

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 20TH OCTOBER, 2022

REFERENCE FROM GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:
27TH SEPTEMBER, 2022

“269 DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN ANNUAL SELF ASSESSMENT 2021/22
(REF) –

The Director of Corporate Resources presented the reference from Cabinet of 8th September, 2022 as contained within the report.

The Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report (Appendix A) drew on a wide range of information sources to assess the progress made by the Council in meeting its Annual Delivery Plan commitments for 2021/22 as aligned to the Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives. The findings would enable the Council to identify how to further enhance internal processes and use of resources to improve and support achievement of the Annual Delivery Plan commitments and Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

The Annual Self-Assessment report was a new requirement for Welsh Local Authorities under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which required the Council to keep performance under review, consult on and then publish a report setting out the conclusions of its self-assessment once in respect of every financial year.

Overall, based on the review of last year’s performance, it was believed that on balance the Annual Delivery Plan commitments for 2021/22 had been met, in what continued to be a challenging year for the Council. The conclusion would be reviewed to reflect the findings from consultation work with citizens, partners, Council staff and other key statutory consultees following conclusion of engagement activities at the end of September.

Councillor M. Hooper referred to page 20 and the success of the bid for the Marina, and he asked whether this related to an expectation or an accurate representation. In reply, the Director of Corporate Resources clarified that a decision by the U.K. Government had yet to be made, but it was imminent.

The Chair, Mr. G. Chapman, commented on the consultation that was ongoing with staff, key businesses, trade unions, etc., which was not yet completed, but would be essential for the Governance and Audit Committee to assess before passing further views on to Cabinet for its consideration. The Chair queried whether there were any services or functions that had been identified as a red status which required more attention, particularly in relation to the more complex service actions, and how would these be monitored by senior management. In response, the Director advised that the Committee would receive the full response from the consultation process that

would help inform the Committee's reflections on the judgements made in the report. Cabinet would then have responsibility to consider any specific views raised by the Governance and Audit Committee before final approval by Full Council. He added that in terms of identification of any specific areas of improvements within Directorates, these would be considered through the Scrutiny process and the quarterly monitoring reports that would include slippage against any action or Council measure and highlighted with a red status. This allowed Elected Members opportunity to challenge the remedial actions processed by service managers. Within the Annual Self-Assessment report and the appendices, there was detail relating to those areas which required improvement, one of which was around more engagement and insight that would lead to an ongoing conversation on performance with staff and trade unions.

Mr. M. Evans (Lay Member) referred to the direction of travel boxes and stated that he expected more of an assessment of where the Council was against where the Council thought it would be 12 months ago, as opposed to the position for the previous quarter. He therefore asked for the rationale behind that approach. Mr. Evans also queried whether there were numeric thresholds (such as a percentage achievement rate) which determined the red, amber or green statuses. The Director in reply, advised that in terms of the directions of travel, they did represent the position at the end of that quarter. In terms of the data to show if the Council had achieved what it had set out to achieve, this was best illustrated with the data at the bottom of page 16 of the Self-Assessment document. This was a breakdown of performance at the end of the year. The assessment was based on a numeric value, and this would be shared with the Committee members via email. The Director went on to advise that performance exceptions were reported on a quarterly basis to each of the Council's 5 Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor M. Hooper commented that it was important to ensure the narrative associated with the cost-of-living crisis was up to date as there was a danger of underplaying the seriousness of the issues being faced to support the basic needs of vulnerable groups. Councillor Hooper, also commented that there was reference to the purchase of the site of the former Aberthaw power station to deliver green projects, and he stated that more detail around that proposal should be included. In reply, the Director stated that the report related to the position as at the end 2021/22, but he would take on board the views relating to the cost-of-living crisis and the Aberthaw site. The narrative for the next Annual Delivery Plan would be very different reflecting on the economic and social events taking place very quickly and response work being undertaken by the Council.

The Director agreed that if Members had further comments then he would be happy to receive them via email.

Having considered the reference, report and discussions at the meeting, Committee

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report 2021/22 (Appendix A) as the basis for consultation as described in the report be endorsed.

(2) T H A T the views of the Governance and Audit Committee be referred to Cabinet for its consideration; these being:

- More narrative related to the actions in supporting the basic needs of vulnerable groups as a result of the cost of living crisis;
- Greater reference to the proposals for the redevelopment of the former Aberthaw Power Station site.

Reasons for decisions

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

(2) To inform Cabinet of the views of the Governance and Audit Committee.”