

Meeting of:	Resources Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 21 May 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Resources Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Forward Work Programme Schedule 2025/26
Purpose of Report:	To determine the Annual Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2025/26 and to consider topics for Task and Finish Review Activity.
Report Owner:	Director of Corporate Resources
Responsible Officer:	Liz Whitaker, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Director of Corporate Resources
Policy Framework:	This report is in accordance with the recommendations of the Audit Wales (formerly Wales Audit Office) Democratic Renewal report and follows a review of the review of the Council's scrutiny function.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report requests that Members consider the draft Annual Forward Work Programme items and topics of investigatory scrutiny (Task and Finish Review) for 2025/26 and the new Resources Scrutiny Committee. • A draft Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2025/26 is attached at Appendix A, and Members of the Committee are asked to consider the contents for approval. • In addition, the Committee is asked to note the remit of the Resources Scrutiny Committee, as shown in paragraph 1.2 of this report. 	

Recommendations

1. That the Committee considers and agrees items for its Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2025/26 (Appendix A) including areas for deeper dive Task and Finish review investigations.
2. That the Committee notes the remit of the Resources Scrutiny Committee

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To agree the items and topics that the Resources Scrutiny Committee will consider for 2025/26.
2. To note the remit for the new Resources Scrutiny Committee.

1. Background

- 1.1** On 10th April 2025, Cabinet agreed proposals for new Scrutiny arrangements to take effect for the 2025/26 municipal year and which were aligned to the new objectives contained within the Council's new Corporate Plan – Vale 2030. A copy of the Cabinet report can be found in the following link:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2025/25-04-10/Reshaping-Scrutiny.pdf

- 1.2** The new arrangements were subsequently agreed by Council at its meeting held on 28th April 2025. Which included a new Committee structure as follows:

Committee Name	Corporate Plan Objective	Remits
Start Well	Giving Everyone a Good Start in Life	Schools, Schools Improvement, Post 16 Education and Training, Skills, Additional Learning Needs (ALN), Youth Services, Flying Start/Families First, Play and Welsh (external policy).
Live Well	Supporting and Protecting Those Who Need Us Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit	Adult Services, Children and Young People's Services, Libraries, Arts, Culture, Leisure, Sports, Community Learning, Homelessness, Public Protection and Equalities (external policy).

Committee Name	Corporate Plan Objective	Remits
Place	Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit Respecting and Celebrating the Environment	Economic Development and Regeneration, Tourism, Countryside and Parks, Waste management and cleansing, Highways and Engineering, Planning, Transportation, Climate and Nature Emergency, Placemaking and Public and Private Sector Housing.
Resources	Being the Best Council We Can Be	Corporate Policies and Performance, Communication and Participation, Customer Relations, Finance, Procurement, Digital, Property, Human Resources, Equalities (internal policy) and Welsh (internal policy).

- 1.3** A revised and reformatted Work Programme Schedule has been devised by Democratic Services and provides a breakdown of reports anticipated to be considered by the Resources Scrutiny Committee over the forthcoming months/municipal year (May 2025 to April 2026). It is also designed to indicate topics of deep dive investigatory Task and Finish review. In addition, it outlines a new mechanism where reports for information and noting will be shared with Members electronically. The new Work Programme also indicates those topics that will be considered via Member’s briefings outside of the formal Committee meeting settings.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The draft Work Programme schedule for 2025/26 attached at Appendix A, has been devised by Democratic Services in consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources.
- 2.2** To enable more effective scrutiny, the Council has defined the types of scrutiny and how these will take place within the Council. Types of scrutiny will include:

Scrutiny Type	Summary Description
Briefings	Information only or update items which are for noting and where scrutiny can add limited value N.B. Members can utilise the call-in procedure if required
Monitoring	Scrutiny Members consider performance against the Corporate Plan, considering objectives, measures and outcomes at a strategic level
Proposal	Policies are in development and are seeking Scrutiny feedback and recommendations to help shape the Council’s future direction

Scrutiny Type	Summary Description
Investigative (Task and Finish)	Committees can take deeper dives into topics using a range of methods based upon the Committee's forward work programme and identified priorities

2.1 Briefings

Information only type items will be cascaded through an alternative medium, likely to be a shared folder, with a notification indicating when new material is available. This will include elements such as reports and presentations from the Council and Partner organisations which would likely not benefit from Scrutiny time but be useful information to support Members in improving their awareness of local, regional and national policy direction. This information could be accessed by all Members on a remote basis whenever they need to access the information. Additionally, sessions will be arranged, often before relevant Scrutiny sessions, to invite officers or wider partners to provide whole Member briefing sessions and presentations as appropriate. This will be facilitated by the Democratic Services team.

2.2 Monitoring

Monitoring of performance information (including objectives, measures and outcomes) would take place in Q2 and Q4 (including end of year self-assessment) only. This will be held in a single joint forum bringing together all existing Scrutiny committees. Whilst a large meeting, this will encourage cross-committee working and learning, and Members would be encouraged to focus questioning upon their "home" Committee's remits. Areas of interest within this forum could be used to shape individual Committee's forward work programmes moving forward, including the potential commissioning of investigative scrutiny.

2.3 Proposals

When a policy is still in its development stage, and where decisions have yet to be taken, there will be opportunities for the Scrutiny Committees to make individual recommendations on these areas which will in turn be fed back to Cabinet to consider as a policy develops. In turn, it is the expectation that Cabinet will provide a response to these recommendations including any rationale for accepting, partially accepting or rejecting.

2.4 Investigative

A Committee may identify an area of work which would benefit from a deeper dive to explore the issue further. These will be in addition to formal committee meetings and facilitated by Democratic Services, with topics initially identified at the start of the year when a Committee is identifying and agreeing its forward work programme. This cross-party work will have a clearly defined scope (defined using systems thinking methodology) with the Cabinet Member sighted upon, and proposed to occur over a 12-week period (with the knowledge that there may need to be flexibility based upon scope).

- 2.5** Task and Finish will leverage the expertise of officers, partners, wider stakeholders alongside evidence and insight from the people of the Vale of Glamorgan. Investigative scrutiny is to hold the Cabinet and officers accountable on specific topics while proactively shaping the Council’s policy direction. This approach will provide a platform for more active participation in the Council’s decision-making processes for all members of the public, who will be invited and encouraged to participate as expert witnesses and share their lived experiences.
- 2.6** Reports and recommendations from these smaller groups will be fed back to the Cabinet Member, Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet for consideration. This feedback loop will help the Council in shaping its future policy direction, ensuring that decisions are informed by a broad range of perspectives and expertise.
- 2.7** Groups would be brought together on a voluntary basis by Members, are anticipated to consist of 4 to 8 Members, and to be as politically balanced as practicable, with the Chair decided by the “home” Scrutiny committee. This also presents the opportunity for cross-Committee working (dependent upon the nature of a topic). It is at the group’s discretion as to how they operate in terms of ways of working, and to agree a meeting frequency and time. An exercise to map the skills, knowledge and experience of Elected Members will be undertaken to create an index to support this work and draw upon the talents of all Members in shaping policy.
- 2.8** The proposed timeline guidance, which may be subject to change dependent upon the scope of the work, is outlined below:

Week	Stage	Stage Description
Pre	Initiation	Identification of topic; sourced from areas such as performance, Reshaping, Corporate Plan, audit reports and Members’ interests
1	Start up	Appoint Members, agree meeting dates, Members ways of working, and Terms of Reference
2-3	Planning and Scoping	Agree key outcomes and action points, evidence collation, including wider stakeholders
4-9	Delivery	Delivery of content of T&F review, challenging and sharing information to support direction of travel.
10-12	Concluding Report	Production of final report by T&F Chair, including recommendations, to be considered by the commissioning Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

- 2.9** Members are requested to consider and approve the proposed Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Schedule attached at Appendix A, and to also

consider areas that may require deep dive investigatory scrutiny by a Task and Finish Review group.

- 2.10 In considering areas for Task and Finish review, the Committee should note that the former Corporate Resources and Performance Scrutiny Committee have been conducting Task and Finish work around the Council's Procurement Strategy, and that although this project is approaching its conclusion, this work will sit within the remit of, and will be reported on to the Resources Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.11 The work programme schedule is a proposed list of items for consideration and may be subject to change depending on prevailing circumstances.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 Scrutiny Committee FWPs are published by the Council on a regular basis which encourages engagement / involvement by the public in the decision-making process.
- 3.2 The Scrutiny Public Participation Guide can be found at <https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Public-Speaking-Guides/23-12-04-%E2%80%93-Approved-by-Council-Version.pdf>

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1 None as a direct result of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1 None as a direct result of this report.

Employment

- 5.2 None as a direct result of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3 None as a direct result of this report.

6. Background Papers

Cabinet report with new Scrutiny proposal – 10th April 2025:

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2025/25-04-10/Reshaping-Scrutiny.pdf>



Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2025 - 26

Corporate Plan Objectives
Being the best Council we can be.
Remit: Corporate Policies and Performance, Communication and Participation, Customer Relations, Finance, Procurement, Digital, Property, Human Resources, Equalities (internal policy) and Welsh (internal policy).

Cabinet Members	Directors
Cabinet Member - Performance and Resources Cllr Lis Burnett	Director of Corporate Resources Tom Bowring
Cabinet Member – Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services. Cllr Ruba Sivagnanam	SLT: Head of Finance – Matt Bowmer Head of Digital – Nikki Johns Head of Legal and Democratic Services – Victoria Davidson Head of HR and Organisational Development – Tracy Dickenson

Democratic Services Contact	Committee Membership
Liz Whitaker Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer ewhitaker@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk 01446 709144	Committee Membership Webpage Scrutiny Information Webpage(s)

Co-opted Membership - TBC	
[NAME]	[Organisation]

Forms of Scrutiny	
Investigative (Task and Finish)	Committees can take deeper dives into topics using a range of methods based upon the Committee's forward work programme and identified priorities.
Proposal	Policies are in development and are seeking Scrutiny feedback and recommendations to help shape the Council's future direction.
Briefings	Information only or update items which are for noting and where scrutiny can add limited value but the Member call-in procedure can be used.

Task and Finish Working Groups [Investigative]		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-party work, with a clearly defined scope, and the Cabinet Member sighted. • Brought together on a voluntary basis by 4 to 8, politically balanced (where practical) Members, with the Chair decided by the "home" Scrutiny committee. • Leverage the expertise of officers, partners, wider stakeholders alongside evidence and insight from the people of the Vale of Glamorgan who will be invited and encouraged to participate as expert witnesses and share their lived experiences. • Hold the Cabinet and officers accountable on specific topics while proactively shaping the Council's policy direction. • Reports and recommendations fed back to the Cabinet Member, Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet for consideration. 		
Topic	Officer Lead	Timeframe (Max 12 Week Period)
Procurement T&F (CPR)	Mark Thomas	Due to conclude in May/June 2025

Resources Committee Meetings [Proposal]		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six scheduled meetings per Municipal Year. • Opportunity for Committees to make individual recommendations on policies that are still in their development stage, and where decisions have yet to be taken. • Committee recommendations fed back to Cabinet to consider as a policy develops, with Cabinet providing a response to recommendations, including any rationale for accepting, partially accepting or rejecting. • Arena for responding to Cabinet Member Decision Call-ins and/or Committee Requests for Consideration. 		
Topic	Officer Lead	Meeting Date
Proposed Annual Resources Forward Work Programme	Liz Whitaker – Democratic Services Officer	21st May 2025
Legacy Recommendation Tracking (CPR)	Liz Whitaker – Democratic Services Officer	16th July 2025 (TBC)
Procurement Task and Finish Group Report (CPR)	Mark Thomas Democratic Services Officer	16th July 2025 (TBC)

Q4 Sickness Absence Report	Laithe Bonni Operational Manager Employee Services	16th July 2025 (Due to go to Cabinet in June and be referred to Resources)
Draft People Strategy	Tracy Dickenson Head of HR and Organisational Development	16th July 2025
Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board Annual Report	Tom Bowring Director of Corporate Resources	17th September 2025
Resources Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Tracking and Updated FWP	Liz Whitaker Democratic Services Officer	19th November 2025
Q2 Sickness Absence Report	Laithe Bonni Operational Manager Employee Services	21st January 2025
Annual Equality Monitoring Report	Tom Bowring / Rob Jones Operational Manager - Corporate Communications	25th March 2025
Pay Policy 2026/2027	Tracy Dickenson Head of HR and Organisational Development	25th March 2025
Quarterly Revenue Monitoring	Matt Bowmer Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer Gemma Jones Operational Manager - Accountancy	To be scheduled on a quarterly basis.
Quarterly Capital Monitoring	Matt Bowmer Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer Gemma Jones Operational Manager - Accountancy	To be scheduled on a quarterly basis.
Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report	Tom Bowring / Rob Jones Operational Manager - Corporate Communications	To be scheduled
Carbon Management Plan	Helen Moses Operational Manager - Corporate Strategy and Insight	To be confirmed / scheduled

