

Meeting of:	Council
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 24 April 2023
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report 2021/22
Purpose of Report:	To present the 2021/22 Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report to Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution
Report Owner:	T. Bowring, Director of Corporate Resources
Responsible Officer:	Elizabeth Whitaker, Assistant Democratic Services Officer
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	All Scrutiny Committee Members have been consulted
Policy Framework:	Section 7.4.4 of the Council's Constitution requires Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report to be presented to Full Council and to include details of future work programmes.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Annual Report has been produced in accordance with Section 7.4.4 of the Council's Constitution which states that 'Scrutiny Committees must report annually to Full Council on their workings, with recommendations for their future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate'. The report details the role of Scrutiny, how Scrutiny is undertaken in the Vale of Glamorgan and highlights key achievements from the work of each Scrutiny Committee, significant events during the municipal years and future working, specifically in relation to the Council's agreement that the work of Scrutiny should be closely aligned to the four Wellbeing Outcomes of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-25, and subsequently the four Wellbeing Objectives that form the main basis of the Council's new Corporate Plan 	

Recommendation

1. THAT Council receive the Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report for the Municipal year 2021/22.

Reason for Recommendation

1. To receive the Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report as required under the Council's Constitution.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Annual Report has been produced in accordance with Section 7.4.4 of the Council's Constitution which states that 'Scrutiny Committees must report annually to Full Council on their workings, with recommendations for their future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate'.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The report details the role of Scrutiny, how Scrutiny is undertaken in the Vale of Glamorgan and highlights key achievements from the work of each Scrutiny Committee, significant events during the municipal years and future working, specifically in relation to the Council's agreement that the work of Scrutiny should be closely aligned to the four Wellbeing Outcomes of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-25, and subsequently the four Wellbeing Objectives that form the main basis of the Council's new [Corporate Plan](#)'.
- 2.2 For information, Members are advised that the Annual Report is only "reported to Council" as opposed to it requiring actual approval. The Annual Report is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

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

- 3.1 The Annual Report contributes to the long term future by ensuring that Scrutiny Committees adhere to their Wellbeing Objectives and Wellbeing Outcomes through ongoing monitoring and reporting.
- 3.2 The Annual Report contributes to the prevention of problems through the monitoring and reporting of issues and the work of the Scrutiny Committees in this regard.

- 3.3** The Annual Report ensures collaboration/involvement through the monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of Scrutiny Committees in working with external partners, stakeholders and the public in achieving Wellbeing and other Objectives for the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** There are no direct climate change and nature implications.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** There are no direct financial implications.

Employment

- 5.2** There are no direct employment implications.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** The Council is required to comply with the Local Government Act 2000, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the subordinate legislation in relation to the Scrutiny function.

6. Background Papers

None.

VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL
SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT | 2021 - 2022



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FOREWORD

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS GROUP.

As the newly appointed Chair of the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group, I am pleased to present the 2021 - 2022 Scrutiny Annual Report. The report gives the reader an overview of the role of Scrutiny in the Vale of Glamorgan, alongside an account of the progress made in the last municipal year. This includes some of the key pieces of work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees, along with ongoing areas of focus, and key pieces of feedback that Members have provided on how Scrutiny is conducted within our Council.

The 2021-2022 municipal year was an active and engaging one for Scrutiny in the Vale, and it is important to share with all Members and the wider community some of the matters that were considered during this period. As the report highlights, the Committees have tackled many of the primary issues affecting our communities, as well as the challenges faced around recovering and emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Scrutiny must act as a 'critical friend' to the Council, and as such, Scrutiny Committee Members will continue to endeavour to maintain an open and critical mind, to provide criticism in a constructive way, and to offer commendation where this is appropriate, over the coming years.

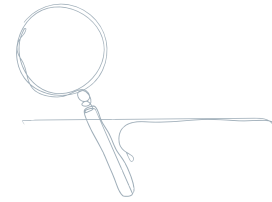
Thanks is extended to all the Members of the Vale of Glamorgan's five Scrutiny Committees who were part of the work covered in this annual report. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank residents, local partners, key stakeholders and witnesses who gave their time to assist the Scrutiny process throughout the year. I, together with the Members of the Scrutiny Committees, look forward to working with all those parties involved in future Scrutiny work, in order to provide this important element of our local democracy.

COUNCILLOR NEIL THOMAS

Chair - Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group and
and Vice-Chair – Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee



“SCRUTINY
ACTS AS
A ‘CRITICAL
FRIEND’,
STANDING BACK
FROM THE DAY TO DAY
DECISION-MAKING TO
LOOK AT AND REVIEW
OUTCOMES FOR
LOCAL RESIDENTS.”



WHAT IS SCRUTINY?

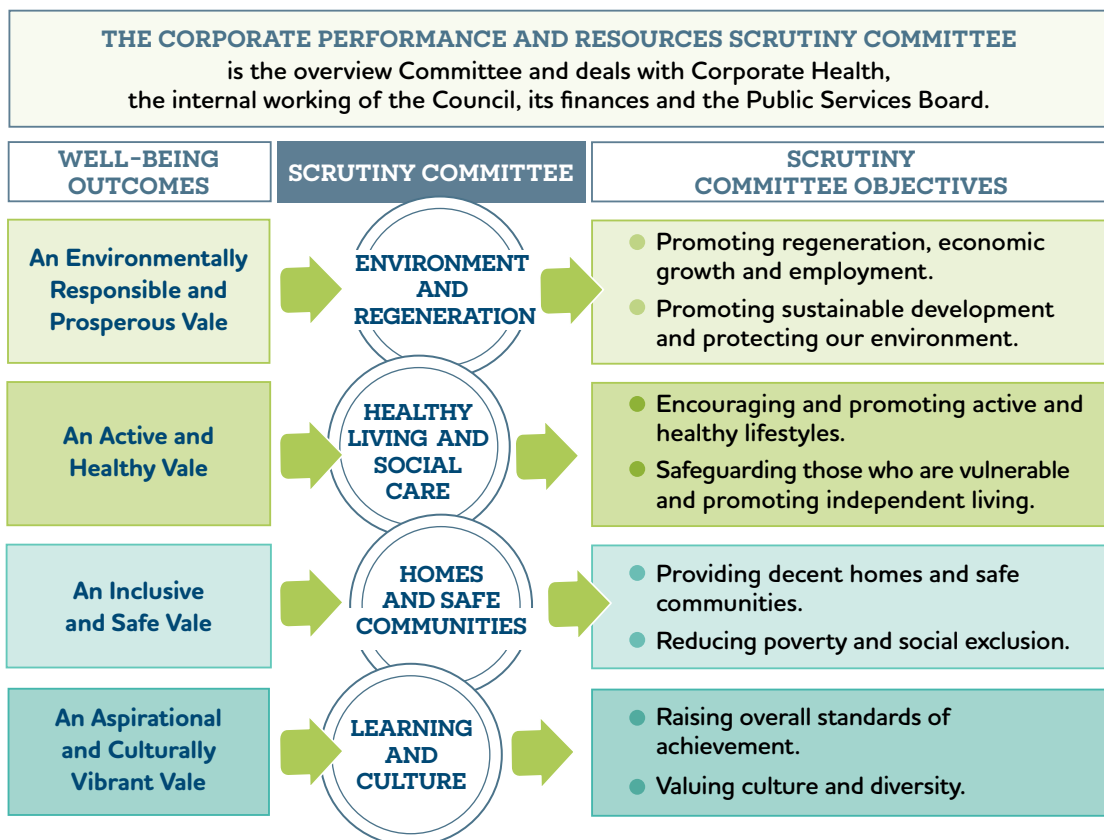
SCRUTINY COMMITTEES CARRY OUT IMPORTANT WORK FOR THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNERS.

It offers reassurance to local people, helps to develop policy, challenging the performance of the Council and its services and holds the Cabinet to account for its decisions.

Scrutiny Committees can make recommendations and scrutinise the policies, decisions and performance of the Cabinet. The Cabinet, in turn, consults with Scrutiny Committees on issues, and responds to Scrutiny Committee recommendations. There are five Scrutiny Committees within the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

HOW DOES SCRUTINY WORK IN THE VALE?

2016/17 saw the introduction of a fresh and new approach to the way that Scrutiny operated within the Vale of Glamorgan. The Council agreed that the work of Scrutiny should be closely aligned to the Council's four new Well-being Outcomes.



Each Committee was therefore linked to one or more of the Wellbeing Outcomes, with its own individual **Objectives**, as shown below:

These Objectives were tailored to the Committee's remit and areas of focus, with annual **Forward Work Programmes** being produced (and updated quarterly) to show the matters to be considered.

VALE OF GLAMORGAN CORPORATE PLAN 2020-25

In February 2020 the Cabinet and Full Council endorsed a new **Corporate Plan**, the Council's key strategic document which sets out how its vision of *Strong Communities with a Bright Future* will be delivered over a five-year period. All Scrutiny Committees were consulted regarding and contributed to the development of the new plan.

A new set of Well-being Objectives have been developed:

- To work with and for our communities;
- To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth;
- To support people at home and in their community; and
- To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment.

These Well-being Objectives reflect a more integrated and cross-cutting approach to the Council's work and demonstrate how actions across the Council's Directorates will contribute to multiple objectives.

A detailed Annual Delivery Plan is published each spring detailing the key activities to be undertaken in order to deliver the commitments contained in the Corporate plan, with each Scrutiny Committee contributing to the drafting process. This process in turn directly informs individual Service Plans which are also produced annually and contain annual performance measures and targets. These are also closely monitored by Scrutiny Committees.

At the first meeting of each Scrutiny Committee following the Annual Meeting a presentation is given on the Annual Delivery Plan in the context of the Corporate Plan and terms of reference of the Committee. This presentation enables Scrutiny Committee Members to identify any areas of particular focus for that Committee for the year and, as such, inform the **Work Programme** of the Committee.

Individually and collectively, each Scrutiny Committee approaches its work in the following ways:

- Striving to improve services to achieve better outcomes for residents;
- Hearing public concerns and voices;
- Adding value to the way decisions are reached;
- Acting positively as a 'critical friend'; and
- Learning from others.



WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

THE ACT REQUIRES PUBLIC BODIES IN WALES TO THINK ABOUT THE LONG-TERM IMPACT OF THEIR DECISIONS, TO WORK BETTER WITH PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND EACH OTHER, AND TO PREVENT PERSISTENT PROBLEMS SUCH AS POVERTY, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE BY CONSIDERING FIVE WAYS OF WORKING.

These Five Ways of Working give a framework through which public bodies must work to deliver the seven national Well-being Goals for Wales as set out by the Act.

Between May 2021 and April 2022 many of the Scrutiny Committees' Forward Work Programme Items have demonstrated their commitment to carrying out their work in accordance with the Act:

5 WAYS OF WORKING	FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME ITEMS
<p>THINKING FOR THE LONG-TERM</p> <p>The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AUDIT WALES: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT OF THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL 2021 – Corporate Performance and Resources • VALE OF GLAMORGAN REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021 – 2036: CONSULTATION ON DRAFT REVIEW REPORT AND DRAFT DELIVERY AGREEMENT – Environment and Regeneration • CONSULTATION ON THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL'S DRAFT WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN (WESP) 2022-32 – Learning and Culture • ENFORCED SALE POLICY – Homes and Safe Communities • CARDIFF AND THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN POPULATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2022. – Healthy Living and Social Care
<p>TAKING AN INTEGRATED APPROACH</p> <p>Considering how the Council's well-being objectives may impact upon other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VALE OF GLAMORGAN ANNUAL AUDIT SUMMARY 2020 AND PROGRESS AGAINST EXTERNAL REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT – Corporate Performance and Resources • PROJECT ZERO - DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE PLAN – Environment and Regeneration • BIG FRESH CATERING COMPANY – Learning and Culture • HOUSING AND BUILDING SERVICES DIGITAL SOLUTION AND THAT OF C1V – Homes and Safe Communities • PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE VALE ALLIANCE - AN INTEGRATED MODEL FOR THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TO ADULT CITIZENS IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN – Healthy Living and Social Care

5 WAYS OF WORKING

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME ITEMS

TAKING A PREVENTATIVE APPROACH

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help the Council to meet its objectives.

- **UNACCEPTABLE ACTIONS BY CITIZENS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES** – Corporate Performance and Resources
- **ACTIVE TRAVEL – RESULTS OF CONSULTATION FOR THE ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK MAP UPDATE 2021** – Environment and Regeneration
- **ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2020/2** – Learning and Culture
- **HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2018- 2022 - MONITORING REPORT** – Homes and Safe Communities
- **SUPPORT FOR CARERS IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN** – Healthy Living and Social Care

COLLABORATING

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the Council itself) that could help the Council to meet its well-being objectives.

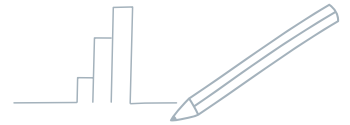
- **VALE OF GLAMORGAN PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21** – Corporate Performance and Resources
- **BARRY DOCKS TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE WELTAG STAGE TWO** – Environment and Regeneration
- **SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN** – Learning and Culture
- **UPDATE ON THE DAARC SERVICE (DOMESTIC ABUSE ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL COORDINATOR)** – Homes and Safe Communities
- **INTELLIGENT PERSONAL ASSISTANCES – USING MAINSTREAM TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE INDEPENDENT LIVING – NICK FRENCH AND ASHELY BALE FROM INNOVATE TRUST. [VIEW PRESENTATION]** – Healthy Living and Social Care

INVOLVEMENT

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the Council serves.

- **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY** – Corporate Performance and Resources
- **FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEMES FOR VALE OF GLAMORGAN AND SECTION 19 FLOOD INVESTIGATION REPORTING UPDATE** – Environment and Regeneration
- **CONSULTATION ON WELSH GOVERNMENT'S LGBTQ+ ACTION PLAN FOR WALES** – Learning and Culture
- **DRAFT TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2021-2026** – Homes and Safe Communities
- **FOSTER WALES – AMY McARDLE, VALE OF GLAMORGAN MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT CO-ORDINATOR. [VIEW PRESENTATION]** – Healthy Living and Social Care

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF SCRUTINY



DURING THE PREVIOUS AND CURRENT MUNICIPAL YEARS OUR SCRUTINY COMMITTEES HAVE PLACED GREATER FOCUS ON MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE WORK THEY CARRY OUT.

However, it has been important to acknowledge the challenges faced when trying to assess the impact of Scrutiny given that its positive outcomes are not always easily measured and often only become apparent over longer periods of time, and therefore cannot be easily captured via the Council's usual Quarterly Decision Tracking or Annual Reporting Procedures.

There are, however, some metrics that can be used to monitor the direct outcomes of Scrutiny, which in turn can give an indication of its impact on the decision-making processes of the Council. These have been summarised below:

VALE OF GLAMORGAN SCRUTINY SCORECARD 2021-22

- Number of Scrutiny Committee Meetings: **53**
- Number of Scrutiny Committee Meetings which heard from Public Speakers: **5**
- Members of the Public who have made verbal representations at Scrutiny Meetings: **31**
- % of Cabinet Items with Scrutiny input
Items which have been referred to Cabinet by a Scrutiny Committee: **30.1%**
- % of Scrutiny recommendations agreed by Cabinet: **75%**

WHAT MEMBERS HAVE TO SAY:

In April 2021, all Members of Scrutiny Committees were asked to complete a Scrutiny Impact Questionnaire so that they could feed back on issues such as whether Scrutiny has a positive impact on the work of the Council, how their own contributions have impacted the debate and recommendations made, and how Scrutiny in the Vale could be improved.

Here are some highlights from the responses received:

Does the Scrutiny Committee(s) you are a member of have a clearly defined well-being outcome and valued role in the council's improvement arrangements to achieve its vision?

“100% of respondents answered **Yes.**”

Responses received Cont. :-

What do you understand the main purpose of Scrutiny within the Vale of Glamorgan to be?

“The principal purpose of Scrutiny is to look at overarching policies and decisions made by Cabinet to deliver public service and to put together evidence on the issues that affect residents within the Vale of Glamorgan and make the necessary recommendations based on the committees' research”

How do you feel your contributions at Scrutiny meetings have impacted the debate and any recommendations made?

“When contributing with other Councillors, recommendations are often implemented by subsequent cabinet meetings”
“I have been able to shape resolutions and direct thinking”
“When I have raised any issues or contributed in a debate I feel that these have been taken on board”

Do you think the Committee is focused on the right issues?

“100% of respondents answered **Yes.**”
“The issues are many and varied, and the length of time taken at these meetings is indicative of our focus”
“All requests from members are brought by officers to committee regarding what is needed to be covered by the committee.”
“The committee is usually in agreement with the agenda and the forward work programme, members of the Public seem happy.”

How could Scrutiny in the Vale of Glamorgan be improved and / or what would you do differently?

“Have more themed meetings, greater public participation, more workshops, more use of forms and more independent witnesses”
“I have no suggestions on how things could be improved as I believe the structure of these committees function well”

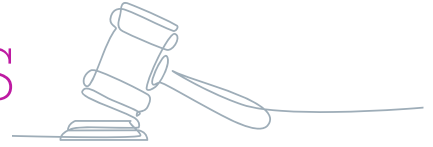
What further training and development would you consider beneficial to help you in your Scrutiny role?

“I always welcome any training that would keep us up to date on changes within policy as time doesn't stand still and there are always new developments coming on board that we have to be aware of and understand in order to operate a successful Scrutiny process”

Do you feel you have had sufficient training and development opportunities to help you perform your role as a Scrutiny Committee Member?

“100% of respondents answered **Yes.**”

MEET THE COMMITTEES



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES

OBJECTIVES AND REMIT:

Overview Committee that deals with Corporate Health, the internal working of the Council, its finances and the Public Services Board.

Chair: Councillor Mark Wilson;

Vice-Chair: Councillor Pamela Drake;

Councillors: George Carroll, Geoff Cox, Robert Crowley, Vince Driscoll, Gwyn John, Dr. Ian Johnson, Ruba Sivagnanam and John Thomas

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION

OBJECTIVES:

- Promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment.
- Promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment.

REMIT:

Waste Management, Highway Maintenance, Planning (but not matters such as planning applications), Transportation and Economic Development.

Chair: Councillor Bronwen Brooks;

Vice-Chair: Councillor Ruba Sivagnanam;

Councillors: Vincent Bailey, Pamela Drake, Vince Driscoll, Gwyn John, Michael Morgan, Andrew Robertson, Leighton Rowlands and Steffan Wiliam

HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE

WHAT MEMBERS HAVE TO SAY

OBJECTIVES

- Encouraging and promoting active and healthy lifestyles.
- Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting independent living.

REMIT:

Adult Services (such as Care Homes), Children and Young People Services (such as the Adoption Service), Leisure, Parks, Sport and Play.

Chair: Councillor Stephen Griffiths

Vice-Chair: Councillor Neil Thomas;

Councillors: Julie Aviet, Janice Charles, Owen Griffiths, Hunter Jarvie, Rachel Nugent-Finn and John Thomas (plus two vacancies)

HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES

OBJECTIVES

- Providing decent homes and safe communities.
- Reducing poverty and social exclusion.

REMIT:

Council Housing and related maintenance, Private Sector Housing, Community Safety, Crime and Disorder (including Youth Offending Services) and Shared Regulatory Services functions.

Chair: Councillor Amelia Collins;

Vice-Chair: Councillor Julie Aviet;

Councillors: Jonathan Bird, Bronwen Brooks, Christine Cave, Sally Hanks, Rachel Nugent-Finn, Andrew Parker, Sandra Perkes and Leighton Rowlands

One representative, as a non-voting observer, from each of the following organisations:

- Citizens Advice Cardiff and Vale
- four representatives from Tenant Working Group/Panel

LEARNING AND CULTURE

OBJECTIVES

- Raising overall standards of achievement.
- Valuing culture and diversity.

REMIT:

All School matters, (which includes School Improvement, Post-16 Education, Community Education), Youth Services, the Library Service, Equalities, Welsh Language and Arts Development.

Chair: Councillor Gordon Kemp;

Vice-Chair: Councillor Rhiannon Birch;

Councillors: Stephen Griffiths, Nic Hodges, Hunter Jarvie, Jayne Norman, Andrew Parker, Sandra Perkes, Leighton Rowlands and Neil Thomas

Also invited to attend as co-opted Members:

- Roman Catholic Church
- Church in Wales
- Parent Governor-Secondary Sector
- Parent Governor-Primary Sector

Also invited to attend as non-voting observers:

- Primary
- Welsh Medium Education
- Secondary
- Vale Youth Forum
- Headteachers
- Free Churches



KEY AREAS OF SCRUTINY ACTIVITY 2021-22

VALE ALLIANCE - AN INTEGRATED MODEL FOR THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TO ADULT CITIZENS IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: Healthy Living and Social Care

ACTIVITY: In March 2022, the Committee was presented with an intended phased approach to establishing an alliance model for health and social care in the Vale of Glamorgan. For more than a decade, an integrated structure had been in place in the Vale for the provision of community health and adult social care services. In order to reduce duplication and provide a more seamless service in line with the strategic vision of 'A Healthier Wales', it was the ambition that the current arrangement should be progressed further. A Vale Alliance was the proposed mechanism to encompass further integration. It was expected that through pooling resources it would operate more effectively to meet the health and wellbeing needs of the citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan. The proposed alliance model would represent an advanced form of integration between health and social care which had not been attempted locally in the past, and it would offer considerable opportunities for pooling resources in order to deliver better outcomes for residents..

OUTCOME: Following Scrutiny consideration, significant opportunities to engage and involve the public with the formation of the model, as well as ensuring that the local third sector providers were integrated at a management level within the Alliance, were established. The project team actively collaborated with commissioned and specialist providers in order to ensure that the model delivered tangibly fewer hand-offs for those in need of help and support. It was agreed that the model would be built on a solid strategic and policy foundation, aimed at ensuring that people in need were seen as early as possible, at the right level, and supported to remain in their homes and communities. Increased integration between health and social care would directly contribute to a more robust model of preventative support, where services and resources were managed and aligned more effectively. The model also supported sustainable growth within local communities by better harnessing the skills and resources of local wellbeing and support services, and managing them proactively based on an accurate and ongoing local assessment of need and demand. An Alliance model empowered those providing care and support to make the right decisions at the right time, and to tap into the strengths and assets available within people's networks and communities.

SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: Corporate Performance and Resources

ACTIVITY: A report on this matter was referred to this Committee in January 2022 for their consideration, with any comments referred back to Cabinet for further consideration. This provided an update on the sickness absence statistics for the 6-month period from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021.

OUTCOME: The Committee scrutinised and debated the findings of the report, leading them to recommend that in order to provide a more comprehensive view for both Elected Members and the public, future reporting on Sickness Absence should include details of sickness absence comparisons with other Local Authorities. Subsequently, Human Resources agreed that comparative data on sickness absence from other Local Authorities would be looked into and included for future reports.

ILLEGAL MONEY LENDING

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: Homes and Safe Communities

ACTIVITY: A presentation was given to the Committee in January 2022 on the work of the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit (WIMLU), whose focus was to tackle people involved in illegal money lending activities, commonly known as 'loan sharks' through investigation and enforcement.

OUTCOME: The Committee scrutinised the work of WIMLU, querying the scale of the issue, addressing how best for victims to come forward, noting the effectiveness of using the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA), and assessing how WIMLU could deal with new challenges going forward, for example, the use on online platforms for illegal money lending, and growing issues such as fuel poverty, which could lead to the expansion of 'loan shark' activity. Furthermore, through the presentation to the Committee and due to the attendance of the representative from the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Head of Service for the Council's Housing and Building Services, these bodies would be engaging with WIMLU in terms of training, awareness raising and further such collaboration, going forward. For example, WIMLU staff were able to carry out in depth training for 21 members of staff from the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Housing Team, and 48 staff and volunteers from Cardiff & Vale Citizens' Advice. Also, Committee Members were provided with the contact details and posters advertising the role of WIMLU, in order to share these with their constituents and the wider public. The presentation and the scrutiny undertaken by the Committee regarding the work of WIMLU helped to raise WIMLU's profile, leading to greater engagement and interaction with the wider public and other groups. For example, the presentation on WIMLU at the Committee meeting was reported by Barry & District News, which was then picked up by Wales Online, which ran useful coverage of WIMLU's work. This was subsequently reported on further via social media.

FLOOD ALLEVIATION

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: Environment and Regeneration

ACTIVITY: In February 2022, the Committee was presented with an update from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) on flood alleviation schemes planned and ongoing for the Vale of Glamorgan. This was in response to a major flooding event back in December 2020 which effected large parts of the Vale of Glamorgan including Dinas Powys and Sully. The Council's initial response to the flooding event was reported to the Committee in February 2021 and it was noted that the Council was required to instigate an investigation report under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. At that meeting, the Committee recommended for an update to be reported when the investigation report was complete, and for this to be considered in conjunction with a report from NRW regarding flood alleviation schemes.

In February 2022, the Committee also heard several representations from public speakers, focussing on the personal impact on people's lives that the floods had on residents in Sully, Dinas Powys and Llandough. The Committee was able to consider the flood alleviation works being undertaken by NRW as well as the reasons for the floods, and the responses of responsible agencies and organisations.

OUTCOME: Consideration by the Scrutiny Committee allowed significant opportunity for the Council and NRW to engage with members of the public directly impacted by the flooding event, which also provided Members of the Scrutiny Committee with first-hand knowledge and experience. As a result, the Committee was able to highlight emergency funding of £2.9m provided by Welsh Government for Property Level Protection. This enabled residents to apply for structural improvements to their homes, which would help alleviate risks of flood damage in the future.

PROPOSALS TO AMALGAMATE BUTE COTTAGE NURSERY WITH EVENLODE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND COGAN NURSERY WITH COGAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: Learning and Culture

ACTIVITY: On 10th January 2022, Cabinet considered an Update report on the Consultation on the Proposals to Amalgamate Bute Cottage Nursery with Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Nursery with Cogan Primary School. Councillor G.D.D. Carrol, as an Elected Member of the Council, being of the view that opinions expressed in the consultation warranted further consideration, called the item in for discussion at the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee's meeting of February 2022.

OUTCOME: Six members of the public spoke at the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee meeting regarding the proposals, and there were three additional written representations made by representatives from two of the schools involved, both for and against the proposals, which enabled Committee to gain insight into the views of those directly impacted. A vote was held with regards to the stance of the Committee regarding the proposals, and the outcome was that the Committee endorsed Cabinet's recommendations.

ONGOING TASK AND FINISH WORK



THE COST OF SCHOOLING

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: Learning and Culture

ACTIVITY: The Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee established a Task and Finish Group in January 2020 to review the costs to parents and carers of sending their children to school. The Group have subsequently heard evidence from pupils attending school in the Vale of Glamorgan, parents whose children attend a range of Vale of Glamorgan Schools, and Local Authority Officers who have been involved in tackling challenges around the affordability of schooling, digital exclusion and period dignity, particularly in light of the impact of the COVID19 Pandemic. In March 2022 a report was presented to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee, summarising the work undertaken by the group and presenting a draft of a suggested Good Practice Guidance, with the aim of referring this on to Cabinet and subject to their approval, then making the Guidance available

OUTCOME: In their meeting of 28th March 2022, Cabinet endorsed the Good Practice guide, and agreed that it should be circulated to the Governing Bodies and Head Teachers of all Vale of Glamorgan Schools, and be made publicly available on the Council's Website.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PROVISION WITHIN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: Homes and Safe Communities

ACTIVITY: The Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee identified, on the 14th October 2020, that housing and homelessness provision as part of the recovery from COVID-19 should be reviewed by the Committee and consideration be given to setting up a Task and Finish Work Group in order to achieve this. A report on setting up this group, its membership, setting out its proposed scope and timescales was presented to the Committee at their meeting on the 10th February, 2021 and subsequently approved. As part of this, the Group would consider the key areas of current and future housing

and homelessness provision and policies – allocation priorities, governance, resources, house building strategy, emerging legislative and funding challenges or developments – and to offer recommendations on how to approach, implement or to improve on these.

OUTCOME: The Task and Finish Group met between April 2021 – February 2022. The Group were presented with information by Council Officers and other interested parties, including external witnesses, partners and stakeholders (i.e. Shelter Cymru and Pobl) on various key aspects of housing and homelessness provision. The findings of the Group were shared as [a report to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee](#) and referred to Cabinet in March 2022, with the report offering a number of recommendations for Scrutiny and Cabinet to consider, as follows:

- That the Council provides further modular accommodation with intensive, wraparound support, such as seen at the Court Road development.
- That the Council reviews the opportunities of expanding the One Stop Shop provision at Holton Road i.e., greater inclusion of 3rd Sector services to complement the work undertaken by Pobl. As part of this, consideration should be given to promoting and publicising the services available to all residents within the Vale of Glamorgan.
- That the Council develops a land disposal protocol which prioritises the disposal of surplus Council owned land for new Council house building in addition to purchasing land within the private market, and further, Council officers liaise with Welsh Government officials regarding surplus public sector land.
- That the Council explore the possibility of accelerating the process between planning for new build social housing sites and move in ready for tenants, i.e., complete the building of such housing units off site. As part of this, the Council should look at examples of best practice in other Local Authorities in Wales and elsewhere.
- That the Council build carbon neutral properties and invest in original stock to bring up to a similar level, where able, in order to ensure sustainable accommodation and to reduce fuel poverty.

Subsequently, both Scrutiny and Cabinet endorsed the report and its recommendations, which would be incorporated into the Council's housing policies, with an update report on this matter to be provided to Scrutiny and Cabinet in 12 months' time.

SUPPORT FOR SCRUTINY



Scrutiny is supported by officers from Democratic Services, who are tasked with looking after the democratic process within the Vale. The team ensures that all Councillors have all the necessary information and evidence they need in order to properly consider any topic or area of interest.

LOOKING FORWARD

KEY WORK FOR 2022-23 WILL BE:

- Continue to scrutinise how well the Council is meeting its objectives, as outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan with a change in administration;
- Making positive contributions to policy development and to the continuous improvements to Council functions;
- Looking at the impact of the financial savings that the Council has to achieve and scrutinising the implications of further reduction in resources;
- Continue to evaluate proposals around services that will come out of the Council's Reshaping Services project;
- Continue to monitor the attainment levels of our pupils and to assess challenges facing schools;
- To continue to consider sustainable development and explore funding opportunities;
- To continue to scrutinise the work and impact of the Public Service Board and the Central South Consortium and, through joint scrutiny, the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal;
- To continue to build on the Council's detailed Member Development Programme, to consider looking at further innovative forms of scrutiny, and looking at how scrutiny can add value and encourage public participation.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Members of the public are able to register to speak at a scrutiny Committee, should they wish to do so. Full details of public Speaking at scrutiny Committees is contained in the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Scrutiny Public Participation Guide, which is available on the Council's website, via the following link: [Scrutiny Public Participation Guide](#)



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Should you wish to find out more about the work of Scrutiny, you can do so at:
www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/scrutiny/scrutiny.aspx

Please look at our website to see the dates, times and venues of forthcoming Scrutiny meetings:
www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/minutes,_agendas_and_reports.aspx

Alternatively you can contact Democratic and Scrutiny Services using the details below:

☎ 01446 709413 | 709856

✉ democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

