

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Special Remote Meeting held on 9th November, 2022.

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

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

Present: Councillor Susan Lloyd-Selby (Mayor); Councillors Anne Asbrey, Julie Aviet, Gareth Ball, Rhiannon Birch, Bronwen Brooks, Gillian Bruce, Ian Buckley, Lis Burnett, Samantha Campbell, George Carroll, Christine Cave, Charles Champion, Janice Charles, Millie Collins, Marianne Cowpe, Pamela Drake, Vincent Driscoll, Christopher Franks, Wendy Gilligan, Russell Godfrey, Emma Goodjohn, Ewan Goodjohn, Stephen Haines, Howard Hamilton, Sally Hanks, William Hennessy, Nic Hodges, Mark Hooper, Catherine Iannucci, Gwyn John, Dr. Ian Johnson, Belinda Loveluck-Edwards, Julie Lynch-Wilson, Kevin Mahoney, Naomi Marshallsea, Michael Morgan, Jayne Norman, Helen Payne, Elliot Penn, Ian Perry, Joanna Protheroe, Ruba Sivagnanam, Carys Stallard, Neil Thomas, Rhys Thomas, Steffan Wiliam, Margaret Wilkinson, Edward Williams, Mark Wilson and Nicholas Wood.

428 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Mayor read the following statement: “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing”.

429 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors Anthony Ernest, Robert Fisher and Sandra Perkes.

430 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

431 FINAL DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2021/22 (REF) –

The Leader indicated that the Annual Self-Assessment was a new requirement for Local Authorities under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which required the Council to keep its 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. It formed part of the delivery and monitoring framework of the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) which sat between the five year

Corporate Plan (2020 to 2025) and the Directorate Service Plans. The ADP for 2021/22 referred to a range of documents that were considered such as the Future Generations Act and the Future Generations Report, COVID-19 Community Impact Assessment, COVID-19 Economic Impact Assessment, Coronavirus Recovery Strategy, findings from the work of regulators and views of residents. The consultation on the ADP took place over an 8 week period and extended due to the Christmas and New Year holiday period and continued the approval process via Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet and finally Council in April 2021. Since then, she indicated that the ADP had been monitored on a quarterly basis, the last being July 2022.

The Leader also indicated that information contained within the Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report would be used to inform the development of the Council's ADP for 2023/24 and to engagement with all Members via the relevant Council Committees to date, which included the Council's Governance and Audit Committee on two separate occasions, draft and final versions, which had recommended changes to the Plan and these had subsequently been incorporated into the final version.

The Leader felt that on balance the report found that the Council had delivered against its ADP, acknowledging that it was still a work in progress and given that it was the first time it has been done in this way.

The Leader's attention then turned to the consultation responses to the draft Plan which compared favourably with other consultations undertaken by the Council, referring to various examples.

In concluding, the Leader referred to the Cabinet resolution (3) of 3rd November, 2022 and Moved that the Final draft Vale of Glamorgan Council Annual Self-Assessment Report 2021/22 as considered by Cabinet on 3rd November, 2022, which included revisions to the "Improving our Economic Infrastructure" which had already been included into the document, be approved.

This was duly seconded by the Deputy Leader.

Councillor Dr. Johnson thanked the staff responsible for preparing the report. Alluding to Welsh Government (WG) legislation he considered that Local Government was already the most heavily scrutinised of public bodies in Wales and referred to a number of regulatory bodies who did so and touched upon the Cabinet / Scrutiny roles within the Council. The matter was before Council and it was right to scrutinise the report further. He was unclear who the intended reader of the Annual Report was, other than WG. He did not feel it was written for the general public. As one of the most important reports of the year he would have expected the report to include a short executive summary so that the Council could get its point across as to what it was finalising. Overall he did not consider the document easy to read. Alluding to the Governance and Audit Committee comments that there were relatively few responses from the general public and Council staff to the consultation, he was not necessarily concerned about the numbers, but in the context of the report's importance to the Council it did need to be explained and resolved, as these were important methodology questions. He enquired if the survey was the best

means of obtaining rich enough data from which meaningful conclusions could be drawn and questioned the small sample number of respondents in terms of drawing meaningful conclusions. He felt if such small numbers were acceptable there should be an explanation why it was, particularly the less than positive response on the Council's actual service delivery, and highlighted a number of specific matters. Despite this, the Council had rated itself as good, however this did not chime with the views of the participating public. He felt there needed to be greater reflection on this and the credibility gap reduced, particularly at a time when delivering services was going to become even more challenging as a result of Westminster cuts.

He signalled that his Group would be rejecting the report stating that it should be redrafted and resubmitted to Council as he believed it could be improved. If it was approved tonight he hoped that his comments would be sent with the report to WG in the hope their officers would consider these going forward.

Councillor Perry, concurring with the comments of Councillor Dr. Johnson, expressed concern at the document's accessibility as there were a number of errors contained within it that made it less accessible and difficult to read for those using a screen reader. He was also disappointed with the progress towards delivering Project Zero. He indicated that he would be voting against the approval of the report.

Councillor Carroll, having some sympathy for the Administration in that this was the first time that a report of this nature has been brought before Council, shared some of the concerns raised by other Members. He felt there were issues with the format of the report and it could have been more accessible alluding to the comments made by the Council's Governance and Audit Committee. He considered it a sensible suggestion to bring this report back to allow it to be refined it and make it more accessible and supported Councillor Dr. Johnson's stance.

Councillor Mahoney considered that the Council was not capable of self-assessing itself. Any assessment of the Council should be carried out by an independent person.

Having been put to a vote, it was

RESOLVED – T H A T the Final Draft Vale of Glamorgan Council Annual Self-Assessment Report 2021/22 as considered by Cabinet on 3rd November, 2022 (Minute No. C117 refers), which included the revisions to the section headed "Improving our Economic Infrastructure" which had been incorporated into the document, be approved.

Reason for decision

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