

SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES: POLICY REVIEW SCRUTINY

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides Members with background information on the Shared Regulatory Services (SRS), including setting out which areas fall within this Committee's terms of reference.

Background – Shared Regulatory Services

2. The Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) is a collaborative service that was formed by the partner local authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff, and the Vale of Glamorgan on 1st May 2015. The approach delivers a fully integrated service under a single management structure, with shared governance arrangements ensuring full Elected Member involvement.
3. The Shared Regulatory Service operates under a Joint Working Agreement with the Head of Service reporting on service provision to a Joint Committee of Elected Members drawn from the three partner local authorities. The detailed delegations of policy and functions from partners to the Joint Committee and Head of Service are set out in the Joint Working Agreement, and include:
 - a. The functions to be carried out by the joint service
 - b. The terms of reference and constitution of the Joint Committee, the Management Board, etc.
 - c. The term of the proposed Shared Regulatory Service such as staffing, the services to be provided by the host and other partners, financing, and other functional issues, and
 - d. The financial operating model.
4. The five priorities of the SRS are:
 - i. Improving health and wellbeing
 - ii. Safeguarding the vulnerable
 - iii. Protecting the environment

- iv. Supporting the local economy
- v. Maximising the use of resources.

Core Services Provided by the Shared Regulatory Service

5. The SRS provides a diverse and comprehensive range of services that safeguard the health, safety and economic wellbeing of consumers, businesses and residents. The services are covered under the three main areas of Trading Standards, Environmental Health, and Licensing
6. This Committee has responsibility for scrutinising work related to supporting the local economy, including some areas of Regulatory Services, major events, the rise in new food businesses and on-line retailing, as well as commercial services offered to local businesses that assist them to achieve legal compliance.
7. The Shared Regulatory Service protects consumers and businesses by maintaining and promoting a fair and safe trading environment. This area of work ensures that businesses comply with a host of consumer protection statutes. The areas that fall within this Committee's terms of reference¹ include:
 - Product safety;
 - Age restricted sales;
 - Counterfeiting;
 - Weights and measures;
 - False claims about goods and services;
8. The Trading Standards Service investigates complaints, participates in criminal investigations and exercises, conducts inspections of businesses, undertakes a sampling programme, provides consumer advice to vulnerable residents and provides business advice to help businesses improve their trading practices. Furthermore, the Trading Standards Service has the only

¹ The Environmental Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the Environmental Health aspects of SRS, whilst the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee scrutinises Consumer Protection, Private Sector Housing and Noise Nuisance.

UKAS accredited Metrology Laboratory in Wales providing calibration of weights and measures of length and capacity.

Shared Regulatory Service Business Plan 2023-24

9. The Shared Regulatory Services Business Plan 2023-24 is attached at **Appendix A**. It sets out the resources, targets, challenges and priorities for 2023-24, and is arranged in six main sections, as follows:

- **Overview of Services** – This section provides a background to the service; a summary of the key services provided; an area wide profile; the structure for management and governance of the service; and a breakdown of staff resources.
- **Service Aims & Strategic Priorities** – This section addresses the vision, strategic priorities and aims of the service; the corporate priorities and key outcomes for each of the partner local authorities; and how the vision, aims and priorities will be delivered.
- **Challenges** – This section touches on the main challenges facing the service. For 2023/24 the Business Plan identifies these are: delivering the Shared Regulatory Service in the future; managing complex financial processes; ICT; recruitment and retention; remaining relevant to the three Councils; new legislation; out of hours; and the cost-of-living crisis.
- **Budget** – This section explains the financial allocation for the service and the importance of maximising resources.
- **Workforce Development** – This section sets out what the Shared Regulatory Service is looking to do to develop organisational culture; leadership & management; core skills; recruitment, retention & progression; communication & employee engagement and employee performance management.
- **Turning Actions into Outcomes** – This forms the bulk of the report and explains what the Shared Regulatory Service is doing to improve health & wellbeing; safeguard the vulnerable; protect the environment; support the local economy; and maximise the use of resources.

10. Members attention is drawn to the following pages of **Appendix A**:
 - a. Page 18 – a safe trading environment is maintained
 - b. Page 22 – outdoor hospitality
 - c. Page 27 – children are protected from harmful substances and products
 - d. Pages 39 – 43 supporting the local economy
 - e. Pages 44 – 49 – maximising the use of resources
 - f. Pages 50 – 54 – risk register.

11. The SRS has its own website at: [Shared Regulatory Services \(srs.wales\)](https://srs.wales). The website contains useful background information on the role of SRS and the services it provides as well as news about any prosecutions it has undertaken.

Way Forward

12. During their meeting, Members will have the opportunity to hear from Cllr Michael, Chair – Licensing Committee and member of the SRS Joint Committee, Helen Picton - Head of Shared Regulatory Services, Christina Hill - Operational Manager – Commercial Services, Will Lane - Operational Manager – Neighbourhood Services, and Jason Bale - Operational Manager – Enterprise and Specialist Services. Officers will provide a short presentation and the whole panel will be available to answer Members' questions.

Legal Implications

13. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review, and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be

within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

14. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review, and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. Note the contents of the attached report, and
- ii. Consider whether they wish to pass on any comments to the Cabinet following scrutiny of the item.

LEANNE WESTON

Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer

6 December 2023