

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

COUNCIL: 28TH APRIL, 2025

REFERENCE FROM CABINET: 10TH APRIL, 2025

“C314 RESHAPING SCRUTINY (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) –

The Leader presented the report to provide Cabinet and Full Council with an Overview of Proposals to revise the Council’s Scrutiny functions for approval.

The Leader thanked Members and Officers for their flexibility in agreeing to change the Cabinet date by a week in order to fully consider the discussions and Recommendations from Democratic Services, Governance and Audit and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committees on the matter. With the additional time, all the Recommendations from each Committee had been considered and were included in the final Cabinet report.

The Leader commented that it was desirable for all 54 Members of the Council to be able to contribute to decision-making and the development of major policies, utilising the skills and expertise that Members have on a range of difficult issues faced by the Council. Vale of Glamorgan residents should also have more of an opportunity to contribute to their views and expertise, alongside surveys, etc., through Task and Finish work and Scrutiny investigations.

Paragraph 1.10 of the report discussed the types of matters that Scrutiny had been discussing, however only 20% of items led to robust Scrutiny and considered proposals and formed individual Committee recommendation which were shared with Cabinet for consideration.

Paragraph 1.14 of the report discussed the ‘Let’s Talk About Life in the Vale’ survey which reported that disappointingly the majority of residents disagreed that the Council takes residents views into account when making a decision and 60.5% of respondents had attempted to influence a decision or decisions made by the Council, with only 15.8% attending a Council meeting to do so. It was important for the Council to be more accessible to members of the public.

November’s Panel Performance Assessment made formal recommendations surrounding Governance and using resources effectively which impacted upon the Scrutiny function and Audit Wales had also identified areas where Scrutiny functions could be improved and made recommendations on both a local and national basis.

Paragraph 2.8 of the report listed the various meetings held since the matter was first raised in October 2024 and Paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10 of the report described the

associated consultation with Members and referral to Committees whose comments had been referred back to Cabinet and included in the report.

Paragraph 2.11 of the report described what Members had said and the resultant impact and how that had shaped the related proposals.

Feedback from Members had been largely positive, though there were concerns about changing from 5 to 4 Committees and why the Cabinet meeting was delayed by a week in order to fully consider those concerns.

The report was proposed to be referred to Full Council where there could be further discussion prior to the final decision being taken. The existing calendar of meetings would need to be updated to accommodate any agreed changes. It was proposed to evaluate the proposed arrangements after approximately twelve months of implementation to ensure the desired outcomes of Reshaping Scrutiny were being achieved.

Councillor Birch welcomed the increased use of Task and Finish groups as they would provide Members with an opportunity to put their views forward and to research topics for themselves rather than be presented with a report. There had been positive previous experience of such work by Task and Finish groups and she was pleased to see that the arrangements would be reviewed after twelve months.

Councillor John echoed Councillor Birch's comments, recalled that there had been 4 Scrutiny Committees previously and that Task and Finish groups could play an important role.

Councillor Perkes agreed with both Councillors Birch and John about Task and Finish groups as the last Administration had considered period poverty, housing and homelessness which had all been positive and the proposals would assist with policy development. Some matters would fall across two Committee areas which would enable Members to get a more rounded picture of the issues under consideration and provide more opportunities to develop their knowledge of different areas.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the feedback received from the Member briefing sessions, Democratic Services Committee, Governance and Audit Committee and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee surrounding proposed changes to Scrutiny arrangements be noted.

(2) T H A T the proposed changes be endorsed and those changes recommended for approval by Full Council at its meeting on 28th April, 2025.

- (3) T H A T the policies identified (Appendix D) to be updated to reflect any changes in Scrutiny arrangements which complied with legislation and statutory guidance be endorsed and recommended to Full Council.
- (4) T H A T approval for the calendar of meetings (Appendix E) to be updated to give effect to changes in Scrutiny arrangements be endorsed and recommended to Full Council.
- (5) T H A T the commitment to review the implementation of any proposed arrangements after approximately 12 months of implementation to ensure the desired outcomes of Reshaping Scrutiny were being achieved and to consider any amendments which may be required be endorsed and recommended to Full Council.
- (6) T H A T use of the urgency procedure set out at Section 15.14 of the Council's Constitution be granted to allow the proposed changes to be considered by Full Council at its meeting on 28th April, 2025.**

Reasons for decisions

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the references and discussions at the meetings.
- (2) To enable Full Council to consider if Scrutiny Committees were effectively fulfilling their functions, enhancing the Council's ability to achieve its strategic goals and objectives, delivering high-quality services to residents, and to allow for the dedication of resources to continue the design of future scrutiny arrangements in collaboration with officers and Members, and for the Council to adopt alternative models in delivering the Scrutiny function.
- (3) To ensure that policies and procedures and the Council calendar were updated to reflect the relevant information surrounding the Council's delivery of its Scrutiny function.
- (4) To ensure the Council's Calendar of Meeting reflected the proposed Scrutiny arrangements.
- (5) To allow for the Council to understand if any proposed improvement activities were achieving the identified benefits and improving the Scrutiny function within the Council.
- (6) To allow the matter to be considered by Full Council at its meeting of 28th April, 2025."**