
SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES – COVID UPDATE

Reason for the Report

1. To provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider the current position of Shared Regulatory Services, and the impact that the current Covid crisis has had upon service delivery.

Background

2. On the 23rd March 2020 the United Kingdom was placed into an unprecedented lockdown to help mitigate the rapid spread of the coronavirus pandemic. This drastic action was taken to minimise social contact, reduce the number of new cases and ultimately protect lives.
3. The Council is a business that focuses on serving local people, and so is heavily reliant upon social contact. This means that limiting the number of day-to-day interactions has had a huge impact on the work of the Council, and the support it provides to local residents. Shared Regulatory Services provides a broad range of services for local residents across the local authority areas of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.
4. Shared Regulatory Services 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, these include:
 - The functions to be carried out by the joint service.
 - The terms of reference and constitution of the Joint Committee, the Management Board, etc..

- The term of the proposed Shared Regulatory Services such as staffing, the services to be provided by the host and other partners, financing and other functional issues.
- The financial operating model.

Core Services Provided by Shared Regulatory Services

5. Shared Regulatory Services 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 Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing.
6. These broad areas encompass a wide range of services that deal with issues that can have a huge impact upon people when things go wrong or have not been enforced properly. A brief description of specific services delivered by Shared Regulatory Services is included in this section of the report.
7. **Trading Standards** – this 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 including those relating to:
 - Product safety;
 - Food standards;
 - Animal feed;
 - Age restricted sales;
 - Counterfeiting;
 - Environmental safety;
 - Weights and measures;
 - False claims about goods and services;
 - Malpractice including rogue traders, scams and doorstep crime.
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 UKAS accredited Metrology laboratory in Wales providing calibration of weights and measures of length and capacity.

9. **Food Safety** – this service protects public health by ensuring that the food we eat is without risk to the health and safety of consumers. This is achieved through regular food safety inspections of food business and guest caterers, operating the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, providing education courses and practical advice, investigating food and hygiene related complaints, carrying out regular food and water sampling and undertaking checks on imported food.
10. **Housing Safety** – this service protects public health by working with private landlords and owners to provide warm, safe and healthy homes for tenants. They ensure that Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) are licensed through Mandatory and Additional Licensing Schemes, inspecting HMO's and improving physical and management standards of privately rented accommodation. Complaints from tenants about their rented accommodation are investigated; these can include complaints about damp, mould, heating disrepair, nuisance and student housing issues. Problems with empty homes that have fallen into disrepair are addressed and immigration inspections are undertaken.
11. **Pollution** – this service protects public health by controlling noise and air emissions into the environment. The Pollution Service investigates noise complaints about issues such as amplified music, DIY activities, house and car alarms, barking dogs, and construction sites. It investigates air pollution complaints such as smoke, dust and odour and illegal burning, undertakes environmental monitoring, local air quality management and regulates emissions from industrial processes.
12. **Contaminated Land** – this service protects public health by reviewing and implementing the Contaminated Land Strategy which ensures the identification, inspection and remediation of historically contaminated sites. Private water supplies used for both domestic and commercial purposes (such as drinking, cooking, and washing) are regulated and responses are provided to Environmental Information Requests and Planning application consultations.

13. **Health and Safety** – this service protects public health and safety by working with others to ensure risks in the workplace are managed properly. This is achieved by undertaking planned inspections and targeted initiatives, investigating reported accidents, diseases, dangerous occurrences and complaints, providing advice and guidance to employers and employees and securing safety standards at outdoor events.
14. **Communicable Disease** – this service protects public health by controlling and preventing cases and outbreaks of infectious disease by investigating confirmed sporadic and outbreak cases of communicable disease, providing and reviewing advice and guidance on infection control, cleaning and disinfection, case and contact exclusions, providing training on food hygiene, nutritional and infection control, enforcing health protection legislation to minimise the spread of communicable disease and contamination from radiation and chemicals that threaten health and leading on local and national communicable disease surveillance programmes.
15. **Animal Health and Warden Services** – this service ensures the wellbeing of animals generally and during transport. It also administers animal movements to prevent the spread of diseases such as rabies, anthrax and foot & mouth. Wardens respond to complaints about straying animals such as dogs and horses.
16. **Licensing** – this service determines applications for the grant, renewal, variation and transfer of many different authorisations which are the responsibility of the three partner local authorities. Applications for licences, certificates, registrations and permits are processed and enforcement undertaken in respect of statutory requirements such as alcohol, public entertainment, gambling, street trading, taxi licences, charitable collections and animal related licensing.
17. **Pest Control** – this service offers services to the Vale of Glamorgan area for the treatment of pests and infestations. This could include, rats, wasps, mice, fleas, cockroaches etc..
18. **Port Health** - this service prevents the import of infectious and animal disease into the UK, ensuring ships comply with international agreed public health sanitation standards and improving the safety and quality of the food chain.

19. **The Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit** - this service is one of only three units operating across the UK. The Unit covers all 22 Local Authority areas in Wales with the key aim of tackling the problem of illegal money lending. The Unit is both proactive and reactive in its work providing education and promotion across Wales to various social groups and highlighting the dangers of illegal lending. The unit also carries out detailed investigations with a view to prosecuting offenders and has the capabilities to act swiftly where necessary to deal with victims of loan sharks.
20. In addition to the traditional main areas covered, Shared Regulatory Services has played a pivotal role in the delivery of the Test, Track & Trace service which has been delivered across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. This has placed an obvious additional resource pressure on the service.
21. This item will provide Members with an opportunity to review the impact that the Covid crisis has had upon the services (above) relevant to Shared Regulatory Services. The relevant Cabinet Members and the Head of Shared Regulatory Services have agreed to attend the meeting to support the briefing, which will include:
 - The budget position of Shared Regulatory Services as a whole, along with a summary of individual service parts;
 - How Shared Regulatory Services has performed against its performance objectives during the Covid crisis;
 - A summary of the main challenges that Shared Regulatory Services has faced during the Covid crisis;
 - A summary of the main opportunities that Shared Regulatory Services has identified during the Covid crisis;
 - A summary of key future proposals relevant to Shared Regulatory Services.

Way Forward

22. The Cabinet Members for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment and Housing & Communities have been invited to attend the meeting. In addition to this the Chair for Licensing & Public Protection has also been invited to attend. They will be supported by the Head of Shared Regulatory Services.

Legal Implications

23. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not making 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 the 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

24. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not making 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

25. The Committee is recommended to:
- (i) Consider the information in this report and the information presented at the meeting;
 - (ii) Determine whether they would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations to the Cabinet on this matter; and,

(iii) Decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance & Legal Services

30th September 2020