

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE: 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH, 2022

REFERENCE FROM VOLUNTARY SECTORY JOINT LIAISON COMMITTEE:  
7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2022

“AUDIT WALES: THIRD SECTOR PARTNERSHIP WORKING – VALE OF  
GLAMORGAN COUNCIL (CX) –

The Head of Policy and Business Transformation presented the report which advised Committee of the findings of the Auditor General for Wales' examination of partnership working between the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the Third Sector. The review focused on examining whether the Council's arrangements with the Third Sector were effectively supporting the Council to achieve its strategic recovery priorities.

Overall, the report findings concluded that the Council's arrangements supported its current way of working with the Third Sector, but now could be strengthened to maximise opportunities to enhance the relationship to support the delivery of the Council's strategic recovery priorities.

The report also identified four Proposals for Improvement:

- P1 – The Council should reconsider the checklist set out in Appendix 1 of the Audit Wales (AW) report, in particular the following sections:
  - Vision
  - Corporate strategy
  - Compact
  - Understanding engagement with the Third Sector
  - Designing services
  - Training
  - Performance review
- P2 – As part of the review of the compact, the Council should reflect how it wanted to work with the Third Sector to help deliver its strategic recovery priorities, how it could build on the positive work during the pandemic, and consider how it could strengthen its application of the sustainable development principle.
- P3 – The Council should consider the level of resources and investment required to achieve a more collaborative way of working with the Third Sector and reflect this in its Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- P4 – The Council should consider what actions it could take to help the Third Sector adjust to a more collaborative way of working.

The Chair thanked the Officer for his presentation of the report and subsequently invited comments from Members, the responses to which could be summarised as follows:

- The representative from Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) felt it was vitally important that the response to the AW report was collaborative and co-produced, with involvement from both the Local Authority and the Third Sector.
- GVS had been invited to present its Annual Report to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee at a future meeting.
- The report from AW had highlighted several matters for GVS, particularly regarding the surge of additional volunteers between March and June 2020, and while the number of volunteers was no longer at that same level, it was higher than it had been pre-March 2020. It was therefore important to capture the enthusiasm and willingness to support that had come through and continued to come through from the Vale of Glamorgan's population.
- It was difficult to increase the number of volunteers or stakeholders who engaged with feedback surveys, as they often had other priorities and time spent on a survey was a turn-off.
- While it was acknowledged that 1,100 respondents to the Wellbeing Survey were not representative of the Vale's population (at less than 1%) this was actually a relatively high response rate. Moreover, the Council's Public Participation Strategy set out an ambition to explore different ways of engaging with the population on a cyclical basis, involving them in processes much earlier on.
- Regarding the establishment and constitution of a Task and Finish Group which would explore issues raised in the report, the Officer advised that the Group would notionally include Local Authority Officers and colleagues working in the Third Sector to do initial scoping work, with there being broader involvement of Elected Members and other representatives to develop the work further. The Group would report updates regularly to Committee in order that it could scrutinise, influence and shape the work as it progressed, but the Officer clarified that a representative of the Committee could of course be involved in the Group to help shape its initial phase of engagement work.
- Officers consulted and encouraged the public to participate in a range of ways, and although due to COVID-19 they had not been able to undertake traditional face-to-face consultation, they were hoping to be back doing this shortly. In addition, there were options to complete surveys via telephone or through the Council's Contact Centre if individuals did not have access to technology or the internet. The Public Participation Strategy looked at available methods and how to best participate.
- The representative from Cardiff and the Vale Action for Mental Health (CAVAMH) indicated the organisation would be happy to help with the work under discussion, and noted that in some instances replies to surveys were being encouraged by being offered monetary payment.

In response to comments made by Councillor Cave, the Chair suggested that she discuss with the Assistant Democratic Services Officer how best to circulate relevant reports and minutes to other Council Committees, and Committee agreed this was a good idea.

There being no further comments or queries at this time it was subsequently

AGREED –

(1) T H A T the key findings arising from Audit Wales' review of the Council's partnership working with the Third Sector, and the Council's response to the review and Audit Wales' proposals for improvement as set out in the report be noted.

(2) T H A T the comments of the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee, which considered this matter at their meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2022, be noted.

(3) T H A T the report be referred to the Governance and Audit Committee and thereon to Cabinet for endorsement of the proposed actions to address the proposals for improvement together with relevant comments from the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee and the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

#### Reasons for decisions

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

(3) To ensure the Council responds appropriately and implements areas of improvement as identified by Audit Wales .”

Attached as Appendix: Report to Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee:  
7<sup>th</sup> February, 2022.