

SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 25th June, 2025.

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

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Representing Bridgend County Borough Council – Councillor H. Williams.

Representing Cardiff City and County Council – Councillors N. Mackie 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 Democratic and Scrutiny 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 Chair for the Municipal year and in line with the Joint Working Agreement.

(c) Appointment of Vice-Chair –

RESOLVED – T H A T Councillor H. Williams be appointed Vice-Chair for the Municipal year and in line with the Joint Working Agreement.

(d) Apology for Absence –

This was received from Councillor M. Lewis (representing Bridgend County Borough Council).

(e) Minutes –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

(f) Declarations of Interest –

No declarations of interest were received.

(g) Shared Regulatory Services Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2024/25 (HOF/S151O) –

The report was presented by the Operational Manager – Accountancy. The Unaudited Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) Statement of Accounts 2024/25 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 financial year 2024/25, of which the Operational Manager highlighted the key points to the Committee. The Statement of Accounts was subject to Audit. The Committee was asked to authorise the Chair and the Head of Finance to sign and release the SRS Statement of Accounts to Audit Wales.

The Operational Manager – Accountancy did point out that table 5 of the report (concerning the management accounts and the information presented as part of the expenditure and funding analysis) may require some further work and checks prior to submission to Audit Wales (but would not substantively change the accounts), which the Committee agreed to and a copy of this would be shared with them in due course.

The Joint Committee, after considering the report, subsequently

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the content of the Shared Regulatory Services Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2024/25 report, following review by the Joint Committee, be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Shared Regulatory Service Statement of Accounts be approved electronically by Members by 25th June, 2025, therefore enabling the final sign off to occur by the 30th June, 2025 deadline.
- (3) T H A T the Chair and Head of Finance be authorised to sign the Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2024/25 for its release to Audit Wales.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) In order for Members to approve the Unaudited Statement prior to the deadline.
- (2&3) To ensure the completion of the audit of the accounts.

(h) Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report 2024-25 (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 that 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 report provided assurance that during 2024-25, the Shared Service had largely recovered performance across its traditional metrics after the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. There was still some way to go however in finally clearing the inevitable backlogs in some areas of programmed work.

The report also reflected on additional demands being placed upon the Service, through for example, Government expectation that new areas of legislation would be enforced despite there being no new funding. This at a time when the Service had implemented a further core services budget saving of 3% going into the 2024-25 financial year.

The report was presented by the Head of Shared Regulatory Services, in conjunction with her colleagues, namely the three Operational Managers for the Shared Regulatory Services, and the Operational Manager – Accountancy. They covered several key areas, achievements and challenges for SRS during 2024/25, including the budget, sickness absence levels, recruitment and retention of staff and key services / performance, ranging from food and trading standards (including enforcement and prosecutions) through to noise and air pollution, licensing, empty homes, building safety, animal welfare, safeguarding the vulnerable, among a wide range of service areas and responsibilities.

Members of the Committee raised several queries and made comments on the report, including the following:

- Councillor Michael wished to highlight the good work that had been undertaken by SRS in terms of recruitment and retention, including the regulatory apprenticeship scheme.
- The Chair asked about the sickness data, and for more details regarding the drop in short-term sickness. The Head of Shared Regulatory Services explained that there were no specific trends identified underlying this for the last financial year, but certain factors may have helped, such as flexible working arrangements, with a mix of working from home, the office and on-site when appropriate, which could be helping to prevent instances of short-term sickness.
- The Chair and other Members of the Committee echoed the points raised in the report about, and highlighted the good work and service delivery undertaken by, SRS officers and staff, as evidenced in the report with its overall positive feedback, findings and performance measures.
- Councillor Mackie emphasised the wide ranging and expanded scope of work undertaken by SRS under challenging circumstances and asked how the service was able to cope with this quite so effectively. The Operational Manager - Commercial Services (SRS) replied that the service was fortunate to have an extremely experienced, highly trained and professional workforce willing to undertake this work on behalf of SRS. The service was incredibly lean in terms of the number of staff it employed and SRS achievements, delivery of services etc. were therefore down to the hard work and dedication

of its staff. The positive comments made by Members would be shared with SRS staff.

- The Chair raised food hygiene and the special procedures (new licensing rules apply across Wales for Acupuncture (including dry needling), Tattooing, etc.), and whether businesses, especially new ones, were having to 'start from scratch' with no idea of what they must do to adhere to, or to implement, these, meaning that SRS was having to spend time having to explain the process to them. The Operational Manager - Commercial Services (SRS) replied that due to the Covid-19 Pandemic there had been a surge in entrepreneurial activity, with a greater emphasis on home and online based businesses, with some of these being more knowledgeable about the new legislation and special procedure than other new businesses and start-ups. Such businesses required further support via SRS and in essence the service had a dual role of both nurturing and supporting the local economy to help it be as vibrant as possible and to ensure that businesses and enterprises complied with the legal and public health frameworks so that residents and visitors were protected and safe. This was done through SRS inspection and intervention.
- The Vice-Chair wished to thank SRS for its efforts, focus and success regarding empty homes. He referred to the use of various tools at the SRS' disposal on this issue, which, with having a dedicated team in this area, had had an impact in addressing the negative effects of these properties, such as attracting anti-social behaviour and being seen as a 'blight' on local communities. The Operational Manager – Neighbourhood Services would pass on the Vice-Chair's comments on to the members of the relevant team, adding that the work involved the co-operation of other staff and stakeholders, such as the working group for this area i.e. in Bridgend.
- Councillor Mackie referred to the animal welfare aspects of the report and asked whether the illegal breeding of dogs had seen any reduction due to the efforts of SRS in tackling this area. The Operational Manager – Enterprise and Specialist Services replied that this was an intelligence led exercise, with increasing reports on this activity being made, but the key challenge was verifying such reports or complaints and then to get sufficient evidence to be able to gain and execute a warrant to act against illegal breeders. It was well advertised those persons breeding dogs required a licence to do so under animal licensing regulations, and SRS would do what it could within the current resources it had to tackle it. Councillor Mackie felt there should be more publicity on licensing and dog breeder's responsibilities around this. The Committee wished to thank the animal welfare team for their efforts in challenging circumstances and how this was reflected in the awards and accolades they had received, which would be disseminated back to them.
- Councillor Mackie referred to the excellent work undertaken by SRS around air quality in Cardiff, which she had seen first-hand. On air quality, the Chair asked about the relatively high number of monitoring locations within the Vale of Glamorgan. The Operational Manager – Enterprise and Specialist Services explained that due to the diffused nature of settlements and living spaces within the Vale, a wider spread of monitoring locations was required to properly monitor and assess air quality, unlike more urbanised and concentrated areas such as Cardiff which required a smaller number of monitors.
- The Vice-Chair emphasised the importance of making sure that the food that

residents ate and the air that they breathed was safe and these key priorities were reflected in the good work that SRS undertook.

- Councillor Michael suggested that SRS attend an event hosted by the Lord Mayor of Cardiff at a local dogs home and for them to highlight the crucial work they undertook regarding animal welfare and around dogs.
- On the prosecution of rogue traders, etc. and the wider safeguarding of vulnerable members of the public, Councillor Mackie stressed the importance of SRS and the partner Councils advertising examples of enforcement and prosecution undertaken, as well as the overall good work being done by SRS in this area.
- The Chair suggested there should be more communications sent out by the partner Councils of SRS to publicise, promote and inform on both the higher-level or more publicised achievements and work of SRS, and at the lower level regarding 'bread and butter' type activities that the service undertook, which the public may not be fully aware of. This was echoed by Councillor Michael, who stated there should be six monthly updates to all Councillors from partner authorities to complement this.
- Finally, the Chair asked, considering the challenges and additional calls on SRS for its services due to additional legislation, how SRS would address and resource these. The Head of the Shared Regulatory Services explained there would need to be a prioritisation process in place to address these new responsibilities as the service could not be stretched indefinitely. This would include conversations with partner authorities about areas of importance and managing expectations going forward. There was only so much SRS could do under the current budgetary and funding constraints, unless additional funding came from national and central government.

The Joint Committee, after considering the report, subsequently

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report 2024-25 be approved and the Chief Executive, Vale of Glamorgan Council, be authorised to forward a copy of the report to the Heads of Paid Service for the other partner Councils.
- (2) T H A T the 2024-25 unaudited outturn position be noted

Reasons for decisions

- (1) In order for the partner Councils and Joint Committee to meet the requirements set out in Clause 5.1 of the Joint Working Agreement.
- (2) Following Members of the Joint Committee's consideration and awareness of the 2024-25 unaudited outturn position.
 - (i) Shared Regulatory Services Business Plan 2025-26 (DEH) –

The report, presented by the Head of Shared Regulatory Services, set out the process by which the draft Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) Business Plan for 2025-26 had been developed.

The SRS Business Plan for 2025-26 reflected the needs and priorities at a corporate level of each of the partner authorities, with each of the intended actions to be undertaken by SRS as part of this set out in the Plan.

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 Joint Committee, after considering the report, subsequently

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the content of the report be noted and the Shared Regulatory Services Business Plan for 2025/26 be approved.

(2) T H A T the Head of the Shared Regulatory Service be authorised to make administrative amendments to the 2025/26 Business Plan should the need arise.

Reasons for decisions

(1) The Joint Working Agreement (JWA) specified (at clause 14) that each year, the Head of Shared Regulatory Services would develop a draft Business Plan under the direction of the Management Board. The purpose of the Business Plan, as specified by the JWA, was 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, this would be circulated to each participant Authority's Head of Paid Service.

(2) Authorising the Head of Shared Regulatory Services 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. As well as reducing the burden on the Joint Committee this approach would mean that minor changes could be made promptly in response to any issues that would arise.

(j) Shared Regulatory Services Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2025/26 (DEH) –

The report, presented by the Operational Manager – Commercial Services (SRS), 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 Services for 2025/26.

Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work Act required Local Authorities to produce a Health and Safety Service Plan setting out the arrangements in place to discharge these duties. This Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan was produced in response to that requirement and was designed to inform residents, the

business community of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of the arrangements the Councils would have in place to regulate health and safety.

The Joint Committee, after considering the report, subsequently

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the 2025/26 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 2025/26 Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan should the need arise.

Reason for decisions

(1&2) This would 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 comply with statutory guidance.