

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
9TH APRIL, 2025

REFERENCE FROM HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 2ND APRIL, 2025

“ ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING DIRECTORATE PLAN 2025/26
(INCLUDING ACTIVITIES, PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND ASSOCIATED
PERFORMANCE TARGETS) TO DELIVER VALE 2030, THE COUNCIL’S
CORPORATE PLAN 2025-30 (DEH) –

The report presentation was given by the Director of Environment and Housing and presented for Members’ consideration the planned activities, performance measures and associated performance targets in the Environment and Housing Directorate Plan 2025/26 attached at Appendix A to the report. This Directorate Plan aligned primarily to the remit of the Homes and Safe Community Scrutiny Committee. The other Directorate Plans were being considered by relevant Scrutiny Committees and their comments and recommendations were to be considered by the Corporate Performance and Resources Committee to form a composite reference to Cabinet on the five Directorate Plans for 2025-26. This approach broadly followed that taken in scrutinising the Council’s Revenue and Capital Budget proposals.

The Directorate Plans had been informed by the Council’s commitments in Vale 2030, the Council’s approved Corporate Plan (Full Council, 10th March, 2025) for the period 2025-30.

All Scrutiny Committees had considered the draft Corporate Plan (December 2024) and their views alongside that of a wide range of key stakeholders had informed the five new well-being objectives and 50 commitments detailed in Vale 2030 which was a five year plan.

Progressing the activities and associated performance targets outlined in Directorate Plans would help to meet the Council’s statutory obligations under the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFG). Both pieces of legislation placed specific duties on the Council in relation to reviewing and setting objectives, keeping performance under review and reporting on performance, with a focus on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.

Scrutiny Committee Members were asked to review the Environment and Housing Directorate Plan 2025-26 (planned activities and proposed performance measures and associated targets) and how it would support delivery of the commitments and outcomes in Vale 2030.

Members were asked to refer any comments and recommendations with regard to the Environment and Housing Directorate Plan 2025-26 to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee to form a composite reference to Cabinet on the five Directorate Plans for 2025-26.

Following their presentation, the Director provided the following advice in response to questions and comments from the Committee.

Councillor Haines advised that he found it difficult to align some of the efficiency savings outlined in the report, with the concept of improving communities and their environments, highlighting the removal of litter bins, the closure of car parks and the potential closure of community centres as examples of actions that the Councillor felt would have a negative impact on the respective communities.

In response, the Director advised that no decisions on savings were easy and that considerable thought had been put into the decisions in the Plan, with a large amount of savings being asked of the Directorate. The Director further advised that it was not the Council's intention to try to close Community Centres, and that officers wanted them to remain open for the benefit of communities, however, alternative ways of operating these was being looked at, with the possibility of community groups, volunteer groups or Town and Community Councils taking over their management in an improved way in order to keep them open. Regarding the removal of litter bins, the Director advised that there was an issue regarding them being used for household waste, and that they had not seen an increase of litter left at sites where bins had been removed and that enforcement action would be implemented around this if it did arise. Furthermore, a review of street cleaning in the areas where bins were removed would be undertaken.

In relation to 'camera car' parking enforcement, the Director advised that a new additional electric camera car was being implemented, with the aim of keeping traffic moving, keeping areas around schools safe, and dealing with parking infringements. The car would at least pay for itself and it was hoped that it would also generate income. How much income it would generate would depend on the number of days it was operational and in which areas it operated.

With regard to play opportunities the Director advised that the free swimming initiative had been a success, but that it was fair to say that it did not have the maximum amount of flexibility in the system to allow children to spontaneously choose to use the pools, as booking was required. The Director added that the leisure centres being run by a commercial business had allowed all of the Vale of Glamorgan's leisure centres to remain open. The Director advised that the Council did have a Play Team who would continue to aim to provide quality play opportunities, but that their activities were reliant upon what could be achieved through grant funding.

Councillor Payne subsequently highlighted the positive work of the Directorate in relation to building homes and addressing temporary accommodation needs. In response, officers highlighted achievements such as ending the accommodation contract with the Holiday Inn hotel, which now meant that all temporary

accommodation, bar a small number in a Barry Hotel, was either council-owned or within shared housing in the community. New home building had contributed to this success, along with the work of Registered Social Landlord partners and with the help of Section 106 funding, and the Council aimed to build upwards of 500 new homes over the coming years.

With no further queries or comments, Committee subsequently:

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Environment and Housing Directorate Plan (Appendix A to the report) and associated measures and performance targets for 2025/26 contained within it be endorsed, subject to the removal of reference to the closure of community centres in the Directorate Plan, and that this endorsement be referred to Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee, in order for a composite response to be developed and referred back to Cabinet on 1st May, 2025.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee, and in turn Cabinet, were aware of the view of this Committee that community centres added value to the local communities of the Vale of Glamorgan and should be protected from closure where possible.”