

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 17 July 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Arrangements for Voluntary Section Joint Liaison Committee (VSJLC) for 2025/26 Municipal Year.
Purpose of Report:	To provide Cabinet with an overview of proposed arrangements in administering the Committee during the 2025/26 municipal year.
Report Owner:	Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources
Responsible Officer:	Director of Corporate Resources
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services Operational Manager (and Statutory Head of) – Democratic Services Operational Manager – Strategy and Insight Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language (Chair of the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee)
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council currently administers the Voluntary Section Joint Liaison Committee (VSJLC), which currently meets 3-4 times a year, and acts as a means of sharing information and practice between the Council and Third Sector representatives. The Committee's full Terms of Reference are outlined within section 14 of the Council's Constitution (p.147). As the Council reviews its future ways of working, especially in collaboration with wider Partnerships and Committee arrangements to support the delivery of Vale 2030, it is exploring alternative ways to engage with the Third Sector to achieve the desired outcomes. The Director of Corporate Resources and Operational Manager Strategy and Insight meet with the Chief Executive of Glamorgan Voluntary Services on a monthly basis to ensure a regular rhythm of dialogue is maintained between the two organisations. 	

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet agrees to temporarily pause meetings of the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee in the 2025/26 municipal year to allow for a review of working arrangements with the Third Sector.
2. That Cabinet agrees the proposed approach in revising arrangements in working with the Third Sector.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To allow for exploration of improved collaborative ways of working with Third Sector representatives moving forward to maximise value for all stakeholders involved.
2. To allow for all Members of the Committee and wider stakeholders to be involved in shaping the future approach for Members, Officers and Third Sector to work together.

1. Background

- 1.1 Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee (VSJLC) is a Committee which consists of eight Elected Members, alongside seven Voluntary Sector representatives and one representative as nominated by the Community Liaison Committee from Town and Community Councils.
- 1.2 The Committee currently meets two-four times a year, with agendas hosted on the Council's [website](#). Scheduled meetings for the 2025-26 municipal year include 16th June, 2025, 20th October, 2025, 12th January, 2026 and 26th March, 2026. It should be noted that the scheduled meeting on 16th June, 2025 was cancelled due to a lack of agenda items from all stakeholders.
- 1.3 At the May 2025 Annual Committee meeting, it was agreed that the eight Elected Member representatives would be:

Councillor Rhiannon Birch (Chair)
Councillor Ian Buckley (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Lis Burnett
Councillor Amelia Collins
Councillor Robert Fisher
Councillor Jayne Norman
Councillor Joanna Protheroe
Councillor Nicholas Wood
- 1.4 In relation to the seven Voluntary Sector Representative seats on the Committee, two are currently taken up by a representative from Glamorgan Voluntary Services, and Cardiff and Vale Action for Mental Health, an organisation which was noted in announcing its closure in September 2025. The remaining five seats for these Representatives remain vacant, with vacancies not filled by nominations from either the Council or Third Sector representatives.

- 1.4.1 The Committee's Terms of Reference is outlined within Section 14 of the Council's Constitution; and includes areas such as:
- (1) To refer, as appropriate, reports and recommendations to the Council's Cabinet and the Executives of Voluntary Sector organisations.
 - (2) To appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair from amongst the eight Members of the Council and an Honorary Vice-Chair from amongst the seven representatives from the Voluntary Sector.
 - (3) To advise the Council of the needs, views and concerns of the Voluntary Sector.
 - (4) To report on the work of those organisations grant funded by the Council, either in full or in part.
 - (5) To act as a consultative forum where the Voluntary Sector and the Council may, in partnership, put forward policy proposals for discussion and decision.
 - (6) To facilitate and promote joint working between the Council and the Voluntary Sector.
 - (7) In accordance with the statutory provisions, only Members of the Council will have voting rights. However, where there is no consensus, this will be reported in the minutes and placed before the Cabinet prior to a decision being taken.
 - (8) To review the Compact and associated Annual Work Plan and to monitor and report on progress made towards achieving the actions contained within the Compact and the Plan.
 - (9) To consider reports of the Cabinet and other Committees of the Council which have a bearing and impact on the Voluntary Sector.
- 1.5** Attendance at this Committee has been varied in recent times, potentially limiting the effectiveness of the existing arrangements, with agendas largely consisting of update reports and presentations where comments are made and noted. Whilst not a Scrutiny Committee, in the spirit of the Council's work to improve the effectiveness of its Committee arrangements, there is a drive to reduce the number of information only/briefing type items and move these to an alternative space, whilst exploring alternative means and methods of achieving the intended purposes of having a mechanism for strategically working with the Third Sector.

Date	Number of Agenda Items	Number of Council Attendees (Committee Members)	Number of Third Sector Attendees	Number of Town and Community Council Attendees
29/04/2025	2	4	2	0
27/01/2025	3	5	2	1

Date	Number of Agenda Items	Number of Council Attendees (Committee Members)	Number of Third Sector Attendees	Number of Town and Community Council Attendees
14/10/2024	4	6	1	1
15/04/2024	2	4	1	1
29/01/2024	5	4	2	1

- 1.6** It is also important to note that there are other partnership arrangements where the Council works with Third Sector representatives, including:

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer of Glamorgan Voluntary Services being a member of the Vale of Glamorgan Public Service Board.
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer of Glamorgan Voluntary Services being a member of the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board.

A fuller list is available within the latest update of the [Strategic Collaborative Initiatives Working Update](#) (Cabinet, 22nd May, 2025).

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** As outlined, VSJLC currently meets on a quarterly basis and is attended by Councillors from Vale of Glamorgan, Third Sector representatives and a Town and Community Council representative.
- 2.2** Agendas currently include a range of information sharing items; and there needs to be consideration if a Committee is the most appropriate forum for this information to be shared, aligning to the principles of the Council's wider Reshaping Scrutiny work.
- 2.3** The Council's new Corporate Plan, Vale 2030, also considers how the Council will work in partnership, and its commitment to those who work with us. It is critical that existing arrangements are reviewed to consider if they are the most appropriate; reflecting upon how the Council and third sector can work together in ways which are open, proud, ambitious and together. Cabinet will note that for the first time, a specific partnership statement is included within Vale 2030.
- 2.4** Following the announcement of the closure of Cardiff and Vale Action for Mental Health, the Committee's sole representative of the Third Sector is the Chief Executive of Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS).
- 2.5** The Chief Executive of GVS already has an established relationship with the Director of Corporate Resources and Operational Manager – Corporate Strategy and Insight and meets monthly to share key organisational updates.
- 2.6** Following the recent changes to the Council's Scrutiny Function and emphasis upon engagement and collaboration, where possible, there could be liaison with

GVS surrounding the sharing of Committee Forward Work Programmes with them and identifying opportunities for GVS to be involved in other Committee work. This may include representing the sector holistically or identifying potential organisations they are aware of which may add value, particularly within investigative (task and finish) scrutiny work.

- 2.7** Opportunities also exist for GVS to be involved in the Members briefing process, including the sharing of key documents with all Members via Democratic Services, the arrangements of briefings with Councillors as required or to attend Member Expo sessions.
- 2.8** Whilst there is statutory guidance surrounding the opportunities for co-option to Scrutiny Committees, a valuable tool in increasing the range of perspectives in policy making, it is felt at this juncture that formal co-option to a Scrutiny Committee is not appropriate as it is not possible to co-opt “organisations who are financially supported by partner agencies (as they) may feel reluctant to challenge the performance of funding providers in a public arena. Steps should be taken to minimise the risk of co-optees experiencing conflicts of interest as a result of being involved in scrutiny work.”¹ Also, with the changes recently introduced to the Scrutiny Committees, it is felt appropriate to enable these to bed-in and work programmes to establish. Over time it will become apparent where opportunities for involving different groups exist, including within task and finish activity.
- 2.9** It is proposed that the following approach is undertaken with existing Members of VSJLC. Temporarily pausing the Committee for this 2025-26 municipal year provides opportunities for a collaborative effort between the Council (officers and Members) and Third Sector representatives to explore alternative ways of working which may achieve the same outcomes as outlined within this report.

Date	Activity	Stakeholders
June 2025	Communicate with existing Members surrounding the desire to temporarily pause this Committee for the municipal year.	Existing Committee Members
June to September 2025	Agree Council’s approach to ways of working with Third Sector representatives to share information (framed around Vale 2030 commitment)	Director of Corporate Resources/Cabinet/Third Sector Representatives
September 2025	Communicate changes to ways of working with Third Sector to Group Leaders	Director of Corporate Resources/Cabinet/Third Sector

¹ Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance on Democracy within Principal Councils, Welsh Government, Source: <https://www.gov.wales/statutory-and-non-statutory-guidance-democracy-within-principal-councils>

Date	Activity	Stakeholders
		Representatives/Group Leaders
March 2026	Desktop review of effectiveness of arrangements with involved stakeholders	Director of Corporate Resources/Cabinet/Third Sector Representatives
April 2026	Amendments to Council's Constitution if required at Full Council	Head of Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer
April to May 2026	Recalculation of political balance and review of Committee appointments at Annual Meeting to reflect any changes	Head of Democratic Services

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** This proposal is seeking to ensure that the long-term ambition of the Council's approach to collaborating with the Third Sector are achieved, and that there are opportunities for integration, whilst also involving them in the Council's decision making. Reviewing these arrangements seeks to prevent future challenges in how the Council works with Third Sector representatives.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** Whilst there are no direct impacts to the climate and nature emergencies, liaison between the Council and Third Sector is critical in raising awareness of activities and opportunities of initiatives which support these emergencies.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** This Committee is serviced and delivered using existing resources, meaning there are no direct financial implications because of this proposal.

Employment

- 5.2** There are no direct employment impacts because of this proposal.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report, as this Committee does not discharge any formal legal functions. Any changes made to ways of working will need to be reflected in the Council's Constitution as appropriate.
- 5.4** Participation and engagement with the Third Sector will be considered in line with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act, with reflection upon guidance to co-option arrangements considered from the Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales, and other relevant legislation as appropriate.

6. Background Papers

Not applicable.