

JOINT PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Hybrid meeting held on 22nd July 2026.

The meeting papers are available [here](#).

The recording of the meeting is available in [English](#) or [English and Welsh](#).

To view the presentation and subsequent discussion for any Part I agenda item, please click the hyperlink contained in its title below.

Present: Councillors A. Asbrey, J. Aviet, G. Ball, G.D.D. Carroll, C.E.A. Champion, A.M. Collins, P. Drake, V.P. Driscoll, C.P. Franks, W. Gilligan, E.J. Goodjohn, E. Goodjohn, S.J. Haines, W.A. Hennessy, N.P. Hodges, C. Iannucci-Williams, Dr. I.J. Johnson, S. Lloyd-Selby, B. Loveluck-Edwards, N.B. Marshallsea, J.M. Norman, H.M. Payne, J. Protheroe, C. Stallard, N.C. Thomas and N.J. Wood.

Also present: Councillors R.M. Birch (Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language), L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), S.A. Hodges, G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Wellbeing), S.D. Perkes (Cabinet Member for Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement), E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health) and M.R. Wilson (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services).

194 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Operational Manager for Democratic Services 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”.

195 [APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE](#) –

These were received from Councillors I.R. Buckley, S. Campbell, C.M. Cowpe, S.M. Hanks and S.T. Wiliam.

196 [DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST](#) –

No declarations of interest were received.

197 [MINUTES](#) –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2026 be approved as a correct record.

198 [PRE-CONSULTATION DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT 2025/26 \(REF\)](#) –

It was agreed that Agenda Items 4 and 5 be considered together.

The reference from Cabinet of 9th July 2026 was presented. Cabinet had also referred the report to the Governance and Audit Committee for consideration as part of the consultation programme, with any views and recommendations referred to Cabinet for their consideration prior to consideration of the Final Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report on 5th November 2026.

The Chief Executive introduced the annual self-assessment process by providing a recap of its purpose and methodology, noting that this was the first assessment related to the Vale 2030. They reminded Members of the Council's duty to keep performance under review annually, focusing on three specific requirements: how well the Council was performing, the effectiveness of resource usage, and the robustness of governance and decision-making and that the assessment was informed by a wide range of data, which was then subjected to peer challenge across the Council to ensure robustness.

They noted that the process began at the start of the year with discussions by the Strategic Leadership Team, followed by internal challenge sessions, and would move through Scrutiny, Cabinet consultation, and finally the Governance and Audit Committee. They explained that a moderation framework was in place to review Directorate-level assessments, integrating external evidence, consultation opinions, and engagement data to reach a final judgment and that the Council was delivering positive outcomes and making good progress against Vale 2030 commitments, whilst noting that the report would also highlight areas of inconsistent performance, financial pressures, and workforce challenges that required further transformation.

The report was considered in four stages as below:

[Performance](#)

The Chief Executive introduced the performance section by presenting a high-level summary of the Council's progress against the Vale 2030 Corporate Plan, noting that while 90% of commitments were delivered, some measures lacked targets for a formal rating. They emphasised that despite significant financial and demand pressures, the Council's overall performance was considered positive. Building on this, the Director of Corporate Resources highlighted the utility of the PowerBI dashboard as a tool for transparency, allowing Members to drill down into specific data, actions, and performance exceptions, whilst also referencing the Council's cross cutting missions (poverty, tackling inequalities and climate change). The Chief Executive reflected that moderation concluded that the Council's performance was 'Good', reflecting strong delivery and positive outcomes overall, but not yet the consistent, sustained and fully evidenced impact required for a higher rating.

There were several comments raised by Members including:

- Councillor Dr. Johnson expressed concerns over the discrepancy between the high percentage of green-rated actions and the lower performance rates for measures. They questioned the moderation process, specifically why social services procurement and funding shifted from 'poor' to 'fair', and sought clarity on how these varied judgements impacted departmental bandings.
- Councillor Franks asked the specific reasons why the Council did not achieve a higher performance rating. They also enquired about what steps could be taken to improve these areas and requested examples of other Councils that had achieved the top rating and the use of benchmarking information.
- Councillor Protheroe stated that the Council had an excellent social care team, and that other Councils were in a similar situation due to the challenges in commissioning Social Care and reflected that there could be consideration of cross Local Authority collaboration.
- The Leader explained that Councils measured themselves in different ways, noting the Performance Panel Assessment, and highlighted the value of informal discussion forums alongside professional networks across Wales of which the Council actively participated in.
- Councillor Emma Goodjohn raised the issue of challenge of organisation inconsistencies and sought to understand how these were to be resolved in the future.

Resources

The Director of Corporate Resources opened the resources section by emphasising that the Council's use of resources was judged as good overall, supported by effective financial management and a balanced budget.

To provide a comprehensive view, the Director of Corporate Resources invited other service leads to outline specific cross-cutting challenges:

- The Director of Education raised the challenge of sustained financial pressures and funding uncertainty, and reflected upon the role it was having on schools;
- The Director of Social Services highlighted rising service demand and the critical reliance on independent sector;
- The Director of Environment and Housing discussed the Council's workforce planning strategies, explaining how they were building long-term organisational capacity and resilience whilst adapting service delivery models;
- The Director of Place noted that 2025/26 was a year of consolidation and structural improvement in the management of the Council's physical and digital assets, whilst reflecting upon asset condition.

There were several comments raised by Members including:

- Councillor Franks expressed concern about the impact of potential budget reductions on school standards, specifically regarding the reduction of school deficits.
- Councillor Dr. Johnson challenged the effectiveness of the meeting format, commenting that they felt it was difficult to scrutinise the entire Council in one

forum, and questioned the grouping of finance, commissioning and procurement as a single topic, arguing that it lacked the necessary nuance for effective oversight.

- The Leader noted that the Council was open to evaluating how this structure worked for the future while emphasising the importance of digital tools like PowerBI for transparency and sharing information publicly.
- Councillor Protheroe emphasised that finance was distinct from procurement and argued that separating these areas would allow for more effective and nuanced scrutiny and highlighted the value of the Procurement 'task and finish' group in supporting the development of this area of work. They also suggested that it would be beneficial to explore a cross party working group to look at the Council's budget.
- Councillor Lloyd-Selby shared a positive experience from a Flying Start event, noting the importance of teams engaging directly with residents in the community.

Governance

The Chief Executive opened the governance section by confirming that the Council felt it maintained sound and effective governance arrangements, a conclusion supported by both internal and external auditors, and highlighted several key components of their framework:

- The Council utilised a robust framework for making decisions and managing risks, supported by a corporate risk register that was regularly monitored;
- The Council held an unqualified external audit opinion and had received generally positive regulatory feedback, with 86% of external recommendations marked as green by the end of the year;
- They identified the need to better use data and insight for decision-making, improve learning from the complaints process, and continue addressing capacity and workforce pressures;
- The Chief Executive noted the timeliness of the Scrutiny Review by Audit Wales, given the new Scrutiny arrangements implemented over the past year. He pointed out the shift toward more task and finish work and less frequent formal meetings, which was a change born out of previous Performance Panel Assessment recommendations, whilst noting that this would be an ongoing piece of work as the role and function continued to adapt to changes.

There were several comments raised by Members including:

- Councillor Dr. Johnson stated that scrutiny looked different depending on one's position and role within the Council and emphasised a lack of consensus regarding its purpose and expressed that they felt there were fewer opportunities to scrutinise Council performance under the current system. They also noted that some parties were not actively participating in task and finish groups, which was a concern raised before the process was implemented.
- The Leader noted that information-only reports were circulated and that it was up to Scrutiny Members to 'call in' reports for deeper exploration if they

wished to increase the effectiveness of the process. They also shared that Scrutiny was self-directing, and that improvement was ongoing.

- Councillor Loveluck-Edwards welcomed the changes to the scrutiny process, highlighting the value of 'task and finish' groups. They noted, however, that public engagement remained a barrier and that they would like to see clearer paths from task and finish recommendations to final outcomes.
- Councillor Carroll expressed that they felt that the reforms had not worked and argued that reducing the number of Committees had been detrimental. He characterised the change as a 'fait accompli' where opposition concerns were largely ignored and suggested as part of its ongoing development, that the Council consider the need for a more interrogative approach to Officers and Cabinet Members in Committees.
- Councillor Haines noted that task and finish sessions may solve problems but did not always provide the depth of scrutiny required to understand why issues occurred and felt they needed further resourcing to be delivered more effectively.
- Councillor Payne emphasised that individual Members had an obligation to raise issues of concern and noted that their own experience with cross-party task and finish groups regarding Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and school budgets had been a valuable deep dive.
- Councillor Lloyd-Selby stated that, based on their experience chairing a committee, there was more that could be done to clarify the roles of Scrutiny Members and how to manage the volume of items on an agenda to enable effective scrutiny of issues and that this was being taken forward as part of the Scrutiny improvement work.
- Councillor Asbrey endorsed Councillor Payne's comments, confirming that her experience on task and finish groups had been 'absolutely excellent.'
- Councillor Protheroe highlighted the value of reflecting on how the Council redeveloped and changed its services through this scrutiny process.
- Councillor Goodjohn noted that the feedback surrounding scrutiny changes would be considered by the Head of Democratic Services as part of its ongoing continuous improvement.

Overall Assessment

The Chief Executive presented a final slide summarising the Council's performance, highlighting three core pillars that underpinned the overall assessment:

- Strong progress against the *Vale 2030* Corporate Plan;
- Effective management of financial and organisational resources;
- Robust governance, decision-making, and assurance arrangements.

They also took a moment to express their gratitude to the staff and the broader team responsible for the year-long process of preparing the Annual Self-Assessment, noting that the work remained ongoing as they moved through the summer consultation period and prepared for final reviews in the Autumn.

Following consideration of the reference and report, Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the end of year performance as detailed in the Annual Self-Assessment Report 2025/26 be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Council reviews its approach to grouping Procurement, Commissioning, and Finance in future iterations of the Annual Self-Assessment Report.
- (3) T H A T the Council reviews the methodology for rating categorisation (Fair/Good/Poor/Excellent) in future iterations of the Annual Self-Assessment Report.
- (4) T H A T the Council develop a cross-party Scrutiny working group to help inform the annual budget setting process.
- (5) T H A T the Council explores alternative resourcing models to increase capacity to further support the delivery of Task and Finish Scrutiny.
- (6) T H A T the Head of Democratic Services notes all the comments regarding Scrutiny, noting there were a range of views, and use them as part of its existing ongoing evaluation of Reshaping Scrutiny, and to inform the response to the Audit Wales review of Scrutiny arrangements.

Reason for recommendations

- (1-6) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.