

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE: 23RD OCTOBER, 2023

REFERENCE FROM CABINET: 19TH OCTOBER, 2023

“C129 FINAL DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ANNUAL-SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT 2022/23 (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – ALL) –

The Leader presented the report, and the associated references from Scrutiny Committees under Items (4), (5) and (8) on the agenda, the purpose of which was to seek Cabinet endorsement of the Final Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment Report 2022/23, incorporating the key findings from engagement with the Council’s key stakeholders.

The Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 13th September, 2023 where it was recognised that a tremendous amount of work had gone into the Annual Self-Assessment Report there was a query whether or not here should be a bite-size version available. Committee also commented that the report should clearly outline that it would be addressing areas that the Council said it would do so that in the planning process it was possible to then address what had been delivered, as well as include a statement around the Councils ambitions and aspirations. The Leader said that such a statement was more for the Annual Delivery Plan than the Annual Self-Assessment Report.

Encouraging more residents to participate and engage with the self-assessment process was an aspiration and members of the public were encouraged to attend Scrutiny Committee meetings to do so, but the Leader agreed that more could be done to make the process involving local residents better, including making the presentations that are made to Scrutiny Committees more available.

The Governance and Audit Committee considered the report at its meeting on 18th September, 2023 felt the Report was easily accessible given the level of detail and information provided. Given that Governance and Audit Committee were used to looking at complex reports and the comments from Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee, the Leader suggested that the future document needed to be somewhere in-between.

Governance and Audit Committee wanted extra context in view of agency staff and the percentage of overall Council salaries that agency contracts made, as well as information the use of staff employed via agencies. The Leader said a report that considered such matters was included for discussion later on the agenda, however an update would be made to the ‘Our Year in Numbers’ section of the Report, advising that the Council spent £198.951m in 2022/3 on employee salaries (schools and non-schools). The total spend on agency contracts was £15.8m (£9.3m schools and £6.5m non-schools). This equated to 7.9% of the total salary spend.

There was also a query regarding the target audience for the Report which linked the earlier comment of making the Report accessible to different groups.

The Leader referred to a comment concerning Council Tax rising and the level of services decreasing. She said that when setting budgets and not having sufficient funding to do everything that was requested, prioritisation was important when looking to care for the most vulnerable individuals versus non-statutory services.

The Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 20th September, 2023 and requested further emphasis on reflections and views of residents on Council services within the Report, which the Leader said was a valid point and there would be an opportunity to discuss that further when the results of the latest Customer Survey were known.

The importance of communicating with the public about the services that could or could not be provided was a topic always discussed when budget setting and was discussed in the Annual Delivery and Service Plans.

The Leader acknowledged the comments made from each of the Scrutiny Committees and where relevant would look to take them on board in planning and monitoring going forward.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the views, discussion and comments made at each of the Homes and Safe Communities, Governance and Audit and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committees held on 13th, 18th and 20th September, 2023 respectively be noted.

(2) T H A T the consultation summary findings and endorses the updated Final Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report 2022/23 appended at Appendix A be endorsed.

(3) T H A T the Final Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report be referred to Governance and Audit Committee (23rd October, 2023) for their consideration and approval in line with their statutory role, under Part 6 (section 114) of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and that upon consideration the Committee refers any recommendations back to Cabinet for their final consideration (2nd November, 2023) prior to Cabinet referring the report, the comments of the Governance and Audit Committee and Cabinet's responses to Council (20th November, 2023) for consideration and approval. Should Governance and Audit Committee have no further comments to refer to Cabinet for consideration that the Final Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report be referred to Full Council (20th November, 2023) for consideration and approval.

(4) T H A T the use of paragraph 15.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution (Urgent Decision Procedure) be authorised to allow the Final Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self - Assessment 2022/23 to be referred to the Governance and Audit Committee meeting taking place on 23rd October, 2023 for consideration, with any recommendations considered by Cabinet on 2nd November, 2023, prior to Full Council consideration on 20th November, 2023.

Reasons for decisions

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

(2) To consider the consultation feedback and approve the subsequent changes to the Final Draft Annual Self-Assessment report 2022/23.

(3) To enable the Governance and Audit Committee to consider the Final Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment findings in line with its statutory role, under Part 6 (section 114) of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

(4) To ensure that the Final Draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report 2022/23 could be presented to Council in November for consideration and approval.”