

SRS Business Plan 2024-25

Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee

10th July 2024

Background

- A fully integrated service delivering the Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing functions across the Bridgend, Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan areas.
- Around 175 FTE staff working across the region
- Serving a population of approximately 640,000 residents and regulating over 10,000 businesses
- Now in its 10th year

Governance

- Governance is through a Joint Working Agreement, Joint Committee and Scrutiny arrangements of the respective councils

SRS Joint Committee



Councillor
Michael Michael
Cardiff Council



Councillor
Maxine Lewis
Bridgend County
Borough Council



Councillor
Ruba Sivagnanam
Vale of Glamorgan
Council



Councillor
Norma Mackie
Cardiff Council

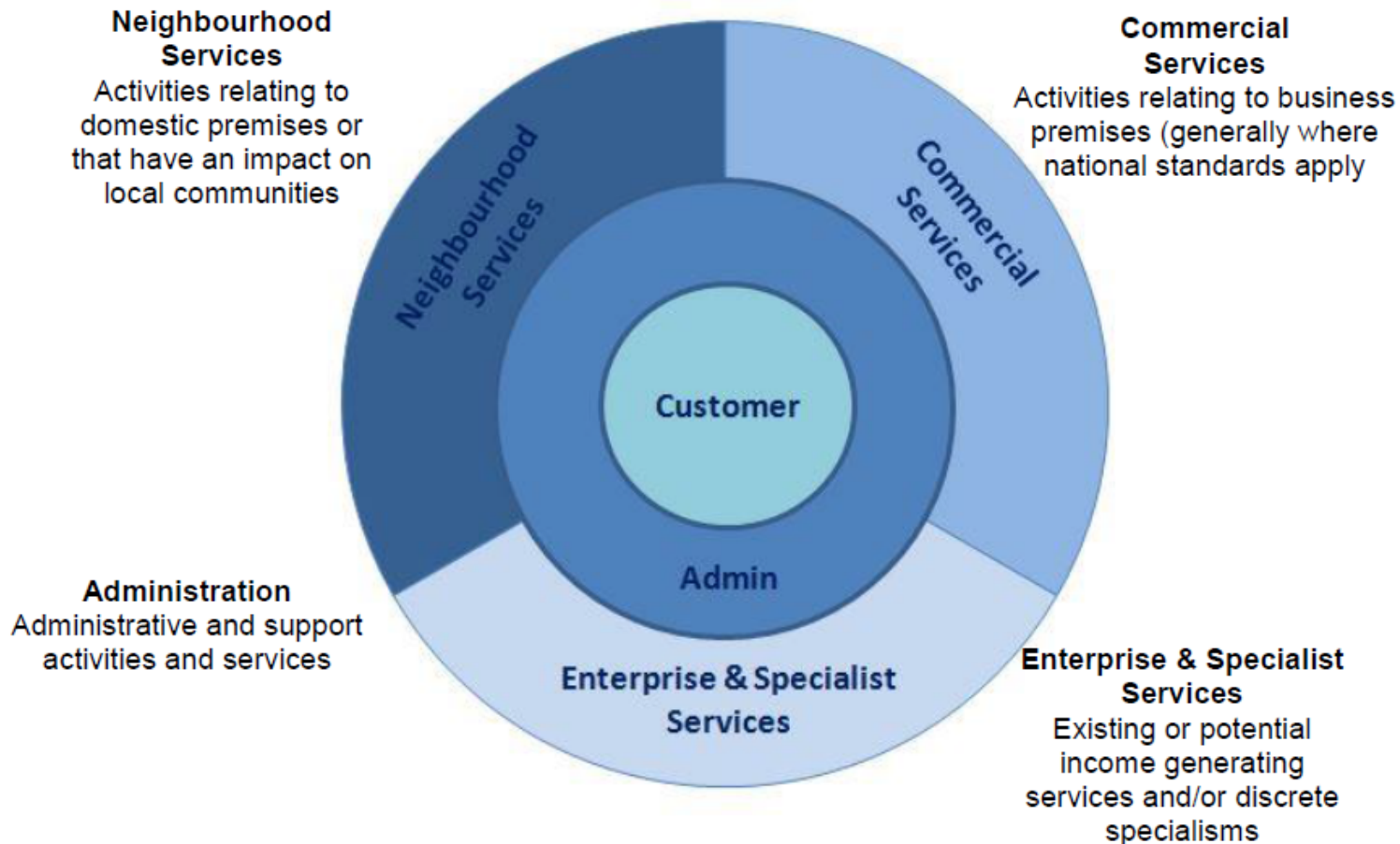


Councillor
Hywel Williams
Bridgend County
Borough Council



Councillor
Pamela Drake
Vale of Glamorgan
Council

SRS structure



The SRS business planning process

The SRS Business Plan

- Delivers the statutory requirements placed upon each Council
- Supports the corporate priorities of each Council through our five strategic themes



SRS strategic themes



Turning strategic themes into outcomes



SRS Business Plan 2024-25



Reflecting on 2023-24

The Business Plan sets out service achievements during 2023-24 under each of the strategic themes. Just a few examples:

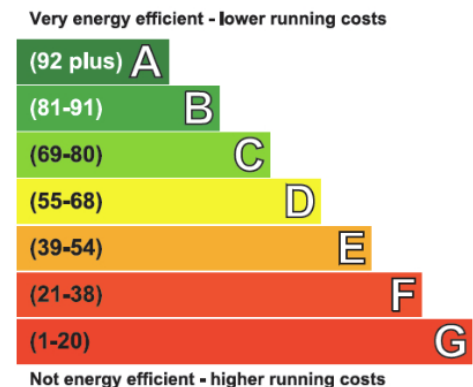
Post-COVID recovery

- Resumption of the full SRS Food inspection programmes post COVID. By year end, 100% of food hygiene inspections were achieved in respect of the highest risk food premises (categories A, B and C)
- Managing increased enforcement demands
- Resumption of full range of training courses for business and other SRS cost recovery / income generation initiatives

Reflecting on 2023-24

Housing

- Appointment of an Environmental Health professional as an Empty Homes Officer in the Vale of Glamorgan Council area has brought a much needed enforcement resource
- Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the private rented sector
 - Ensuring properties have energy efficiency ratings of A-E
 - In the Vale, 44 properties improved with benefits for both the climate change and cost of living agendas
 - Reduction in CO₂: 127.1 tonnes
 - Reduction in energy used for heating 151,559 KWh



Reflecting on 2023-24

Protecting the vulnerable

- Officers dealt with 185 scams against residents and 151 doorstep crime cases
- A total of 70 call blockers are now installed in residents' homes. An estimated 50k+ calls have been blocked and 80+ scams prevented
- A busy year for the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit, due in no small part to the impact of cost of living pressures
 - 11 lenders investigated
 - 25 victims supported
 - Two prosecutions of atypical loan sharks – a 73 year old male and an 83 year old female

Reflecting on 2023-24

46 prosecution cases concluded in court (compared with 28 in 2022-23).
These included:

Cases against Rogue builders / doorstep criminals

- 9 convictions
- A total of 8 years in custodial sentences & 2 years in suspended sentences
- 1 Criminal Behaviour Order, lasting 10 years
- 5 community orders
- Compensation of nearly £7000 awarded to some of those affected

Private sector housing cases

- 11 convictions
- £142,881 in fines and £12,812 in costs

Reflecting on 2023-24

Underage sales

- 111 complaints received
- 53 attempts to purchase alcohol and vapes resulted in a sale (19%)

Illegal vapes

- 53 /141 adult test purchases of vapes resulted in the sale of illegal goods (38%)

Illegal tobacco

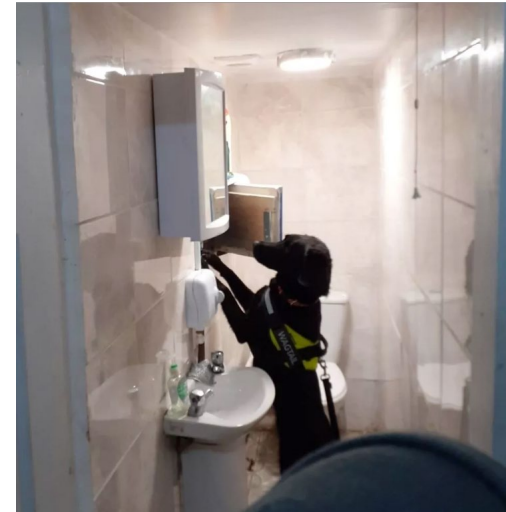
- 1078 packets of illegal cigarettes and 673 packets of hand rolling tobacco were seized



New approaches in 2023-24

Operation Usk

- OCG with outlets in Cardiff, and Bridgend as well as in the Vale
- £600k worth of illegal tobacco and £12.5k worth of N₂O seized
- Running a fraudulent business to the value of £1.8m, and money laundering charges
- 11 defendants found guilty or changed their pleas during the two trials
- A total of 25 years immediate imprisonment
- A total of 9 years in suspended prison sentences



[Report - NO IFS. NO BUTTS. \(noifs-nobutts.co.uk\)](http://noifs-nobutts.co.uk)

New approaches in 2023-24

Use of Closure Orders

Under the Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014



19.3.24



20.3.24

New approaches in 2023-24

Recruitment and Retention – ‘Growing our Own’

- Ageing workforce and difficulties in recruitment and retention of staff in certain roles - problems shared with all local authorities
- Successful fast-tracking of two officers through the Higher certificate qualification in Food Premises Inspection
- Supporting members of staff through match funded study to achieve the MSc in Environmental Health
- Enhancement of relationships with academic institutions
- Further progress in establishing the Regulatory Apprenticeship for Wales (Level 4 Diploma in Regulatory Compliance)

In 2024-25

Challenges for the Shared Service:

- Recruitment and retention remains a priority
- New areas of regulation without additional WG / Westminster funding *e.g. special procedures, single use vapes*
- Responding to world events
- Complexity of investigations
- All within a reduced budget

