

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 6TH MARCH 2025REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 19 FEBRUARY 2025

VALE 2030 - DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN CORPORATE PLAN 2025-30 (CX) –

The report set out how the Vale 2030, the draft Corporate Plan (the Plan) 2025-30 (attached at Appendix A to the report) had been developed, the outcome of the consultation and the subsequent changes to the Plan. The Director of Corporate Resources in presenting the report advised that the recommendations of the Panel Performance Assessment (PPA) undertaken in November 2024 which had reported to Cabinet on 6th February, 2025 had shaped changes to the Vale 2030, Corporate Plan 2025-30. The Vale 2030 also detailed five new Well-being Objectives and the activities that would be undertaken in 2025-30 to deliver those objectives.

The commitments within Vale 2030 would be reflected in Annual Directorate Plans together with a suite of performance measures which showed how the different Council service areas would contribute to the delivery of the five Well-being Objectives. Work had commenced to develop Directorate Plans which would be presented to the relevant Scrutiny Committees in March / April together with proposed service improvement targets for 2025-26.

Publishing the Council's Well-being Objectives at the start of the financial year would enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations under the performance duties of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA), both of which placed specific duties on the Council in relation to objective setting and reporting. Under the WFGA, the Council was required to publish its Well-being Objectives by 31st March each year and to keep these under review.

The Operational Manager for Corporate Strategy and Insight drew Committees attention to the number of comments received as a result of the consultation that had been undertaken in Autumn 2024 which had shaped the document. Although she said not all objectives had been commented on by all respondents, a number of the comments had now been included in the appendices referring to for example reference to the capacity and financial challenges facing the Council. Based on the consultation and the panel performance assessment, it had also been considered appropriate to change the title of the document as some comments received considered the title to be unclear for the public with the new title being considered to be more engaging.. A number of the sections in the document had also been separated to provide more focus. In conclusion the officer further informed Committee of the number of positive comments that had been received relating to

the support the Vale Council provided to vulnerable people and the youths of the Vale.

In referring to the next steps the Director reiterated that in the new arrangements five directorate plans would be reported to cabinet and the scrutiny committees and discussions had also been held with the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice chairs group and group leaders as to the proposals for monitoring the plan going forward together. An annual statement at the beginning of the year would also be produced which would detail what was to be progressed with particular priority in the forthcoming year.

The Chair said that she was fully aware, following the consultation, that a lot of the feedback had been acted upon which she said was very positive and in her view the move to five directorate plans made complete sense. The Chair also commented that she was pleased that the current iteration of the corporate plan was creating outcomes that were measurable, using both quantitative and qualitative data to measure the progress against the plan, and was looking forward to seeing what could be achieved going forward.

Councillor Carroll said that he had concerns with regard to the document stating that there appeared to be no reference in the document to productivity which in his view was the way in which improvements should be made. In response the Director said that the corporate plan needed to do a number of things in particular referencing improvements to well-being and identifying in the strategic context for services of how the council worked and how it delivered its services. Although the use of the word productivity was not specifically referred to in the document he said this was covered within several actions references to digital strategy the use of digital services, artificial intelligence (AI), service transformation work and the target operating model theme of Reshaping. .

Councillor Carroll however, commented that in his view there was too much emphasis on other things rather than the services being provided and that the local authority was not there to address radical ideology but to provide core services and he felt the plan going forward should be more focused on service provision.

Councillor Johnson said that in his view there had been a dramatic improvement in the plan since the first draft following the consultation undertaken and that it was important that as a local authority the well-being of every single person in the Vale was considered and queried the work being undertaken in relation to the new customer relations strategy and the strategic equalities plan. The Director said it was timely that a new customer relations strategy was being prepared and that the brilliant basics work being undertaken was a major piece of work. There was also a statutory duty on local authorities to produce a strategic equalities plan which was currently being redrafted.

Councillor Goodjohn in referring to objective five referred to within the plan said that in his view some of the wording of some of the actions was difficult to quantify and

difficult to identify where the change was coming from. He asked if the wording could be strengthened and clarified, in particular he said in relation to the comments around the Welsh language and the Customer relations strategy. He also asked that further consideration be given to the document being made more user friendly and that it also detailed more clearly for the public the improvements that the Council was trying to make.

The Director said that he would re-look at the outcomes of objective 5 with the intent to develop a more visionary focus and reflect more innovative ways of working that the Council planned to progress.

The Leader (with the committees permission to speak) said the plan was about delivering better services for residents and in referring to page 17 of the appendix said this section talked about changing how the council worked and the transformation agenda which brought the plan to life. It was also important she added to look at ways to deliver services, to ensure that the public consultation assisted the way forward and emphasised the importance of diversity and inclusion as a vision as not everyone within the area she added lived the same type of life. The council had to understand the challenges that all residents faced so it could work with the public to ensure services were delivered as effectively as possible.

Councillor Johnson said he had appreciated the amendments made to the document and welcomed the detail in relation to the data. He said it was important to be ambitious and to consider outcomes by setting baselines with the scrutiny committees having an important role to play in looking closer over the years at the data when received, to understand how good and representative it truly was.

Council Franks commented that it appeared that every time a new plan was developed there was criticism of the previous plan.

The Leader in response said that the council was not saying that other plans were flawed but that things were of their time and that it was now timely to do things in a different way. The Council she added had faced austerity over the years and the experience gained as a result provided opportunities for years to come and commenting that it was important to work together as the difference that could make could be significant. The panel performance assessment had also been arranged in order to assist the process with experts from across the UK and a considerable number of people having considered the plan which had been widely accepted and on a number of occasions praised.

Following the discussion it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

T H A T the comments of the Committee on the draft plan be referred to Cabinet with Cabinet being requested to consider the following -

- the wording within the document in relation to objective 5 relating to goals and in particular those of the Welsh Language and the new customer services strategy be strengthened and clarified,

- further consideration be given to making the document more user friendly and

- the improvements that the Council was trying to make be detailed more clearly within the plan.

Reason for recommendations

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.