcomed the report and the emphasis on social enterprises laid out by Cwmpas and their recommendation that the Council undertake detailed mapping of the sector to develop a comprehensive understanding of the size and make-up of the

sector within the Vale of Glamorgan. It was vital that the Council supported social enterprises through providing a pipeline of opportunities and helping them to find a market, in order to make these enterprises as beneficial and sustainable as possible.

Councillor Carroll stated that the Council should hold the various Third Sector organisations and partners that it worked with to account to ensure that they were meeting their obligations and objectives to the Local Authority and residents and wanted to understand how this was currently being implemented by the Council. In response, it was explained that there were various arrangements and agreements in place with these partners, which included key conditions, service level agreements and terms of reference in order to monitor and evaluate their performance and what they were achieving in terms of the specific, set outcomes and services for the Council and its residents. The specific examples raised by the Councillor would be forwarded to the appropriate Council teams.

The Vice-Chair welcomed the work being undertaken by Third Sector partners, which would also provide the Council with an external perspective of the organisation and the opportunity to look at best practice from this sector which could be taken on board by the Council in its own workstreams and practices. This also applied to its partnership and relationship with local Town and Community Councils, which would also help to strengthen the relationship between the Council and Town and Community Councils within the Vale of Glamorgan. Procurement was an important element to these relationships and should be taken forward as part of this process, as well as being more creative with procurement going forward. In response, it was explained that, regarding procurement, a more creative approach was being undertaken and at the Section 16 forum on engaging with the wider Third and Social Enterprise sectors around the procurement process. Procurement was also being addressed by the Committee's Task and Finish Group. Work was also being undertaken as part of the report on a reflections piece, which was an open and honest piece of work, getting the views of external partners in terms of working with the Council for the Reshaping Programme and Corporate Plan.

The Chair explained that the Procurement Reform and the Social Partnership Bill which would be coming in February 2025, would make it easier and simpler to engage, pre-tender, with Third Sector, Social Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and for them to bid for these. Also, there would be a requirement to publish a pipeline of opportunities, which would aid the Council's procurement and benefit local and smaller businesses in tendering to the Authority.

Following the discussions on this item, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the following comments from the Committee be shared with Cabinet for consideration:

- The emphasis on social enterprises was welcomed, as well as the recommendation by Cwmpas for the Council to undertake detailed mapping of the sector to develop a comprehensive understanding of the size and make-up of the sector within the County;

- The importance of the Council supporting social enterprises through providing a pipeline of opportunities and helping them to find a market, in order to make these enterprises as beneficial and sustainable as possible;
- To ensure that the Council holds the various third sector organisations and partners that it works with to account to ensure that they were meeting their obligations to the Local Authority and residents;
- The benefits of working with various external agencies and third sector partners which would provide the Council with an external perspective of the organisation and the opportunity to look at best practice from this sector which could be taken on board by the Council in its own workstreams and practices;
- Also, to have this similar external perspective and appraisal of the Council and how it worked from other key stakeholders and partners such as the local Town and Community Councils in order to build on the relationships with them;
- The importance of the Vale of Glamorgan Council working with its Town and Community Council partners around procurement, as well as social enterprises and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) within the county.

Reason for recommendation

In order that the comments from the Committee are fed back and considered by Cabinet.”