

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2023

REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2023

“ CHIEF OFFICER APPRAISAL SCHEME – PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS  
(DCR) –

The report, presented by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, sought the Committee’s endorsement of proposals to refine the Chief Officer Appraisal system.

The current Chief Officer Appraisal Process had been in place since 2012, with only minor adjustments. It was therefore timely to now look at a revised approach as to how the Council reviewed the performance of its Chief Officer grades.

The proposed changes to the Chief Officer Appraisal Scheme were considered initially by the Senior Leadership Team on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2022, the Trade Unions and Diversity Networks were briefed in November 2022. Heads of Service were initially briefed on the proposed changes in January 2023.

The proposal supported the principles of Performance Management best practice and the current Appraisal process, but sought to enhance and provide more rigour to the process through the following measures:

- Robust SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results Focused, Timebound) objectives and targets, both behavioural and technical should be agreed for all participants both fairly and consistently;
- Behavioural competency reflected the expectations contained within the Senior Leaders Competency Framework;
- Increase frequency from an annual review to quarterly reviews – this supported best practice performance management of moving away from a single looking back appraisal, to multiple touch points looking forward;
- Moving towards coaching conversations focusing on a strengths-based improvement, based on robust data and evidence linked to clear objectives;
- Encouraging a rounded view of performance through peer review and 360 feedback;
- Use of a suitable rating scale that supported both technical (what) and behavioural (how) assessment and provided a reliable assessment using the full breadth of scale;

The above would help to ensure that the performance process was more forward-looking and to look at what the future requirements were for the organization as well as looking back.

The updated Chief Officer Appraisal system, if approved, would be introduced from 1st April, 2023 with a trial period being undertaken in order to help inform, improve and prepare the Appraisal system for its full roll out from April 2024.

Following the presentation of the report, the following comments and questions were raised by the Committee.

Councillor Carroll welcomed the move to a competency-based framework and assessment and felt that this would help to improve output and performance.

The Vice Chair asked what mechanisms were in place to ensure that Council officers, especially at the most senior level, were not solely reviewing one another and that a wider range of officers and Council staff were included to ensure as wide a range of opinions were considered as possible. It was explained that such reviews would be led by the Council's Organisational Development and Learning team who would ensure that there was a wide range of opinions and staff involved, such as line managers and other team members, as well as the Equalities Team.

Councillor Haines also raised the issue and risks of 'peer review' and how these could be adequately addressed and monitored by the Council in order to prevent any abuse of the process for appraisals. It was explained that the Organisational Development and Learning team would ensure that the appraisal process would have rigour and that Chief Officers were highly competent professionals who were very constructive in terms of the criticism or feedback they would provide to one another.

Councillor Dr Johnson felt that the greater number of touch points, a greater amount of reflection and more frequent appraisals as part of the updated process would be beneficial to Chief Officers in terms of development and performance. Regarding his query on what groups of officers / staff would come under this Chief Officer Appraisal system, it was explained that the Council was looking to integrate all Chief Officer grades into this appraisal process. On his query about possible duplication within the appendices to the report concerning performance / ratings matrixes, this would be looked into by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

Regarding Councillor Wood's query on the setting of targets as part of the appraisal process, and the need for 'quantifiable' targets (such as efficiencies and savings achieved) to be set alongside behavioural ones, it was explained that these would be addressed in the appraisal process through the use of SMART objectives, based on competency and performance, as aligned to the Annual Delivery and Team Plans. The performance framework as part of the appraisal process would also be clearly visible and transparent.

Having considered the report, Scrutiny Committee

**RECOMMENDED –**

(1) T H A T the contents of the report be noted.

(2) T H A T the proposals for Chief Officer Appraisals be referred to the Cabinet meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2023 for their endorsement prior to final consideration and approval by Council on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 in order to introduce the new scheme from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2023.

Reasons for recommendations

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

(2) To seek endorsement from Cabinet for the proposed changes to the appraisal system and enable all Council Members to consider the proposals in line with the Council's Constitution to enable the new scheme to operate from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2023."