

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2025

REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2025

“ RESHAPING SCRUTINY – CABINET: 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2025 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 was presented by the Operational Manager – Democratic Services. The purpose of the report was that the Committee had the opportunity to consider the draft Scrutiny proposals and provide feedback as part of the programme of consultation.

The Operational Manager – Democratic Services presented a summary of the proposals being presented to review the Council's Scrutiny arrangements, which were being motivated by a range of internal and external drivers, such as responding the recommendations from Audit Wales, the Performance Panel Assessment and reflecting the Council's new Corporate Plan, Vale 2030. They presented a range of proposals which were being considered to strengthen the Scrutiny function; including:

- Removal of information only / noting / presentation items;
- Training for officers and Elected Members surrounding the value of Scrutiny
- Reducing from 4 Committees to 3 Committees;
- Reviewing the remits of Committees;
- Introduction of investigative scrutiny (via Task and Finish);
- Changing of frequency of Scrutiny meetings to bi-monthly;
- Amending the Corporate Plan's performance monitoring arrangements;
- Enhanced recommendations monitoring.

Councillor Protheroe indicated that they agreed with the need to align the Corporate Plan and consider new ways of working, and to stop spending Committee time debating reports where no meaningful value could be made. They sought further information for what the longer-term plans were for Scrutiny improvement, to which the Operational Manager – Democratic Services shared surrounding training that was being commissioned via WLGA, undertaking a skills and experience audit with Members, the exploration of co-option opportunities, particularly thinking about youth voice, and the opportunities for wider public participation within investigative scrutiny.

Councillor Goodjohn welcomed the proposals as positive and emphasised the devolution of power to back bench Members to direct policy making via Task and Finish as an opportunity to add value. They stated that it was not about people doing less work, but using time better to make proposals, and felt Task and Finish was an opportunity to link with Citizen Assemblies model. They reflected concern over the structuring of Committees, as Start Well would be responsible for a

significant proportion of the Council's budget currently, and Place also seemed to have a large portfolio.

Councillor Wood indicated they would await firm proposals before commenting.

Councillor Franks wanted to ensure Members could easily request an item on an agenda moving forward, and if excessively long reports would be a thing of the past. They also questioned if the relevant Cabinet Member should be in attendance. The Operational Manager – Democratic Services responded that all Members were able to suggest items for an agenda currently, and at the start of the year, a session would be held with all Committee Members to help devise a Forward Work Programme. They also indicated that work was being undertaken with officers surrounding emphasising the value of scrutiny of work, but acknowledged there would be no guarantee of reduced reports as it is important for officers not to lead Members.

Councillor Loveluck-Edwards asked how the evidence of the impact of any changes would be monitored, and if there were any emerging themes from consultation to date. The Operational Manager – Democratic Services responded that public perception would be measured via the Let's Talk About Life in the Vale survey, with an iteration due shortly, and then every 2 years, as there were specific questions surrounding residents' ability to get involved and perception of decision making. Bench marking could also be undertaken as Data Cymru were supporting with a wider national survey. This would also be reviewed by Internal Audit following implementation to ensure the desired outcomes were achieved. They also shared how they sought to promote this work and raise awareness through a number of channels, including social media. They indicated that there had been emerging themes similar to those raised in this meeting; including the number and structure of Committees, but that all of these views were being fed back to Cabinet accordingly.

Councillor Carroll indicated that his Group did not support the proposed reduction of 5 to 4 Committees as there would be an increased workload for other Committees and would reduce the capacity for scrutiny. He also shared concern for the timeline and felt that proposals felt rushed and should come back to Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The Operational Manager – Democratic Services responded proposals had been developed iteratively through a series of Member sessions from October 2024 to present, and that the final proposal would be shared with Members in a briefing session, and not a formal Committee due to the timelines involved and the number of Committee meetings at which this proposal had already been considered.

Councillor John shared that it was not the first time the Council had undertaken Task and Finish, and it provided an opportunity to look at areas of concern, which would play a big part of change moving forward.

## RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T Cabinet be asked to review the proposed Committee structure and remits based upon feedback from Members

(2) T H A T the contents of the report be noted.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.”