

SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Remote Annual Meeting held on 28th June, 2022.

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

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

Present:

Representing Bridgend County Borough Council – Councillor M. Lewis.

Representing Cardiff City and County Council – Councillors D. De’Ath and M. Michael.

Representing the Vale of Glamorgan Council – Councillors P. Drake and R. Sivagnanam.

(a) Announcement –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Principal Democratic Services Officer 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”.

(b) Appointment of Chair –

RESOLVED – T H A T Councillor R. Sivagnanam be appointed to the position of Chair for the current Municipal year and in line with the Joint Working Agreement.

(c) Appointment of Vice-Chair –

RESOLVED – T H A T Councillor R. Goode be appointed to the position of Vice-Chair for the current Municipal year and in line with the Joint Working Agreement.

(d) Apology for Absence –

This was received from Councillor R. Goode (Bridgend County Borough Council).

(e) Minutes –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March, 2022 be approved as a correct record.

(f) Declarations of Interest –

No declarations were received.

(g) Shared Regulatory Services Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2021/22 (HOF/S151O) –

The Head of Finance, in presenting the report, advised that the Unaudited Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) Statement of Accounts 2021/22 had been prepared in accordance with the proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/ LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code). The Statement was complete, and the report informed Committee of the financial position of the SRS prior to final audit in respect of the financial year 2021/22.

Appendix 1 to the report which had been unavailable at the time of the agenda despatch had been forwarded to all Members and uploaded to the Vale Council's website prior to the date of the meeting.

Although the Statement of Accounts was subject to Audit, Committee was requested to authorise that the Chair and the Head of Finance sign and release the SRS Statement of Accounts to Audit Wales.

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the report and the Appendix 1 be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Chair and Head of Finance be authorised to sign the Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2021/22 for its release to Audit Wales.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report and the information provided at the meeting.
- (2) To facilitate the completion of the audit of the accounts.

(h) Audit Wales 2022 Audit Plan (HOF/S151O) –

Mr S. Wyndham from Audit Wales (AW), as the nominated auditor for the Shared Regulatory Services, was required to undertake work in relation to the following:

- Audit of the Financial Statements;
- Vale for money;
- Continuous Improvement;
- Sustainable Development principle.

The report provided details regarding how AW would complete the work in 2022 with the auditor advising that the audit would be commencing in a matter of days.

The Committee was requested to consider and agree the proposed audit plan for 2022.

RESOLVED – T H A T the contents of the report be noted.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the contents of the report and the information provided at the meeting.

(i) Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report (DEH) –

The Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) was a collaboration between Bridgend County Borough Council, the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Council which commenced on 1st May, 2015, and was charged with the provision of Regulatory Services across the three Authorities.

The Joint Working Agreement required the Head of SRS and the Head of Finance to produce an Annual Report which, once approved by the Committee, was forwarded to the partner Councils.

The Head of Shared Regulatory Services advised that the report illustrated that the traditional reporting regimes and delivery of some statutory duties had been impacted significantly by the coronavirus pandemic over the course of 2021/22.

The report noted that the £8.331m 2021/22 gross revenue budget that had been agreed by the Joint Committee on 8th December, 2020 included an assumed 2.75% pay increase and this had been partially offset by a 1.9% reduction in the employer's superannuation contribution rate. No further savings were incorporated in the 2021/22 budget.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2021/22 revenue position remained challenging throughout the year, with sustained pressure on the service both operationally and financially. The cost of the increased draw on services was mitigated by additional funding being provided by Welsh Government (WG).

In 2021/22, £488k was claimed from WG against the Covid-19 Hardship Grant which funded the additional activities undertaken within the Covid Compliance and three Enforcement teams that covered the SRS region. In addition, £616k had been recharged to the Bridgend and Cardiff Councils in respect of the Service's support of the Test, Trace and Protect provision. A further £12k had been claimed against the WG Income Loss Grant during 2021/22.

As at 31st March, 2022, SRS had achieved an unaudited outturn underspend of £363k against the 2021/22 £8.331m gross revenue budget. This position included consideration for a special reserve of £148k being created to fund the replacement of ageing vehicles plus the acquisition of operational equipment to support the

operational activities plus safeguarding staff wellbeing whilst on operations and to formally invite Wales Audit Office to commence their audit of the accounts.

During the presentation of the report the Head of Service invited each of the Operational Managers to provide an overview of their respective service areas.

With regard to the Food Inspection programme and the Food Standards Agency Local Authority Recovery Plan, the Chair enquired as to the confidence the Operational Manager had going forward. In response the Operational Manager advised that recruitment to food hygiene positions had been an ongoing challenge since the establishment of the SRS service. Apprenticeships for the sector would assist but it would take time. The section was working to the recovery plan with the aim that the majority of inspections would be completed and with justified reasons why some may not be able to be completed. Again with regard to the noise pollution service aspect of SRS, the Operational Manager for that service area stated that it too was carrying some vacancies which was the same position for most Local Authorities. However, this would continue to be monitored.

With regard to Building Safety following the publication of the Building Safety White paper as referred to in paragraph 2.29 of the report, a Welsh Government priority remained the establishment of a Joint Inspection Team (JIT) with the Operational Manager for the service advising that since the report had been drafted for Committee the position for the Head of the JIT had been advertised.

During the meeting reference was made to the increase in illegal puppy breeding, with Councillor Lewis taking the opportunity to congratulate the team on the work and impact relating to a number of criminal prosecutions that had been made in various aspects of the service.

Councillor De'Ath enquired as to how successful the taxi lease scheme had been as referred to in paragraph 2.42 of the report. In response Committee was advised that there had been uptake to the City Region scheme but the other lease scheme referred to had not been taken up, as yet, and a Task and Finish Group working with Welsh Government had been established to consider and provide solutions / options to assist.

RESOLVED – T H A T the Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report, including the Draft Statement of Accounts, be approved and the Chief Executive of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, be authorised to forward a copy of the report to the Heads of Paid Service for the other Partner Councils.

Reason for decision

To meet the requirements set out in Clause 5.1 of the Joint Working Agreement.

(j) Shared Regulatory Services Business Plan (DEH) –

The report set out the process by which the draft Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) Business Plan for 2022/23 had been developed.

The draft Plan required ratification by the Joint Committee and formed a part of the SRS Annual reporting process set out in the Joint Working Agreement.

The Chair commented that report presented a good news story for partnership working and how it worked in practice, with it subsequently being

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the content of the report be noted and the Shared Regulatory Services Business Plan for 2022/23 be approved.

(2) T H A T the Head of the Shared Regulatory Services be authorised to make administrative amendments to the 2022/23 Business Plan should the need arise.

Reasons for decisions

(1) The Joint Working Agreement (JWA) specifies (at clause 14) that each year, the Head of Shared Regulatory Services will develop a draft Business Plan under the direction of the Management Board.

(2) The purpose of the Business Plan, as specified by the JWA, being to update the information contained in the previous Business Plan; and to identify the proposals for service activities, business and financial objectives, efficiency targets, business continuity planning, risk management, indicative staffing levels and changes, performance targets, costs and income. The JWA further specified that a draft Business Plan be submitted to the Joint Committee for approval, and that once approved, it be circulated to each Participant Authority's Head of Paid Service.

(3) The Head of Shared Regulatory Services being authorised to make administrative amendments to the Business Plan would enable minor changes to be made, as and when needed during the year, without the need to bring the matter back to the Joint Committee. To ensure that minor changes can be made promptly in response to any issues that arise.

(k) Shared Regulatory Services Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2022/23 (DEH) –

The Operational Manager, in presenting the report, advised that Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work Act required Local Authorities to produce a Health and Safety Plan setting out the arrangements in place to discharge the duties. The report apprised the Committee of the work of the Health and Safety team and requested approval for the Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan for the Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) for 2022/23.

Following a query from the Chair as to whether the objectives for this aspect of the SRS could be set by individual Authorities or were imposed, the Operational Manager advised it was a mixture of both.

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the 2022/23 Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan be approved.

(2) T H A T the Head of the Shared Regulatory Services be authorised to make administrative amendments to the 2022/23 Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan should the need arise.

Reason for decisions

(1&2) To ensure the Shared Regulatory Service had robust arrangements in place to deliver its obligations as an enforcing authority under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and to comply with statutory guidance.