

CABINET

Minutes of a Hybrid meeting held on 10th April, 2025.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The Meeting recording is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor L. Burnett (Chair); Councillors R.M. Birch, G. John, S.D. Perkes, S. Sivagnanam, E. Williams and M.R. Wilson.

Also Present: Councillors Dr. I.J. Johnson and N.C Thomas.

C304 ANNOUNCEMENT –

The Leader commenced by advising of some housekeeping issues and advised that the meeting was being livestreamed, recorded and would be uploaded to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website as soon as practicable after the meeting.

C305 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor B.E. Brooks.

C306 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

C307 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

C308 AUDIT WALES: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, DECEMBER 2024 – (REF) –

The reference from Governance and Audit Committee held on 17th February, 2025 was presented.

There was good discussion at the meeting including comparison of the level and amount of usable reserves. Committee did not make any formal Recommendations and referred its comments to Cabinet for consideration which included:-

- role of central Government to ensure that Local Authorities were sufficiently resourced.

- some Local Authorities in Wales had very little useable reserves available whilst some Councils had reserves in excess of £200m.
- there was opportunity for Welsh Government to consider the level of useable reserves within Councils as part of the budget settlement process, which the Leader said were part of ongoing conversations.

The matter had been referred to Governance and Audit Committee from Corporate Performances and Resources Scrutiny Committee which included:-

- that Welsh Government be requested to consider multi-year settlements going forward, which the Leader said was already being discussed and related to ongoing settlement from Uk Government.
- comparison work on lessons learned, which was a matter for Committee.
- community engagement
- a further report concerning Digital Services, which was a matter for Committee.
- what external guidance could be provided to support the Council's budget setting process.
- that the figures in relation to the ALN provision for students be reviewed.

RESOLVED – T H A T Corporate Performances and Resources Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees be thanked for their consideration of the matter and that the comments of the Committee be noted.

Reason for decision

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

C309 Q3 PROGRESS AGAINST EXTERNAL REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT (REF) –

The reference from Governance and Audit Committee held on 17th February, 2025 was presented.

Committee were pleased to be informed that at Q3 the vast majority of actions had been attributed a Green status and that there were a number of ongoing actions in the Insight Tracker. Governance and Audit Committee had been asked to review the Council's progress to date in addressing the recommendations and improvement proposals made by the Council's external regulators as outlined in the appended SIB Insight Tracker, including the removal of complete actions.

RESOLVED – T H A T Governance and Audit Committee be thanked for their consideration of the matter and that the removal of completed actions from the Strategic Insight Board (SIB) Insight Tracker be endorsed and passed to Officers for their action.

Reason for decision

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

C310 AUDIT WALES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNANCE OF THE PLANNING SERVICE-PLANNING PROTOCOL, PLANNING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, AND AMENDED SCHEME OF DELEGATION (REF) –

The reference from Governance and Audit Committee held on 24th March, 2025 was presented.

The Cabinet Member said that Committee had raised issues concerning wording in the documents with regard consistency of use of some terms within the document and minor grammatical changes, which Officers would amend accordingly.

Other matters raised were matters that were concerned with the Vale of Glamorgan Concl Constitution, such as public speaking times at Committee meetings and the maximum length of time for meetings to take place. The Protocol was prepared in line with the detail in the current Council Constitution, therefore any future proposed changes to the Constitution would require an update to the Protocol itself accordingly, where related. There was also discussion concerning changes to the site visit protocol which again was consistent with the current Council Constitution and a matter for Full Council consideration.

There was also feedback from a member of the public in relation to accountability, decision-making and the robustness of decisions in Planning Committee where applications were overturned. It had been suggested that training should be mandatory and Members assessed following such training. The existing Protocol stated that members should not participate in any decision-making at meetings dealing with Planning matters if they had not attended any mandatory Planning training as prescribed by the Head of Sustainable Development and Monitoring Officer or determined by Cabinet and Full Council. Members should endeavour to also attend any other specialised training provided to extend Members' knowledge of law or Planning regulation and procedures. It was not considered that post-training assessments were required. Any further training proposed to be mandatory would also require a change to the Constitution and would be a matter for consideration by Full Council.

If agreed an updated version of the Planning Protocol would be provided to Full Council for consideration.

Councillor Wilson referred to the length of time of meetings and whether four hours was reasonable, but said it was important to be able to determine matters at Planning Committee or risk non-determination, so a common-sense approach was required as there could be cost implications and applications had to be properly examined.

Councillor Williams said that where there were major Planning applications for consideration, Officers would provide pre-training and pre-advice to Members with focus on Planning and material considerations, which were well attended by Members.

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T Governance and Audit Committee be thanked for their consideration of the matter.

(2) T H A T Officers update the Planning Protocol document taking into account the related Consistency of use of some terms within the document and minor grammatical changes.

(3) T H A T the Protocol would require updates should there be related changes to the Vale of Glamorgan Constitution, such as those related to public speaking, site visits or mandatory training, where required.

Reasons for decisions

(1-3) Having regard to the contents of the reference and discussions at the meeting.

C311 RE-SHAPING SCRUTINY (REF) –

The reference from Democratic Services Committee held on 21st March, 2025 was presented.

RESOLVED – T H A T the contents of the reference be noted and considered in conjunction with the associated Part II report on the meeting agenda.

Reason for decision

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

C312 RE-SHAPING SCRUTINY (REF) –

The reference from Governance and Audit Committee held on 24th March, 2025 was presented.

RESOLVED – T H A T the contents of the reference be noted and considered in conjunction with the associated Part II report on the meeting agenda.

Reason for decision

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

C313 RE-SHAPING SCRUTINY (REF) –

The reference from Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 26th March, 2025 was presented.

RESOLVED – T H A T the contents of the reference be noted and considered in conjunction with the associated Part II report on the meeting agenda.

Reason for decision

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

C314 RESHAPING SCRUTINY (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) –

The Leader presented the report to provide Cabinet and Full Council with an Overview of Proposals to revise the Council’s Scrutiny functions for approval.

The Leader thanked Members and Officers for their flexibility in agreeing to change the Cabinet date by a week in order to fully consider the discussions and Recommendations from Democratic Services, Governance and Audit and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committees on the matter. With the additional time, all the Recommendations from each Committee had been considered and were included in the final Cabinet report.

The Leader commented that it was desirable for all 54 Members of the Council to be able to contribute to decision-making and the development of major policies, utilising the skills and expertise that Members have on a range of difficult issues faced by the Council. Vale of Glamorgan residents should also have more of an opportunity to contribute to their views and expertise, alongside surveys, etc., through Task and Finish work and Scrutiny investigations.

Paragraph 1.10 of the report discussed the types of matters that Scrutiny had been discussing, however only 20% of items led to robust Scrutiny and considered proposals and formed individual Committee recommendation which were shared with Cabinet for consideration.

Paragraph 1.14 of the report discussed the ‘Let’s Talk About Life in the Vale’ survey which reported that disappointingly the majority of residents disagreed that the Council takes residents views into account when making a decision and 60.5% of respondents had attempted to influence a decision or decisions made by the Council, with only 15.8% attending a Council meeting to do so. It was important for the Council to be more accessible to members of the public.

November’s Panel Performance Assessment made formal recommendations surrounding Governance and using resources effectively which impacted upon the Scrutiny function and Audit Wales had also identified areas where Scrutiny functions could be improved and made recommendations on both a local and national basis.

Paragraph 2.8 of the report listed the various meetings held since the matter was first raised in October 2024 and Paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10 of the report described the associated consultation with Members and referral to Committees whose comments had been referred back to Cabinet and included in the report.

Paragraph 2.11 of the report described what Members had said and the resultant impact and how that had shaped the related proposals.

Feedback from Members had been largely positive, though there were concerns about changing from 5 to 4 Committees and why the Cabinet meeting was delayed by a week in order to fully consider those concerns.

The report was proposed to be referred to Full Council where there could be further discussion prior to the final decision being taken. The existing calendar of meetings would need to be updated to accommodate any agreed changes. It was proposed to evaluate the proposed arrangements after approximately twelve months of implementation to ensure the desired outcomes of Reshaping Scrutiny were being achieved.

Councillor Birch welcomed the increased use of Task and Finish groups as they would provide Members with an opportunity to put their views forward and to research topics for themselves rather than be presented with a report. There had been positive previous experience of such work by Task and Finish groups and she was pleased to see that the arrangements would be reviewed after twelve months.

Councillor John echoed Councillor Birch's comments, recalled that there had been 4 Scrutiny Committees previously and that Task and Finish groups could play an important role.

Councillor Perkes agreed with both Councillors Birch and John about Task and Finish groups as the last Administration had considered period poverty, housing and homelessness which had all been positive and the proposals would assist with policy development. Some matters would fall across two Committee areas which would enable Members to get a more rounded picture of the issues under consideration and provide more opportunities to develop their knowledge of different areas.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the feedback received from the Member briefing sessions, Democratic Services Committee, Governance and Audit Committee and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee surrounding proposed changes to Scrutiny arrangements be noted.

(2) T H A T the proposed changes be endorsed and those changes recommended for approval by Full Council at its meeting on 28th April, 2025.

(3) T H A T the policies identified (Appendix D) to be updated to reflect any changes in Scrutiny arrangements which complied with legislation and statutory guidance be endorsed and recommended to Full Council.

- (4) T H A T approval for the calendar of meetings (Appendix E) to be updated to give effect to changes in Scrutiny arrangements be endorsed and recommended to Full Council.
- (5) T H A T the commitment to review the implementation of any proposed arrangements after approximately 12 months of implementation to ensure the desired outcomes of Reshaping Scrutiny were being achieved and to consider any amendments which may be required be endorsed and recommended to Full Council.
- (6) T H A T use of the urgency procedure set out at Section 15.14 of the Council's Constitution be granted to allow the proposed changes to be considered by Full Council at its meeting on 28th April, 2025.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the references and discussions at the meetings.
- (2) To enable Full Council to consider if Scrutiny Committees were effectively fulfilling their functions, enhancing the Council's ability to achieve its strategic goals and objectives, delivering high-quality services to residents, and to allow for the dedication of resources to continue the design of future scrutiny arrangements in collaboration with officers and Members, and for the Council to adopt alternative models in delivering the Scrutiny function.
- (3) To ensure that policies and procedures and the Council calendar were updated to reflect the relevant information surrounding the Council's delivery of its Scrutiny function.
- (4) To ensure the Council's Calendar of Meeting reflected the proposed Scrutiny arrangements.
- (5) To allow for the Council to understand if any proposed improvement activities were achieving the identified benefits and improving the Scrutiny function within the Council.
- (6) To allow the matter to be considered by Full Council at its meeting of 28th April, 2025.

C315 MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT FOR OFFICE 365 - LICENSING RENEWAL (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) –

The Leader presented the Part I report to approve the approach to the renewal of the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement for Office 365 and related digital services.

The Leader said that Microsoft licensing for public sector organisations was structured through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), known as the SPA 24 framework, released in October 2024 with significant cost savings per license for

Public Sector organisations and there was an associated Part II report on the meeting agenda that would consider the commercially sensitive aspects of the matter.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED – T H A T Cabinet notes the contents of the report, with a view to taking decisions on the investment in the Council's ICT infrastructure as described in the report and the proposed route to market within the Part II report later on the agenda.

Reason for decision

To advise of the current position regarding the renewal of the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement for Office 365 and related digital services.

C316 FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR DISABILITY ADAPTATION CONTRACTORS (DL/SP) (SCRUTINY – HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES) –

The Leader presented the Part I report to seek authority from Cabinet to appoint contractors to a framework agreement for the delivery of disability adaptation works, with an associated Part II report on the meeting agenda that would consider the commercially sensitive aspects of the matter.

The new disability adaptation process was a major step forward in allowing people leaving hospital or who were disabled to be able to live in their own homes for longer.

Councillor John said it would be a vital service for many residents across the Vale of Glamorgan.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED – T H A T the contents of the report be noted, with a view to taking decisions on the award of the contract detailed within the Part II report later on the agenda.

Reason for decision

To advise of the current position with this particular contract.

C317 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC –

RESOLVED – T H A T under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 4 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Act, the relevant paragraphs of the Schedule being referred to in brackets after the minute heading.

C318 MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT FOR OFFICE 365 - LICENSING RENEWAL (EL/PR) (EXEMPT INFORMATION – PARAGRAPH 14) (SCRUTINY – CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) –

The Leader presented the report to approve the approach to the renewal of the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement for Office 365 and related digital services.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T, further to the Part I report on the meeting agenda, the investment in the Council's ICT infrastructure as described in the report and the proposed route to market be approved.

(2) T H A T delegated authority be granted to the Head of Digital, in consultation with the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, to undertake the procurement of a three year licensing arrangement and delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services to execute the associated legal agreement.

Reasons for decisions

(1) To allow completion of the procurement exercise and utilise the Crown Commercial Services Aggregation model to achieve the best value for the renewal.

(2) To ensure the procurement and associated processes are undertaken in accordance with the Council's contract procedure rules.

C319 FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR DISABILITY ADAPTATION CONTRACTORS (DL/SP) EXEMPT INFORMATION – PARAGRAPHS 12, 13 AND 14 (SCRUTINY – HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES) –

The Deputy Leader presented the report to seek authority from Cabinet to appoint contractors to a framework agreement for the delivery of disability adaptation works.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T further to the Part I report on the meeting agenda, the appointment of successful contractors to a framework agreement to undertake disability adaptations following the completion of the tender process be approved.

(2) T H A T delegated authority be granted to the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services / Operational Manager Legal Services to draft and execute the contract(s) for the award of a contract with the successful and reserve contractors.

(3) T H A T the use of the urgent decision procedure as set out in Section 15.14 of the Council's Constitution be granted to allow the delivery of disability adaptation works without delay.

Reasons for decisions

(1) To ensure compliance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

(2) To ensure that the necessary legal documentation was in place to appoint contractors to the framework.

(3) To allow the delivery of disability adaptation works without delay.