

Meeting of:	<b>Council</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Monday, 30 September 2024</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report 2023/24
Purpose of Report:	To present the 2023/24 Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report to Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution
Report Owner:	T. Bowring, Director of Corporate Resources
Responsible Officer:	E. 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"> <li>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'.</li> <li>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 <a href="#">Corporate Plan</a></li> </ul>	

## **Recommendation**

1. THAT Council receives the Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report for the Municipal year 2023/24.

## **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 Annual report attached at Appendix 1 to this 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 All Members of the Council's Scrutiny Committees have been consulted on the Annual report and any comments / suggestions included as appropriate.
- 2.3 Examples of what future work programmes items the Scrutiny Committees will be considering going forward can be found in the Looking Forward section of the report at pages 17-19.
- 2.4 For information, Members are advised that the Annual Report is only "reported to Council" to be received by Full Council as required under the Constitution as opposed to it requiring actual approval.
- 2.5 The Annual report will also be uploaded to the Council's website.

## **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 2023-24**

## **Foreword from the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group**

Welcome to the second annual scrutiny report, since the Members of the Vale Council were appointed in May 2022 at the Local Government Elections. The report highlights the key scrutiny activities and developments in the Vale of Glamorgan Council during the 2023/24 Municipal Year (May 2023 – April 2024). The report also provides a summary of the work undertaken by scrutiny in 2023-24 and outlines future work programmes.

During the past year, the five Scrutiny Committees have been involved in a broad range of work; including providing challenge on key decisions in advance of consideration by Cabinet, monitoring service improvements, carrying out visits and working with partners on key areas affecting the residents of the Vale. Following the introduction of the Principles of Effective Scrutiny which were reported to the five Scrutiny Committees in May 2023 regular updates on progress have been reported to the Committees, the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group and subsequently reports presented to the Democratic Services Committee and Cabinet. Three excellent workshops were also held for Scrutiny Members in March 2024 facilitated by the Democratic Services Team which have also been recommended to be mandatory for the Induction Programme for Elected Members following the next Local Government Elections in 2027.

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 acts as a ‘critical friend’ to Cabinet, standing back from the day-to-day decision-making to look at and review outcomes for local residents. Scrutiny in the Vale has played its part in this regard being the challenging voice and by continuing a full programme of remote online meetings to ensure full accountability and examples of this work can be seen within the report.

Looking forward Local Authorities continue to face significant financial pressures on top of existing demographic challenges, rising costs of care for vulnerable children and adults and rising costs of living. I know that Scrutiny will contribute to meet these challenges by acting as a ‘critical friend’ to decision-makers, supporting innovation in how the Council and its partners deliver services and acting as the voice of the people when important decisions are being made.

I conclude by offering my thanks to all the Members of the Vale of Glamorgan’s five Scrutiny Committees who were part of the work covered in this Annual Report and to the Officers and Democratic Services Team for their support. 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 whether by speaking at Scrutiny Committee meetings or liaising with their local Members.

**Councillor Neil Thomas**

***Chair – Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group***

***and Vice-Chair – Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee***

## **Introduction**

At the Local Government Elections in May 2022 the Council saw the membership of the Council increase from 47 Members to 54 Elected Members with a significant number of new Councillors being elected to office. Thereafter following the election a comprehensive Member Induction Programme commenced which included for example training on Ethics and Standards, Financial matters, Equalities, Data Protection, Rules of Debate and Chaining skills. Member development is also an ongoing process within the Council and continues as required throughout the Elected Members' term of office.

The membership of each of the Council's Committees, including the membership of Scrutiny Committees, is agreed on an annual basis at the Annual Meeting of the Council, which usually takes place in May of each year. All Scrutiny Committee meetings are live-streamed on the Council's website and archived for future viewing in line with the provisions of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Information relating to the management of such meetings can be found on the Council's website and in the Council's Constitution.

With regard to the work of Scrutiny Committees, members of the public are able to register to speak on agenda items except where matters of an exempt or confidential nature are to be discussed. Agendas for the meetings are published on the Council's website, as is the procedure for public speaking, and the relevant work programmes of the Scrutiny Committees can be found here:

Minutes, Agendas and Reports:

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our\\_council/Council-Structure/minutes\\_agendas\\_and\\_reports/minutes\\_agendas\\_and\\_reports.aspx](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/minutes_agendas_and_reports/minutes_agendas_and_reports.aspx)

Procedure for Public Speaking:

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/\\_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Public-Speaking-Guides/23-12-04-%E2%80%93-Approved-by-Council-Version.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Public-Speaking-Guides/23-12-04-%E2%80%93-Approved-by-Council-Version.pdf)

Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes:

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our\\_council/Council-Structure/scrutiny/scrutiny\\_committees.aspx](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/scrutiny/scrutiny_committees.aspx)

The Democratic Services team in conjunction with the Council's Communications Team continue to promote public engagement which will be further considered via the Council's Public Participation Strategy.

Members of the Public are also able to put forward suggestions for consideration by a Scrutiny Committee via the Topic suggestion process on the Council's website which can be found here:

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our\\_council/Council-Structure/scrutiny/Scrutiny-Committee-Public-Request-for-Consideration.aspx](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/scrutiny/Scrutiny-Committee-Public-Request-for-Consideration.aspx)

## What is Scrutiny?

Scrutiny is a way of achieving open and democratic accountability for the provision of public services. Local Authorities operating an Executive Leader and Cabinet Model have an overview and scrutiny function which is carried out by non-Cabinet Members who act as a critical friend to the Cabinet to hold them to account. Scrutiny Committees are not decision-making committees, but they are there to monitor and influence those that are, i.e. the Cabinet. Scrutiny Committees report their work back to the Cabinet who then decide whether recommendations will be accepted, and if not, explain their reasons for their decisions.

Scrutiny Committees scrutinise the budget and performance management information of the Council and its partners and examine areas of concern. They can also hold key decision-makers to account by way of calling in decisions taken by Cabinet within 5 days of the decisions being made and set up Task and Finish Groups to carry out in-depth reviews. 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.

It is important to note that decisions regarding other certain functions of the Council are determined by 'regulatory' committees of the Council such as the Planning Committee and Licensing Committees and indeed Full Council itself. Such decisions do not fall under the remit of Scrutiny.

## How does Scrutiny work in the Vale?

There are five Scrutiny Committees in the Vale and the work of the Scrutiny Committees is closely aligned to the Council's four **Well-being Outcomes as below -**

The <b>Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee</b> is the overview Committee and deals with Corporate Health, the internal working of the Council, its finances and the Public Services Board and is also the lead Committee for Project Zero.		
<b>Well-being Outcomes</b>	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Scrutiny Committee Objectives</b>
<i>An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale</i>	<b>Environment and Regeneration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment.</li> <li>Promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment.</li> </ul>
<i>An Active and Healthy Vale</i>	<b>Healthy Living and Social Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Encouraging and promoting active and healthy lifestyles.</i></li> <li><i>Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting independent living.</i></li> </ul>

<i>An Inclusive and Safe Vale</i>	<b>Homes and Safe Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Providing decent homes and safe communities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Reducing poverty and social exclusion.</i></li> </ul>
<i>An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale</i>	<b>Learning and Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Raising overall Standards of achievement</i></li> <li>• <i>Valuing Culture and Diversity</i></li> </ul>

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:

<b><u>Vale of Glamorgan Scrutiny Scorecard 2023-24</u></b>		
○ <b>Number of Scrutiny Committee Meetings</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>54</b>
○ <b>Number of Scrutiny Committee Meetings which heard from Public Speakers</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>4</b>
○ <b>Number of Cabinet Items with Scrutiny input</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>131</b>
○ <b>% of Cabinet Items with Scrutiny input</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>58.7%</b>
○ <b>Of the 50 recommendations referred to Cabinet by Scrutiny Committees: -</b>		
- 26 recommendations were explicitly agreed, approved or endorsed by Cabinet		
- 19 recommendations were noted by Cabinet		
- 4 recommendations were already being addressed		
- 1 recommendation where the matter was referred on to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group for discussion.		



## **Scrutiny Support**

Scrutiny is supported by officers from Democratic Services, who are tasked with looking after the democratic process within the Vale. The support includes:

- Providing support and constitution advice to the Council's Scrutiny Committees and to Members of those Committees as well as producing minutes of their meetings and ensuring items arising from those meetings are actioned;
- Giving support and advice in relation to the functions of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to Executive and Non-Executive Members of the Council and its Officers.
- Managing the strategic development of scrutiny in the Vale through engaging with national and regional Scrutiny networks and initiatives, supporting the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group;
- Advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of legislation, in particular the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Government Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance published in June 2023;
- Managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes in conjunction with Scrutiny Members;
- Managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the operation of Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups, authorising reports in conjunction with the Groups and assisting in the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews;
- Managing the Scrutiny Member Development Programme;
- Despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings a minimum of five clear days (including weekends) prior to a meeting;
- Providing advice and guidance to Members of the public on the work of the Committees, the registration process for public speaking and assisting with attendance at remote or hybrid meetings.

# **Scrutiny Committees and their Membership for 2023/24**

## **Corporate Performance and Resources**

### Objectives and Remit:

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

**Chair:** Councillor Joanna Protheroe;

**Vice-Chair:** Councillor Ewan Goodjohn;

**Councillors:** George Carroll, Pamela Drake, Christopher Franks, Stephen Haines, Howard Hamilton; Sally Hanks, Dr. Ian Johnson, Belinda Loveluck-Edwards and Nicholas Wood

## **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 Sandra Perkes (May 2023-September 2023) and Councillor Susan Lloyd-Selby (October 2023-April 2024);

**Vice-Chair:** Councillor Ian Perry;

**Councillors:** Charles Champion, Pamela Drake, Vince Driscoll, Anthony Ernest, Mark Hooper, Catherine Iannucci, Susan Lloyd-Selby (May 2023-October 2023); Elliot Penn; Joanna Protheroe (October 2023-April 2024); and Steffan Wiliam

## **Healthy Living and Social Care**

### 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 Janice Charles;

**Vice-Chair:** Councillor Neil Thomas;

Councillors: Gareth Ball, Ian Buckley; Christine Cave, Millie Collins, Marianne Cowpe, Robert Fisher, Emma Goodjohn, Julie Lynch-Wilson, Jayne Norman and Carys Stallard

## **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 Millie Collins;

**Vice-Chair:** Councillor Belinda Loveluck-Edwards;

Councillors: Julie Aviet, Gareth Ball, Samantha Campbell, Steven Haines (October 2023 - April 2024); George Carroll (May 2023 - October 2023), Sally Hanks, William Hennessy, Susan Lloyd-Selby, Michael Morgan; Helen Payne (December 2023 – April 2024) and Sandra Perkes (May 2023 – September 2023) (plus one/two vacancies)

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 Rhys Thomas;

**Vice-Chair:** Councillor Helen Payne;

**Councillors:** Anne Asbrey, Wendy Gilligan, Russell Godfrey, Emma Goodjohn, William Hennessy, Nic Hodges, Julie Lynch-Wilson, Naomi Marshallsea, Jayne Norman and Elliot Penn

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:

Reps from Primary and Secondary sectors  
Welsh Medium Education  
Headteachers  
Vale Youth Council x 2  
Vale Youth Forum x 2  
Free Churches  
Special school

## **Key Areas of Scrutiny Activity by each Scrutiny Committee in 2023-24**

### **Scrutiny Committee: *Corporate Performance and Resources***

#### **Review of the Vale of Glamorgan's Procurement Policy and Strategy.**

Activity: Following consideration of the new Procurement Policy and Strategy in March 2023, the Committee looked at setting up a Task and Finish Group for the 2023/24 Municipal year in order to address the areas raised around this Policy and Strategy, as well as the new legislation that would be coming in the latter part of 2024 (the introduction of the new Procurement Reform Bill and the Social Partnership element for Wales).

All five of the Council's Scrutiny Committees, in considering their work programmes for 2023/24, were requested to put forward items for consideration for review and the most appropriate forms of scrutiny for each of these, including "task and finish". The Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee identified as one of its options for task and finish activities, on 24th May, 2023, to review the new Procurement Policy, Strategy, processes and documents with regard to embedding circular economy principles throughout the procurement lifecycle, in order to maximise social value and decarbonisation outcomes. Consideration was given to setting up a Task and Finish Group in order to achieve this. It was subsequently agreed at the meeting of Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group on 5th September, 2023 that the review of the new Procurement Policy and Strategy would be chosen as the first to be undertaken by the relevant Task and Finish Group.

The subsequent report for Corporate Performance and Resources, in January 2024, asked Members to consider the appointment of the membership of the Task and Finish Group and to approve the scope for the Group, as well as the meetings/sessions required and timescale for the review.

The aim of the Task and Finish Group would be to undertake an examination and review of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's (VOGC) Procurement Policy and Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27, relating in particular to the Vale of Glamorgan Council cutting its carbon emissions from the supply chain by focusing on reviewing the Sustainable Procurement Strategy, the commissioning of works, goods and services, drawing up of a tender specification, and the evaluation strategy.

The Group will look at operational arrangements i.e. day to day procurement activity in the Council's services and procurement activity in Ardal (a procurement service and partnership between a number of Local Authorities, including the VOGC), and the hand off between the two. It will also take an overview of the lifecycle of procurement i.e. commissioning through to contract renewal, and look at how the social value and decarbonisation outcomes are captured and reported. The work of the Group would also tie in

with Project Zero, which was a regular item that the Committee received updates on, by looking to have a greater emphasis within the Council's procurement processes on decarbonisation, sustainability, and ensuring that circular economy principles are applied to the new Procurement Policy and Strategy. The membership of the Group was intended to reflect all political groups which attend this Scrutiny Committee, in order to have a balanced and diverse approach to the review.

Outcome: Following Scrutiny consideration, the membership and the scope, timelines, etc., of the Task and Finish Group were agreed, with the appointment of Members to the Group from the Scrutiny Committee and from all the political parties that sit on it (Conservative, Labour, Llantwit First and Plaid Cymru). The appointment of the Task and Finish Group followed discussions around political balance, etc., although it was stressed that the findings of the Group in any subsequent report would go back first to Scrutiny in order to ensure that all Members of the Committee were happy with any recommendations or findings that were made. It was also agreed that the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group would be undertaken as soon as possible using Microsoft Teams, with subsequent meetings consisting of a mix of online and in person meetings - i.e. in circumstances where the Group needed to go 'onsite' and / or interview various buyers and commissioners of services, etc.

Subsequently the Group has met a number of times since January 2024 and has undertaken a number of fact finding sessions concerning the circular economy, decarbonisation, the work between the Council and Ardal, and meeting with the Council's procurement officers and buyers. The intention is for the subsequent report(s) produced by the Task and Finish Group to be referred back to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration and any recommendations or comments approved be referred on to Cabinet. This work will probably be finalised in the latter part of 2024, in order to tie-in with the introduction of new procurement-related legislation.

## **Scrutiny Committee: *Homes and Safe Communities***

### **White Paper: Ending Homelessness in Wales**

Activity: In December 2023, the Committee was presented with the above report for pre-Cabinet scrutiny, the purpose of which was for the Committee to consider the proposed changes brought forward by the Welsh Government on ending homelessness in Wales, and identify key impacts which would inform the Vale of Glamorgan Council's response to the consultation. The Welsh Government was consulting on proposals to end homelessness in Wales. The proposals within the White Paper formed part of a long-term transformation process to the homelessness and housing system, as set out in the Programme for Government and Co-operation Agreement. The Council had been requested to respond formally to the proposals. The Committee would be involved as part of the consultation process and the Council's response, with the resulting proposals to be considered and approved by Cabinet

and submitted to Welsh Government by 16th January, 2024. The proposals were set out under five key themes, which included: Reform of existing core homelessness legislation; the broader role of the Welsh public service in preventing homelessness; targeted proposals to prevent homelessness for those disproportionately affected; improving access to accommodation, and lastly - how those changes could be implemented. The Council would need to address a number of key changes and impacts to the way it handled housing and homelessness if the proposals were implemented, i.e. the abolition of the priority need and intentionality test around housing and homelessness provision, as well as the challenges around resourcing the proposals, in light of the limitations the Council faced in terms of appropriate housing, accommodation and the related demand. Although Welsh Government had suggested these would be 'aspirational' proposals, they would still be put into legislation which would create additional responsibilities for the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Outcome: The Committee scrutinised the Welsh Government proposals, with a number of points and queries raised by Members, which subsequently formed part of the comments that the Committee recommended should be included in the Council's response to the consultation, and were as follows:

- While the aspirations of the proposals in the White Paper were admirable, there were clear concerns on how the Vale of Glamorgan Council would be able to resource and manage these.
- The potential challenges and difficulties in pursuing the proposal of always providing supported housing for under-25s under the Council's current resources and access to appropriate accommodation, which would also require significant investment.
- There was a potential conflict in the White Paper concerning proposals around Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) and individuals' housing options and choices.
- Regarding the statutory duty placed on Local Authorities to draw up a PHP setting out steps to be taken to secure accommodation along with a duty to review PHPs every 8 weeks or more when there were changes of circumstances, it was felt that this could place undue pressure on Council staff in the Housing Solutions Team due to current homelessness numbers. It was suggested that the duty to review should start at a higher time span, i.e. 12 weeks, and then work towards an 8-week review.
- It was felt that persons with certain disabilities and care needs would be adversely affected by the proposed abolition of the priority need and intentionality test, as this would unduly impact their specific needs and affect their ability to be near local support networks, as well as the proposals ignoring the extra barriers such persons faced.
- It was important that the Welsh Government had a baseline understanding of the current situation and pressures faced by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and other Welsh Local Authorities around housing and homelessness, as well as the need to define the related timescales to implement the White Paper proposals.
- To stress to Welsh Government that although these proposals were aspirational, should they become legislation, these would place additional statutory duties and pressures on the Council and its resources, although some measures were already being undertaken by the Council.

- That the Council's response to the consultation on the White Paper be shared with the Committee, and that it receives any subsequent updates.

Subsequently, the above comments/recommendations were included in the consultation and as part of the Council's response to the White Paper. A separate report with the draft consultation response from the Council (including the input from Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee) was sent to Cabinet for consideration. Cabinet, at its meeting on 7th March, 2024, resolved that the draft consultation response in relation to proposed changes brought forward by the Welsh Government be approved and authority be granted to the Head of Housing and Building Services to submit the finalised response.

## **Scrutiny Committee: *Healthy Living and Social Care***

### **Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board (RPB) Joint Area Plan 2023-38.**

Activity: In June 2023, the Committee was presented with a report seeking views on the Joint Area Plan. The Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board had a statutory obligation via the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to prepare a Joint Area Plan (JAP) in response to requirements identified within the region's Population Needs Assessment. The JAP must provide a description of the range and level of services proposed to be provided or arranged in response to the care and support needs, including the support needs of carers. As a lead statutory partner, the Vale of Glamorgan Local Authority was statutorily required to collaborate with the Health Board and other Local Authority partners within the region to prepare, develop and assure the JAP before final approval by the RPB.

Outcome: This work culminated in the identification of key commitments where partners consider that combined, focused effort might make the biggest impact for priority population groups in the Vale of Glamorgan:



**We will:**

- Work together to keep our babies, children and young people healthy, well and safe from harm
- Deliver a Nurturing, Empowering, Safe and Trusted approach to emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Improve the support offer for babies, children and young people with complex needs.

**Unpaid Carers** will be recognised for the vital contribution they make to the community and the people they care for and enabled to do the things they want to alongside caring.

With people with **physical and sensory disabilities** we will find out more about their needs, experiences and priorities, developing and delivering changes that enable people to live as independently as possible.

People will be able to **age well** at home with more opportunities for wellbeing and independence. Services will reflect the diversity of people as they age well.

People with **Learning Disabilities** will have the ability to live as independently as possible in their local community.

We will support all people in our region to have the opportunity to live positive, independent lives without being affected by **violence and abuse**.

We will build a co-produced plan with stakeholders and people with **mental health needs** that enables people to do the things that matter most to them.

**Neurodiversity services** will have strengthened provision with a focus on providing the right support at the right time.

**People with Dementia** will be supported to live well and do the things they need to and enjoy in their communities.

## Scrutiny Committee: *Environment and Regeneration*

### Requests for Consideration: Bus Services

Activity: In April 2024, the Committee was presented with a report which provided an overview of the past, present and future aspects of local bus services in the Vale of Glamorgan and was in response to Requests for Consideration received from Councillors Samantha Campbell and Ewan Goodjohn.

The Committee also welcomed a public speaker, who raised concerns about the lack of services for residents within Rhoose. The Committee was able consider the grant monies allocated to support local bus services and it was highlighted that it was unknown as to whether Welsh Government would continue funding past March 2025. That made it difficult for the Council and local bus providers to plan future provision.

Outcome: Following consideration, the Scrutiny Committee requested an update report in six months' time, which should address some of the issues in relation to the Replacement Local Development Plan, in terms of bus routes and the Council's plans for significant housing developments. The update report would also cover the work being progressed by the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, and in relation to the regional partnership working across the Local Authorities, as well as updates in relation to the G1 Greenlinks bus service. The Committee also requested that, from the perspective of equalities, consideration be given around the accessibility of bus timetables, and whether this was a matter for the Council's Equalities Consultative Forum to be consulted on. The outcome of any subsequent review was to be included in the six-month update report. Finally, the matter was referred to Cabinet for consideration, and Cabinet endorsed the Committee's suggestion for there to be further consideration around ways to connect homes and hospitals, and also to the issue of missing bus stops and bus interchanges / connections for Culverhouse Cross and Sycamore Cross. Cabinet were also advised of the Committee's suggestion for a summer marketing campaign to be held, themed 'catching the bus', to which it was agreed that a summer marketing campaign to promote the use of public transport services would be undertaken.

## **Scrutiny Committee: *Learning and Culture***

### **School Funding and Finances**

**Activity:** In June, 2023, at the request of the Chair, the Committee received a presentation on issues around school finances, led by the Chair of the Vale School Governors Association (VSGA), the Chair of Governors for Gwenfo Church in Wales Primary School, and the Headteacher of Romilly Primary School, which advised Committee of the budgetary difficulties experienced by the schools involved. Due to the stark picture illustrated by the presentation, a recommendation was raised by Members to invite the Member of Parliament (MP) and the Member of the Senedd (MS) for the Vale of Glamorgan to address the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee, regarding the issues raised during the presentation, and the subsequent discussion regarding school finances and funding.

**Outcome:** Both the MP and MS were invited to address the Committee. Alun Cairns, Member of Parliament for The Vale of Glamorgan, attended the Committee's October 2023 meeting and gave a presentation regarding the financing of schools in the authority area, with a particular focus on the funding arrangements and formula used to allocate funding to the Vale of Glamorgan.

### **Hearing from You**

The Scrutiny Committees are keen to hear from members of the public and other interested parties on matters before the Committees and or for suggestions of topics for future consideration and scrutiny. The Committees are keen to understand the views and experiences of customers, service users and carers, using workshops, consultation exercises and survey results to gather feedback. The link to the topic suggestion form can be found [here](#).

Opportunities are also afforded to members of the public, partners, key stakeholders to contribute evidence and speak at meetings to broaden understanding and inform discussions. All meetings, together with the reports (save for confidential matters), are advertised on the Council's website and following the publication of agendas on the website public speaking registration forms are made available on the website at the same time. The link to the minutes and agendas on the website can be found [here](#).

The Link to the Scrutiny Public Speaking Guide can also be found [here](#). It is important to note that following a review of the Council's Multi-Locations Policy that is scheduled to be considered by the Council's Cabinet in September 2023 any amendments to the Scrutiny Public Speaking Guide, if required, will be made as soon as possible thereafter and following approval by Full Council also included in the Council's Constitution.

Members of the public who register speak at are also asked to provide feedback on the process, however this is not a mandatory requirement but any information is considered when reviews of the Public Speaking Guide are undertaken.

## **Looking Forward**

The Committees will continue to:

- Scrutinise how well the Council is meeting its objectives, as outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan;
- Make positive contributions to policy development and to the continuous improvements to Council functions;
- Look at the impact of the financial savings that the Council has to achieve and scrutinising the implications of further reduction in resources;
- Evaluate proposals around services that will come out of the Council's Reshaping Services project;
- Monitor the attainment levels of our pupils and to assess challenges facing schools;
- Consider sustainable development and explore funding opportunities;
- 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;
- 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 having regard to Lets Talk about Life in the Vale survey;
- Undertake Task and Finish work as required having regard to the Council's objectives;
- Consider any recommendations from regulators,
- Continue to monitor the principles of Effective Scrutiny as agreed by all Committees (as referenced in the Chair's foreword), and to support all Members in the process.

In addition to the above, a summary of some the items to be considered by the Scrutiny Committees going forward is presented below:

### **Corporate Performance and Resources:**

- Customer Relations Service/C1V Update – considering the progress made on developing this service at C1V

- Pay Policy 2025/2026 – Considering the Council’s Pay Policy for the forthcoming year before its submission to Full Council for Approval
- Proposed Fees and Charges – considering proposed service changes
- Consider any findings of the Committee’s Procurement Task and Finish Group work.

### **Environment and Regeneration:**

- Bathing water quality at designated bathing beaches in the Vale of Glamorgan – Update Report on issues pertaining to bathing water quality in the Vale.
- Update on Recycling and Waste Service Changes – Considering recent significant changes to services.
- Levelling Up Fund Round 3 Update - to update Committee on progress with regard to Levelling Up Fund Round 3 projects.

### **Healthy Living and Social Care:**

- Development of the Vale Alliance – an integrated model for the delivery of health and social care to adult citizens in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Social Care Records System - the procurement of a replacement social care system for CareDirector (WCCIS) that will become end of life by January 2026.
- Leisure Centre Working Group Visits - Elected Members to be involved in the monitoring processes for the Council's Leisure Management Contract.

### **Homes and Safe Communities:**

- Youth Justice and Early Support Service (YJESS) – updates and Performance Report.
- Update on the Changes to The Welsh Housing Quality Standards 2023 – considering the implications and impacts of, undertaking this long-term piece of work on Council capacity, resources and on its tenants.
- Updates on the work being undertaken as part of the Rapid Rehousing Plan and the conversion of existing Council and non-residential buildings to increase the supply of temporary and permanent accommodation.

## **Learning and Culture:**

- Update on the progress of the new Religion, Values and Ethics curriculum.
- Youth Services Update.
- Visit to Pencoedre High School to consider improvements being made to the school.

## **Committee Work Programmes -**

A full list of all the items proposed to be discussed by the Scrutiny Committees on their work programmes during 2023/24 can be found on the Council's website [here](#)

## **Want to Know More?**

Should you wish to find out more about the work of Scrutiny, you can do so at:

[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our\\_council/Council-Structure/scrutiny/scrutiny.aspx](http://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:

[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our\\_council/council/minutes\\_agendas\\_and\\_reports/minutes\\_agendas\\_and\\_reports.aspx](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/minutes_agendas_and_reports/minutes_agendas_and_reports.aspx)

## **Can I view a Scrutiny Committee meeting?**

Scrutiny Committees are currently live streamed as they take place on the Council's website and recorded for archive purposes. The link to view a Scrutiny Committee meeting can be found [here](#).

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

Telephone: **01446 709413 / 709856**

Email: [democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)