

Meeting of:	Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 22 June 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report
Purpose of Report:	To advise members on the performance and financial position of the Shared Regulatory Service for the 2020/21 financial year.
Report Owner:	Head of Shared Regulatory Services Head of Finance, Vale of Glamorgan Council
Responsible Officer:	Director of Environment and Housing
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Advice has been sought from the partner Councils
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for the Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) is a collaboration between Bridgend County Borough Council, the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Council that commenced on the 1st May 2015, and is charged with the provision of Regulatory Services across the Authorities. • The Joint Working Agreement requires the Head of SRS and the Head of Finance to produce an Annual report which, once approved, by the Committee is forwarded to the partner Councils. • The report illustrates that the traditional reporting regimes and delivery of some statutory duties have been impacted significantly by the coronavirus outbreak. The consequences of the coronavirus will impact on 2021/22 performance and income. • The SRS is reporting an overall underspend against the 2020/21 gross revenue budget. The position for 2020/21 includes the achievement of a savings target of £166k required by the Partner Authorities from the 20/21 budget. The previously forecast overspend position has been mitigated by a £493k contribution towards costs received from Welsh Government in respect of an animal welfare investigation. Covid-19 has also impacted on the income generating ability of the SRS. In 2020/21, £48k has been received from Welsh Government in respect of income loss claims submitted. 	

- Additionally, £343k has been received from Welsh Government in respect of claims made against the Covid-19 Hardship Grant which funded the additional activities undertaken in the Covid Compliance and Enforcement teams. Three teams were created mid-year to cover the SRS region. The service has also supported the two Health Boards that cover the SRS region in the provision of the Test, Trace and Protect service, with unbudgeted expenditure recouped from Cardiff and Bridgend Councils TTP provisions.
- Consequently, the report advises on the draft financial outturn position of the Service, and the resulting impact this has to each of the Partner Authorities, appertaining to the provisional outturn position in respect of financial year 2020/21.
- The Draft Shared Regulatory Services Statement of Accounts 2020/21 is presented to Committee, to be signed by both the Chair of the Committee and the Section 151 Officer as Treasurer of the Committee, and to formally invite Welsh Audit Office to commence their audit of the account.

Recommendation

1. That the Joint Committee approves the report and authorises the Managing Director, Vale of Glamorgan Council, to forward a copy of the report to the Heads of Paid Service for the other partner Councils.

Reasons for Recommendation

1. To meet the requirements set out in Clause 5.1 of the Joint Working Agreement.

Background

- 1.1 Under the Joint Working Agreement, the Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) is required to produce an annual report that covers the operational and financial performance of the service for the preceding year. Clause 5 of the Joint Working Agreement states:

"The Joint Committee shall receive in each year at its annual meeting which shall be held no later than 30th June the report of the Head of Regulatory Services and the Lead Financial Officer in respect of the functions delegated to the Joint Committee relating to the twelve months ending 31st March of that year and a copy thereof shall be forwarded to the Chief Executive of each Participant.

- 1.2 The report shall include:-

- (i) *A statement showing the performance of the Regulatory Service Functions and progress in achieving the Objectives and delivering the Business Plan.*

- (ii) *a summary revenue account and statement of capital spending including the distribution or use of any revenue surpluses and the financing of any capital expenditure"*

1.3 This is the sixth report produced under this requirement and covers the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. If the content of this report is agreed, a copy of the report must be sent to the Head of Paid Service of each of the three Councils along with the SRS Business Plan for 2021/22. The report outlines many of the actions undertaken at each partner Council to deliver the wide range of statutory functions assigned to the Service. The report provides a review of operations across the service, a summary of the financial position, and outlines performance against the 2020/21 service objectives.

Operating the Shared Regulatory Service

1.4 The Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) operates across Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The SRS delivers a range of statutory services through a collaborative model that are critical to maintaining the health, safety and economic wellbeing of local communities. The operating model delivers an integrated service for the Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing functions, which has three service delivery sectors focusing upon the customer rather than the traditional professional delivery model.

- Neighbourhood Services: activities relating to residential premises or having an impact on the local community.
- Commercial Services: activities relating to business premises (generally where national standards apply).
- Enterprise and Specialist Services: specialist areas of work and income generating services.

1.5 As a regional organisation, providing regulatory services across three local authority areas, the SRS seeks to place the corporate priorities and stated outcomes of the three councils at the heart of all its activities. Using them as a focus, the strategic priorities for the Shared Regulatory Service:

- Safeguarding the Vulnerable
- Improving Health and wellbeing
- Protecting the Environment
- Supporting the local economy
- Maximising the use of resources

provide a robust base for achieving the outcomes identified in previous business plans and the partner Council's corporate aspirations. This reporting year however, saw much of the planned work deferred due to the impact of the coronavirus upon society

and most significantly the draw upon the SRS resource to support a massive public health response across the three Councils.

1.6 The Joint Working Agreement, executed in April 2015, and updated in July 2017, underpins the entire service provision. The JWA contains a number of "milestones and requirements". In accordance with those requirements:

- The Wales Audit Office completed an independent financial audit of the service in September 2020; there were no recommendations for improvement.
- The service set its budget in December 2020 for the 2021/22 period. The Joint Committee recommended a standstill budget position given the coronavirus outbreak and the impact upon the service. That was agreed by the three Councils.
- The Business Plan for 2021/22 is presented for political approval in other papers to the June 2021 Committee.
- The Joint Committee will receive an audited statement of accounts for 2020/21 in September 2021.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

2.1 The 2019/20 Annual report illustrated that the SRS had delivered the requisite financial savings, and delivered the majority of the business plan actions. The Key Milestones set for 2020/21 were:

- *Delivery of the SRS Business Plan 2020-2021*
- *To review recruitment and retention processes to ensure that the SRS can attract and retain skilled officers*
- *To review the agile working arrangements for the service to ensure that technology is being exploited fully to improve service delivery.*
- *To monitor the implementation of new legislation and any requirements imposed by such legislation upon the Service. Generally new requirements can be planned for and effectively resourced, for example the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 the Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Act 2018, the Renting Homes Act 2019. However, it is not always easy to predict the impact that new legislation may have on resources. The uncertainty on membership of the EU has the potential to exacerbate such matters. The great uncertainty is the quantum of change and the unknown time scales within which that change must take place.*

2.2 As the Business Plan was being drafted in 2020, coronavirus infections began to rise and the uncertainty around what would happen next was evident world-wide. Subsequently, the word unprecedented has appeared many times in the media and in

the quarterly reports to the Joint Committee in the last 12 months on the impact of the virus. This Annual report will address firstly the matters required by the Joint Working Agreement and then reflect upon the SRS activity during 2020/21 to challenge the spread of the coronavirus.

Human Resources

- 2.3** There have been two significant HR matters to report in the last 12 months. The first has been the reassignment of officers into a range of different regulatory functions to support the public health initiatives. This included the Test Trace and Protect service (TTP), enhanced surveillance around care homes and schools, investigation of workplace clusters and more generally monitoring public health provisions in the workplace. The second has been the recruitment of almost 20 environmental health students using additional Welsh Government funding to bolster the SRS resource. Some of those students have now joined the permanent workforce and we are keen to offer as many of those students positions in the future. Their input has been impressive and they have played an active role in protecting the community.
- 2.4** The SRS Staff Survey undertaken in early 2020 identified the area of people development as an opportunity for improvement. The coronavirus has restricted the opportunities for face to face learning, but officers who enrolled on a range of courses in late 2019 have continued their studies remotely and a number have achieved examination success. This year, we will ensure that personal development is actively encouraged through the performance review process and through the provision of suitable development opportunities linked to SRS business objectives. We know that the majority of our officers are content with their employment within the SRS, and the challenge is now to retain and refresh the high calibre workforce we have for the years ahead
- 2.5** Sickness absence levels for 2020/21 were 6.32 days per FTE person. This is a decrease on the previous year where absence rates were recorded as 10.13 per FTE person. It is evident that the coronavirus has affected the sickness absence data in a number of ways. While the virus may have led to additional sickness absence, measures such as social distancing, shielding and increased homeworking appear to have helped reduce other causes of absence. Individuals who were advised to "shield" during the pandemic, together with government asking people to social distance and self-isolate may have led to less exposure to germs and minimised some of the usual sickness absences. Homeworking could also allow people to work when they were a little unwell; they might not have travelled to a workplace to work, but felt well enough to work from home.

Operational Performance

2.6 Operational performance throughout 2020/21 has been reported both to the Joint Committee and to each partner Council through the legacy systems. Performance is gauged normally against the targets set out in the Business Plan. Unfortunately, a number of the targets and actions identified in the plan were not achieved. While all the statutory documents were published on time, the service did not complete many of the proactive programmes. Some of this was due to partner organisations being unable to progress matters, but the primary cause was the realignment of resource toward coronavirus work. The following paragraphs reference the key performance criteria and thereafter some commentary on the activities undertaken to control and reduce the spread of the virus.

2.7 The SRS has a role in two of the Council Public Accountability Measures; PAM 023 and PAM 013 and 045 for Cardiff and Bridgend.

- PAM 023 – Food establishments - broadly compliant (%). This measure provides an indication of how well a food business complies with food hygiene legislation. The food industry is responsible for producing and distributing safe food. The Shared Regulatory Service, as the enforcement agency, conducts inspections, ensuring that standards are met through a robust enforcement programme to deal with those who do not comply with standards. Additionally, the business support regimes introduced into the SRS structure play a part in promoting an increase in hygiene standards, examples of that are set out under the priority heading supporting the local economy. Premises are deemed to be broadly compliant if specified risk scores are achieved for cleanliness, structural issues, and confidence in the management of the business.

The number of premises that are broadly compliant with food hygiene requirements, i.e. scoring 3* or above, are consistent with the previous year and in line with the UK average of 95%. The numbers associated with this indicator do carry a “*health warning*” for the year in that many of the premises scheduled for inspection were closed for much of this reporting period and some did not open at all. The number of food businesses with a food hygiene rating of more than 3* in each authority area during 2020/21 were:

- Bridgend 97.24% (*from 97.49% 2019/20*)
- Cardiff 95.41% (*from 94.84 % 2019/20*)
- Vale of Glamorgan 97.53% (*from 97.37%% 2019/20*)

Moving forward, it is important to note that within the SRS region there has been a significant turnover of food business operators; there are over 1000 new food business enterprises that will require inspection in 2021/22. Many of these new entrants to the market do not attract immediately a broadly compliant rating and that may affect the overall broadly compliant score for the region. Additionally, a focus upon new businesses will impact the traditional risk assessed proactive programme.

- PAM 13, Percentage of empty private properties brought back into use and PAM 45, the number of new homes created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use. These indicators have as their core purpose the aim of indicating the reduction in the number of empty properties as a consequence of action by the Council. The current performance measure guidance sets out the categories of direct action that local authorities can take to bring a property back into use, including, Grants, loans or other financial assistance, enforcement action including statutory notices and dialogue between the owner and the local authority where progress to restore the use of the property is evident. Officers from the SRS contribute a dedicated resource to bring empty properties back into beneficial use within Cardiff and Bridgend.

In Bridgend interventions made by SRS have led to 4 properties listed in the Bridgend Council's top 20 priority properties becoming occupied in the last financial year, with a further 2 properties being sold and new owners engaging with the authority to bring the properties back into beneficial use. One other property is also being renovated. We continue to work with and encourage the owners of empty properties to bring them back into use, through enforcement action where necessary. Following the non-compliance with a Notice served under the Town and County Planning Act, SRS successfully completed the work in default and is continuing to encourage the owner to bring the property back into use. To further improve the information available on empty homes, the opportunity was also taken to overhaul the SRS webpages to provide comprehensive information to members of the public and empty property owners with a range of information on how to bring an empty property back into beneficial use. Furthermore all auction houses with links to South Wales and local estate agents have been contacted and provided with 'A property owner's guide to empty homes' brochure and letter from the empty property co-ordinator introducing the services that Bridgend County Borough Council offer to empty property owners.

In Cardiff 63 properties were returned to use or new units created as a result of empty homes work. This is a result of a combination of both proactive and reactive work involving informal negotiation and formal enforcement in order to assist owners in bringing their properties back into use or to require improvements to eradicate associated nuisances. Lockdown restrictions and the difficulties that these imposed on sale and repairs during the year has had an impact on results for 2020-21 but during the last quarter an increase in qualifying completions and an improvement in results was observed. Looking ahead, we are hopeful that the expected easing of lockdown measures will result in anticipated works that may lead to increased levels of occupation being progressed in a more timely manner. Due to the problematic nature of the work and the many reasons properties become and remain empty, casework is fairly bespoke depending how receptive an owner is. That said, the work does follow a general process in order to open a dialogue with owners and where that fails, formal enforcement in the form of statutory notices, as mentioned above, in addition to such measures as compulsory purchase and enforced sale are available. During 2020/21 two Compulsory Purchase Orders commenced in the previous year are now vested with the Council while further details are resolved prior to their disposal on the open

market. This year the overall target in Cardiff of 81 properties returned to use or new units created as a result of empty homes work was exceeded (82 properties).

- 2.8** The detail of performance against all the agreed indicators is set out in **Appendix 1**. The COVID 19 pandemic, associated lockdown, reopening, lockdown and reopening of the economy over the last 12 months and the changing enforcement demands of the Coronavirus Restrictions Regulations meant that our traditional inspection programme has been severely impacted. Accordingly, an additional set of performance indicators has been created, set out at **Appendix 2**, to give elected members a flavour of the broad range of COVID related enforcement and advice work carried out by SRS. This is presented in an infograph format. To support this data and provide wider context, the Joint Committee will receive a brief presentation at its Annual General Meeting on 22nd June 2021.
- 2.9** The SRS may, through the relevant participative Council, prosecute breaches of legislation, particularly in respect of those who flout the law or who act irresponsibly, or where there is an immediate risk to health and safety. In the period, the service has been successful in challenging a range of unfair practices, many of which attracted significant media attention. The time and work required investigating these matters, and the consequences of officers' ability to carry out day to day work whilst these matters are ongoing, is significant. The details of all the prosecutions concluded in the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 are set out in **Appendix 3**.
- 2.10** The SRS has continued to support relevant corporate challenges at each Council. The uncertainty surrounding the UK's departure from the EU required increased interaction with civil servants in Westminster and Cardiff on a range of public protection matters. Other examples of providing corporate support include officers playing a key role in assisting the Councils to deal with the requirements to improve air quality, participating in a range of audits and supporting the Welsh Government on a range of issues pertaining to public health.
- 2.11** SRS officers have supported all three Councils' statutory Licensing and Public Protection Committees through the year. The Committees have agreed a number of policy documents on Taxi conditions to protect the vulnerable in the community.

Significant Service achievements

2.12 Paragraph 1.5 above, highlights the priorities for the SRS; there have been a number of achievements in 2020/21 that demonstrate progress toward delivering the outcomes associated with those priorities. These actions can be found in Section 6 of the SRS Business Plan for 2021/22. Set out below are some examples of the work undertaken in the previous 12 months.

Improving Health and Wellbeing

2.13 Improving health and wellbeing is a key priority for Shared Regulatory Services. Work undertaken to ensure that food is safe, that infectious disease, noise and air emissions are controlled, that risks in the workplace are managed properly, allows people to live in healthy environments. Add to this our activities to ensure the quality of private rented property, the promotion of a safe trading environment and our regulation of licensed premises to ensure they operate responsibly and it is evident that the work undertaken by the SRS is hugely important to the health and wellbeing of the region.

2.14 When the UK was put into lockdown on 23rd March 2020, the government put into place an unprecedented set of controls to limit the spread of the virus; we were advised that we faced a pandemic, a word that has become familiar to many people. For clarity, the World Health Organization defines a pandemic as ‘the worldwide spread of a new disease.’

2.15 Coronaviruses are not new, but this strain had a devastating impact on society, spreading quickly around the world and infected large numbers of people. All pandemics will be slightly different in how they spread across the world, but all have the potential to have a significant impact on all parts of society. The following paragraphs provide a SRS perspective on the impact of the virus in the region.

2.16 As a consequence of the new public health controls, many businesses had to close; people were required to work from home where possible, and social interaction was curtailed. It became the responsibility of SRS to enforce the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations. One of the immediate demands of this legislation was ensuring that a wide range of businesses falling into the non-essential category across the SRS region closed, and remained closed. Since March 2020, those Regulations have changed many times and applying those controls has been a challenge both for the SRS and the businesses affected by them. Narrating our activities across 2020/21 would take many hours and many pages of text. At the AGM, Committee members will receive a short presentation on those activities. For the purpose of this Annual Report, some of the notable events that members might recall include:

2.17 In April 2020, only “essential” businesses such as food stores were able to remain open. There was an onus upon maintaining social distancing between customers and staff both within the premises and while queueing outside prior to entry. Long queues became a familiar sight. During this time, SRS became aware of incidents of ‘price

gouging' or profiteering whereby the price of essential commodities fluctuated depending on demand, this being at a time when supply chain issues coupled with panic buying left some shelves bare in retail outlets.

- 2.18** The suspension of economic activity saw people experiencing difficulty in obtaining refunds for bookings cancelled as a result of the pandemic and lockdown restrictions. Scammers and rogue traders began to exploit the "opportunities" presented by the pandemic. Complaints included, driveway cleaning services marketed as preventing the spread of the virus, the door to door sale of 'COVID testing kits', texts sent to residents notifying them that they had been seen outdoors and as a result they must pay a fixed penalty notice charge. These complaints became too common.
- 2.19** The early days of lockdown saw huge demands being placed on supply chains for items essential to the pandemic response such as hand sanitisers, masks and gloves. This saw many alcohol producers switch to the manufacture of hand sanitiser, while at the same time, suppliers sourced hand sanitiser from across the UK and beyond, often outside of their normal areas of expertise. In this maelstrom, it was inevitable that substandard product would reach the marketplace. SRS impounded over 15,000 litres of hand gel and many thousands of face masks.
- 2.20** At the start of the lockdown, hotels were not allowed to open their doors to guests in the traditional sense. However, at the request of, or with the permission of the local authority, they could accommodate key workers, so that they could be located closer to their place of work. SRS facilitated this process to ensure that this exemption was not abused and was only used for bona fide circumstances.
- 2.21** Just as SRS was at the forefront of the initial business closure work, it played a crucial role in supporting businesses as they reopened to the public. SRS provided tailored guidance to a number of shopping centres and sporting venues to assist the management with the necessary risk assessments.
- 2.22** In the Summer of 2020, society began to relax, people went on holiday and began to see loved ones again. However, the virus hadn't gone away and new variants began to emerge. A firebreak was introduced in October 2020 and the wider economy went on hold again. In December 2020, the supply of alcohol in hospitality premises was prohibited and early closure times imposed. Later that month, the Welsh Government indicated that a second lockdown would be introduced after Christmas 2020. This meant a return to the closure of non-essential retail premises, tighter restrictions on household mixing, and restrictions on travel. However, the rapid growth in the number of infections and hospital admissions saw the Welsh Government implement lockdown earlier and introduce a status of Alert Level 4 from December 20th 2020.
- 2.23** This period saw the creation of the SRS Joint Enforcement Teams (JET) with South Wales Police. The teams played a huge role in ensuring the goals set out in the national plan were achieved through:

- Investigating quarantine and self-isolation referrals from contact tracers; this work has gained greater import with the arrival in the UK of the different variants of coronavirus.
- Monitoring gatherings at different visitor locations, beaches, country parks, etc.
- Disrupting illegal house parties and the issuing of fixed penalty notices to those in attendance.
- Restricting the opening of non-essential businesses and issuing compliance notices where rules are ignored.

2.24 Perhaps the biggest commitment made by SRS during lockdown was its participation in the Test, Trace and Protect scheme (TTP). Senior officers have been at the heart of the TTP initiative from the outset. Across the two health boards almost 30 officers have been involved in the tracing of people who have tested positive for coronavirus. Linking with health professionals to identify trends and incidents and restrict the spread of the disease allowed SRS to monitor and address upsurges in case numbers effectively and promptly. Notable areas of work relate to care homes, schools and the Universities/Colleges, where SRS officers have been integral in reducing infection rates and saving lives.

2.25 Through the first part of 2021, the Welsh Government reviewed the Health Protection controls at regular intervals cautiously making small changes to try once again to relax the health protection measures and allow a return to a more “normal” way of life. That return is now backed by the vaccination programme. All partners in the public health network are reflecting upon what has happened in the last 15 months. The Chief Medical Officer for Wales (CMO) has published a special report on the issues arising from the Covid 19 pandemic. The report makes a number of key observations noting in particular that responding to the coronavirus crisis has meant major changes to the lives of all across Wales and has meant making difficult decisions in order to save lives and protect the NHS. The CMO notes that:

- “The Public Health system will continue to face significant challenges as we deal with the number of cases and demand on healthcare services, as well as balancing the direct and indirect harms from COVID-19. From a local authority standpoint, maintaining and strengthening the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) programme is an essential part of protecting the people of Wales as we continue to learn about the disease, its transmission and risk factors, as well as understanding the wider harms associated with the crisis”.
- “The pandemic has shown the importance of having in place strong and resilient health protection arrangements at a local, national and international level. The Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, health boards and local authorities should review and enhance investment in health protection services, working together to ensure a robust and integrated system of health protection and surveillance of health threats is in place and able to respond to future threats”.

- 2.26** The preceding paragraphs are a snapshot of the coronavirus related work undertaken by the service in the last 12 months. The commitment of officers has been immense and continues to be an important aspect of curbing the spread of the virus. However, other important elements of work did continue as part of the efforts to improve and protect public health. Appendix 3 above has listed many of the enforcement actions taken, but other matters have required a different approach.
- 2.27** In January 2021, the Welsh Government issued a White Paper setting out its proposals for a comprehensive reform of legislation that contributes to building safety in Wales. It focuses on legislative change across the lifecycle of buildings as well as setting out aspirations for a change in the way buildings are designed, constructed and managed. It should be noted however that the regime will not be retrospective and does not provide an immediate solution for leaseholders and occupiers in buildings which are currently defective due to cladding or compartmentation issues.
- 2.28** To understand fully the scope of the non-compliances, Welsh Government propose to fund in 2021 a Joint Inspection Team (JIT) to work alongside local authorities to help them enforce against landlords / responsible parties using existing powers. The JIT would be a multi-disciplinary team representing expertise from the existing enforcement bodies. SRS has been in discussion with WG surrounding the establishment of the JIT and its composition in Wales. SRS has also maintained dialogue with elected members and residents to encourage developers to take responsibility for building defects and the appearance of scaffolding on a number of tall buildings in Cardiff are a sign of progress. Yet, the number of affected buildings and the pace of rectifying those faults could see works of this nature ongoing for another decade.

Safeguarding the Vulnerable

- 2.29** SRS contributes toward the safeguarding agendas of the partner Councils by seeking to ensure that children are protected from harmful substances and products, that older and vulnerable people are protected from unscrupulous individuals and traders, that illegal money lending activities across Wales, are challenged robustly and that the public feel safe when using taxis as public transport.
- 2.30** During the 2020 /2021, a number of significant rogue builder or doorstep crime prosecution cases concluded in court. Sitting behind each of these cases is a story of residents being defrauded of large sums of money; often life savings. The cases show a pattern of little, or no, work being done. Where work was carried out, it was to a very poor standard. In one case a home was left on the verge of collapse as a result of the incompetence of one rogue builder. The impact of the COVID pandemic on the court system meant cases took longer to conclude, but the 7 concluded cases generated:
- A combined total of nearly 6 years in custodial sentences
 - A further combined total of just over 5 years in suspended sentences

- A number of Proceeds of Crime cases from which it is hoped compensation for the victims will be forthcoming.

2.31 Across Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale, new conditions for Private Hire Operators were introduced that build upon the recommendations of the Department of Transport placing public safety squarely at the forefront of the agenda. The new conditions enhance checks to ensure that Operators are fit and proper and do not pose any threat to public safety. The conditions include general operating processes and complaint reporting systems, DBS checks on staff involved in the handling of personal and sensitive data, checks on working hours of drivers and notification of convictions.

Protecting the Environment

2.32 Protecting the environment is a core strategic priority of SRS. Many of the activities such as water sampling, monitoring air quality, and remediating contaminated land contribute toward promoting a better environment. This in turn means better long term prospects for the health and wellbeing of our communities. The SRS has a key role to play in ensuring society makes best use of existing resources and bringing back redundant/derelict properties into use is an important contributor to both the environment and local community development. SRS has a key role to play in the wider climate change and future generations agendas through its enforcement role on energy efficiency controls on properties and products. The impact of these activities is less apparent in the short term for communities, but has an important role for future generations. In the more immediate term, SRS ensures communities are protected from nuisance and are safer by investigating noise complaints, dealing with stray dogs and horses.

Animal Welfare

2.33 In the early part of 2020, it became apparent that the land used in the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend County Borough by a local horse breeder had become severely overstocked. This, coupled with some atrocious weather conditions resulted in hundreds of animals being kept in unsuitable conditions and without access to appropriate feed or clean fresh water.

2.34 Officers had sought to work with the breeder over many months in order to secure improvements in the keeping of the animals but to no avail, and monitoring visits to the sites left the Service with no option than to rescue some 240 horses from across three locations. This huge undertaking involved significant officer and veterinary time in processing the horses prior to seizure, with horses having to be rounded up, examined and checked for microchips. A range of offences was identified with regard to the unsuitable environments, but also with regard to unnecessary suffering in the case of a number of horses being in poor body condition, or the presence of open wounds or other injury.

- 2.35** COVID related delays in the court system meant that the matter took just over a year to come to trial, and this placed a significant financial burden on the Service. The horse welfare matters were finally heard together with earlier animal welfare charges relating to cruelty to sheep. The defendant was found guilty and sentenced to 26 weeks in prison. He was also banned for life from keeping any animals after a history of prosecutions for mistreatment that had previously seen him receive a five-year disqualification from the keeping of horses. The co-defendant in the case had previously pleaded guilty to all the animal welfare charges and was given a 12 week suspended sentence and required to wear an electronic tag for the duration of this time. A disqualification order under the Animal Welfare Act from keeping any animals (other than some specified pets) was also obtained.

Much of the success of the case stems from partnership working across a range of agencies such as the RSPCA, South Wales Police, a number of equine charities, and in particular officers from the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service for bringing in emergency flood lighting when darkness fell during one of the seizure operations.

Air Quality

- 2.36** In Bridgend, work has continued to deliver a robust air quality action plan (AQAP) for Bridgend's designated Park Street, Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). To promote local air quality management and the decision to implement the Park Street AQMA, a dedicated webpage has been published on the Bridgend County Borough Council website (Bridgend Air Quality Management Area - Bridgend CBC).
- 2.37** In order to support the development of the AQAP and provide the public with access to up-to-date air quality levels on Park Street, real-time datasets (Nitrogen Dioxide NO₂ & Particulate Matter PM₁₀) recorded by the automated air quality monitoring station now installed on Park Street can be viewed and downloaded using the link [Site Air Pollution | Air Quality In Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)
- 2.38** The main objective of the AQAP is to achieve compliance with the set annual average air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Works are now underway to examine in detail the potential benefits of a preferred package of mitigation options including possible changes in signally and road layout. The necessary modelling is being supported by external transportation and air quality consultants, and final results from this analysis are expected in Summer 2021, meaning that the public consultation can then go ahead on the draft AQAP.
- 2.39** As a result of the delays caused by COVID 19, Welsh Government has agreed to extend further the submission deadline for the AQAP, and this now coincides with the Annual Air Quality Progress Report DRAFT submission deadline of 30th September 2021. During the year, SRS ensured that the Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils met their statutory obligations under the Environment Act by producing air quality reports for each area and reporting to the respective Cabinets. Air Quality monitoring has continued throughout the period of the pandemic.

2.40 In **Bridgend**, work has continued to deliver a robust air quality action plan (AQAP) for Bridgend's designated Park Street, Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). To promote local air quality management and the decision to implement the Park Street AQMA, a dedicated webpage has been published on the Bridgend County Borough Council website (Bridgend Air Quality Management Area - Bridgend CBC).

In order to support the development of the AQAP and provide the public with access to up-to-date air quality levels on Park Street, real-time datasets (Nitrogen Dioxide NO₂ & Particulate Matter PM₁₀) recorded by the automated air quality monitoring station now installed on Park Street can be viewed and downloaded using the link [Site Air Pollution | Air Quality In Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

The main objective of the AQAP is to achieve compliance with the set annual average air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Works are now underway to examine in detail the potential benefits of a preferred package of mitigation options including possible changes in signally and road layout. The necessary modelling is being supported by external transportation and air quality consultants, and final results from this analysis are expected in Summer 2021, meaning that the public consultation can then go ahead on the draft AQAP.

As a result of the delays caused by COVID 19, Welsh Government has agreed to extend further the submission deadline for the AQAP, and this now coincides with the Annual Air Quality Progress Report DRAFT submission deadline of 30th September 2021.

2.41 In **Cardiff**, following the legal direction from Welsh Government, work continues to deliver the package of approved, preferred options. A priority measure being implemented over the Summer and managed by the Clean Air Team is the delivery of the Clean Bus Retrofit Scheme for two major bus operators in Cardiff. This project will see emissions technology fitted to 49 buses allowing the NO_x emissions to be improved by up to 95%. Work has also continued to develop a taxi incentive scheme for licensed taxi drivers and operators in Cardiff. Following further legal advice, the scheme is being finalised and it is anticipated that it will be launched later this summer.

As a result of the effects of the COVID pandemic and the need to realign the needs of the city moving forward, the original Castle Street Clean Air scheme has been revisited and further designs suggested. The Clean Air Team has been overseeing further transportation and air quality analysis given the variance of the suggested new designs. This has also required work to ensure Welsh Government is content with the considered proposals to assess any impacts on the level of compliance on Castle Street and ensuring that Cabinet Members are kept informed throughout the process. These additional options/ amendments have been discussed through a public consultation, whereby Cardiff's Cabinet Members will consider which option to progress during June's Cabinet meeting. It is intended that the installation of the preferred option will begin later this year.

- 2.42** In the Vale of Glamorgan, the Windsor Road, Penarth AQMA was revoked after agreement by Cabinet and notification to Welsh Government. Air quality will continue to be monitored at that location and others in the Vale of Glamorgan, and appropriate action taken should there be any cause for concern.

Supporting the Local economy

- 2.43** A strong local economy is a key component in the quality of life experienced by local people. The work of SRS has a significant, but often unseen, impact upon the local economy. The provision of timely advice and guidance on regulation can benefit the economic viability of businesses resulting in improved business practice. Much of the market surveillance activity focuses upon maintaining balance in the “marketplace”; the equitable enforcement of regulations helps businesses to compete on equal terms thus ensuring a fairer trading environment. The SRS role as regulator also extends to providing information to support consumers to enable them to become better informed and confident. In an age where people can purchase goods and services without leaving home, the importance of the principle of “caveat emptor” has never been more relevant.
- 2.44** Members of the Joint Committee will recall a number of significant interventions carried out by the Service in respect of the supply of jewellery in recent years. The business owners each received a 14 month prison sentence, suspended for 18 months, and a Proceeds of Crime investigation undertaken. That investigation concluded that the business owners had benefitted from the unlawful activity in the order of £130,000. That money must be paid into the Government scheme and SRS will in due course receive a portion of that money which will be used to support professional training.
- 2.45** SRS has maintained its 27 Primary Authority partnerships over the course of a year in which the trading environment for many businesses has been challenging. Of particular interest over the course of the year has been the consolidation of the four Primary Authority partnerships SRS holds with supermarket chains. One of these is a local chain while the other three are national retailers for whom SRS is the Primary Authority for matters relating to devolved Welsh Government policy areas.
- 2.46** Supermarkets have been the mainstay of the retail sector throughout the pandemic, keeping the nation supplied with food and other essentials while other retailers had to remain closed. This has been achieved against the backdrop of quickly evolving coronavirus restrictions and associated amendments to the legislation. Through its Primary Authority partnerships, SRS was able to help its supermarket partners to navigate this fast changing landscape, and in particular some of the more challenging areas of compliance, around for example what is and isn't to be classed as 'essential' items, the wearing of face coverings by customers and store layout. This assistance was particularly valuable in the case of the national retailers as they needed to ensure compliance against the legislation prevailing in any of the four nations at any given time. Using the Primary Authority principle in this way, SRS was able to work both

reactively (fielding enquiries from other authorities) and proactively (updating regulatory services across Wales on changes in store policy)

- 2.47** In February, this approach was recognised and promoted by both the Westminster and Welsh Governments as a means of achieving consistency and fairness in enforcement across the retail sector in Wales.

Maximising the use of resources

- 2.48** Maximising the use of resources was the original catalyst for creating SRS, and work in this area continues. By reducing “triplication” of effort, introducing better processes, making systems work without constant intervention, improving access into the service, our business improves and customer satisfaction increases. Income generating activities like marketing our metrology laboratory, offering paid for advice services, building Primary Authority partnerships and extending our training provision to business are examples of our move to a more “commercial” culture.

- 2.49** Our income levels in 2020/21 were impacted by the coronavirus shutdowns. Licence income fell and income associated with training also reduced. This reduction, at present seems likely to continue until the business community is able to begin functioning fully again.

- 2.50** Crucial to the success of SRS are the people who work within the service. SRS officers are engaged fully in the development of the service and encouraged to think, lead and innovate to improve the way we work. The service has been recognised by different organisations for our efforts over the last 12 months including a High Sheriff award for exemplary service in the field of public health.

- 2.51** 2020-21 was a transformative year for SRS. Already a nimble workforce, since its creation, Officers have adapted well to working from different locations. The need to work from home as far as possible since March 2020 has further enhanced this position, but has also forced changes to the way our Business Support is provided. Prior to the first lockdown, the Business Support team, like many other administrative support regimes, was still largely office based. Very quickly, solutions were put in place to minimise the need for an office presence, and with the now routine use of systems such as hybrid mail, nearly all support services can be provided by colleagues working from home, and the only tasks requiring an office presence are those relating to scanning, outgoing mail (having physical attachments) and of course in-coming mail.

- 2.52** The Welsh Government coronavirus restrictions legislation placed a duty on local authorities to publicise details of all Premises Improvement Notices and all Premises Closure Notices served on businesses in their areas. The SRS website (www.srs.wales) proved the ideal space to display these notices served across the SRS region, and they were placed there until such time as they were terminated and no longer in force. As well as being of interest to the public, this area of the SRS website proved particularly

popular with sections of the press and over the months, many media articles have been based on this information. The website is supplemented by our social media offerings, SRS Twitter (@SRS_cymru) and the LinkedIn account. These channels in particular have proved to be a highly effective way of getting information to a large number of businesses and residents.

- 2.53** An audit review of Wales Illegal Money Lending (IML) Grant and the Rent Smart Wales Funding was undertaken as part of the 2020/21 Annual Internal Audit Plan. No key issues were identified during either audit. The reports indicate conclude that the internal control environment is considered to be sound and therefore substantial assurance can be placed upon the management of risks. This overall opinion is supported by the identification of a well-controlled system

Financial Performance

2.54 The Gross Revenue Budget and provisional outturn position for 2020/21 are shown in the tables below, with the position in respect of each of the partners detailed to include both the Core and Authority Specific expenditure positions. The service is reporting an unaudited outturn position of a £250k underspend against a gross revenue budget of £8.209m, as illustrated in the following table:

	Gross Budget	Forecast Outturn	Outturn Variance
Authority	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	1,738	1,624	114
Cardiff	4,782	4,705	77
Vale	1,689	1,630	59
Total Gross Expenditure	8,209	7,959	250

- 2.55** Multiple recruitment drives have been undertaken, however, the Service continues to experience significant issues in attracting appropriate candidates to particular disciplines within the service, which may in part be due to a national scarcity of resource being available. This issue may also be compounded by restrictions in movement relating to national Covid-19 restrictions surrounding travel and infection control being put in place. The Service did recruit 4 apprentices from the Welsh Government Apprentice Scheme, who have been supported to progress within disciplines managed by the Service. The contracts of employment are fixed at 18 months, which enables the apprentice to access relevant external training in Business Administration/Legal Services.
- 2.56** Where possible, the Service has continued to work with local universities in the practical support of students who are enrolled on degree courses relevant to areas within the SRS where there are vacancies. However, due to the impact of Covid-19, this initiative has been greatly reduced towards the end of March 2020. However, from late September onwards, a number of newly qualified Environmental Health Officers have been employed to assist with Covid-19 Enforcement issues throughout the region, with this initiative being funded by the Welsh Government Covid-19 Enforcement Grant. This provides the students with appropriate practical experience to aid their formal qualification, whilst actively contributing to the success and performance of the SRS.
- 2.57** Where possible, staff have worked from home since the outbreak of Covid-19, with only skeleton staffing levels at the hubs, therefore achieving compliance with the social distancing guidance. Due to qualifications and specific skills held by SRS employees, some staff were temporarily seconded out of the service to support the delivery of PPE, supporting patients being discharged from local hospitals, hotel authorisation to house key workers plus inclusion within the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) teams across the SRS area. This has placed additional pressure on residual staffing levels and workflows.

2.58 A full breakdown of the projected gross revenue outturn position is shown in **Appendix 4**.

Core Services

2.59 The approved gross Core Services Budget for 2020/21 is £5.832m and has an overall outturn underspend position of £184k. The Core service's budget is allocated in line with the population split across the participating authorities, as illustrated in the following table:

Authority	%	Gross	Forecast	Outturn
		Budget	Outturn	Variance
		£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	22.45%	1,310	1,267	43
Cardiff	57.24%	3,338	3,236	102
Vale	20.31%	1,184	1,145	39
Total Core		5,832	5,648	184

2.60 As a direct result of Animal Services receiving £493k from Welsh Government towards the unbudgeted costs relating to the January 2020 horse seizure, this service has achieved a greatly reduced overspend of £685k. The overspend reflects the financial impact of the multiple court delays resulting in increased ongoing unbudgeted accommodation and security costs borne by the service throughout the period.

2.61 Environmental Services have achieved a £39k underspend, which is predominantly the result of an air quality officer seconded to Cardiff to assist in the City's Air Quality Initiative, with the post left unfilled. The shortfall in budgeted income was offset by £8k received from the Welsh Government grant for loss of income 2020/21. Two previously designated Air Quality Management Areas have been revoked due to air quality improvements at both sites, and are in the process of being decommissioned. As a direct result of Covid-19, no new radon monitoring stations have been installed in the region.

2.62 Food Services have achieved a £358k underspend, which is the result of on-going issues in attracting suitably qualified applicants that meet the specific skill set required by this discipline. Moreover, numerous staff have been seconded to the support of the TTP teams, therefore temporarily reducing the staff complement within this discipline further. The team continues to undertake numerous workplace assessments where clusters of Covid-19 have been identified. A backlog of food inspections has built up due to the national lockdowns when many businesses were forced to close, with officers being deployed to other essential council work. Since lockdown measures were eased, there has been an increase in new food businesses opening. Prioritisation of resource to target the highest risk has become even more essential than before.

- 2.63** Housing Services has achieved an overspend of £12k which is made up of smaller variances across the headings. The position includes £19k received from the Welsh Government income loss grant in the period, relating to the SRS support of the Welsh Government backed NEST scheme. The Covid-19 pandemic has curtailed the ability of officers to carry out inspections in residential properties - other than cases of emergency. Residential properties and in particular Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) plus student houses have been areas of high Covid-19 risk, resulting in the cessation of face to face meetings and inspections, in order to protect both officers and the public. Inspections are now being undertaken remotely via photographs and social media platforms - with site visits only occurring at the most serious of cases. The lockdown has caused a backlog of HMO licensing cases, with the burden of re-inspections anticipated to remain for at least 18 months past Covid-19.
- 2.64** Health & Safety and Communicable Disease Service have achieved an underspend of £193k, which correlates directly with the level of support provided to the regional TTP teams for both the Cardiff & Vale plus Cwm Taf Health Boards throughout the period. TTP staffing predominantly came from this specialism, with additional support provided from other SRS teams. The £541k cost of provision was 100% recovered from the government backed initiative. £2k has been received from the Welsh Government income loss grant in respect of cancelled training courses. During the final quarter, the team investigated 137 outbreaks and dealt with 1,553 escalated referrals relating to confirmed Covid-19 cases in the care and educational sectors. There has been a steady increase in reactive Health & Safety in the period as lockdown measures are eased.
- 2.65** Pollution Services are reporting a £10k underspend which is predominantly due to Covid-19 restrictions on staff travel. The travel restrictions have resulted in difficulty in progressing noise nuisance complaints as site visits are not a viable option. There has been a 17% increase in the number of noise and air complaints when compared to the previous period. Closure of refuse tips has led to an increased number of complaints regarding fly tipping and smoke from bonfires which have been used as an alternative means of disposal. It is also anticipated that there will be an increase in issues arising from the lifting of social restrictions and the impact of hospitality re-opening.
- 2.66** Trading Standards are reporting an underspend of £281k, which is the result of the shortage of suitable candidates to fill vacant posts, maternity leave which has not been covered, plus temporary vacancies where staff have been temporarily seconded to the Cardiff Food team and to the TTP teams. £19k has been received in 2020/21 from the Welsh Government grant for lost income in respect of paid for services within the unit.
- 2.67** The Trading Standards teams have been extremely busy, with Covid-19 related service requests being received to cover areas such as non-compliance with social distancing and premises that were trading in breach of the Regulations. Covid-19 advice and support has been provided to Primary Authority business such as supermarkets and hospitality businesses. Safeguarding has identified an increase in the number of scams and frauds attempted in the period.
- 2.68** Covid-19 related additional expenditure incurred by the service has been recovered directly from WG via claims made against the Local Government Hardship Fund Grant,

with £343k being received to date in respect of Enforcement and Compliance activities. The Enforcement teams have been very busy across the region receiving a significant number of service requests to be investigated. As a result 100+ businesses have been closed with multiple fines issued, where appropriate officers have also issued advice to be actioned to enable businesses to remain trading. The teams have also worked with many accommodation suppliers in the provision of accommodation to both key workers and the homeless.

- 2.69** Six members of staff continue to be on secondments out of the service, the cost of these secondments being recovered from Cardiff Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Welsh Local Government Association and Welsh Government.
- 2.70** The 2020/21 Welsh Government Rentsmart Grants of £66k are built into the SRS budget. The grant forms an element of the Housing Support Grant received directly by the partner Authorities, therefore, as with previous years, the SRS costs will be recouped directly from the partners at year end.

Authority Specific Services

- 2.71** The approved gross budget of £2.377m in respect of Authority Specific (AS) Services has an outturn underspend of £66k, as detailed in the following table:

	Gross Budget	Forecast Outturn	Outturn Variance
Authority	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	428	357	71
Cardiff	1,444	1,469	(25)
Vale	505	485	20
Total AS Services	2,377	2,311	66

- 2.72** The £71k underspend at Bridgend, relates directly to underspends within the Kennelling & Vets Service plus the Licensing section. Kennelling and Vets has an underspend of £29k, with activity continuing to perform below target, and is consistent with activity levels realised in previous periods. Despite a notable uptake in dog ownership during the Covid-19 restriction period, the number of dogs being presented as homeless has continued to decline. The £43k underspend within the Bridgend Licensing section is the result of carrying a temporary vacancy, where the post holder has been seconded to a higher graded post within the Cardiff Licensing team. The underspends are then marginally offset by Bridgend Empty Homes which has a £1k overspend.
- 2.73** The £25k overspend at Cardiff predominantly relates to the £77k overspend within the Taxi Licensing Section, where there continues to be expenditure in excess of budget

within both the Employee and Supplies and Services elements of the budget, and is consistent with performance achieved in previous years. High volumes of calls have been received in respect of premises licenses, plus the team has provided advice to the trade in respect of compliance with Covid-19 guidelines. The Licensing team worked as part of the task and finish team to draft policies on retro fitting screens inside taxis.

- 2.74** Officers also assisted in the setting up of pedestrian zones in the City, advising on variations to their licenses that may be required. The Licensing Enforcement officers have carried out a significant number of licensed premises visits, ensuring compliance with Covid-19 legislation offering guidance where appropriate. From September onwards, there has been an excessive volume of taxi licenses being renewed, which has put additional pressure on staff resources. The Cardiff's 2020/21 Licensing income budget has been partially adjusted to reflect the budget shortfall held by the SRS.
- 2.75** HMO Cathays and HMO Plasnewydd have a combined £8k underspend. The Student Liaison Officer are reporting a £1k underspend. The officer has worked together with the Universities, Public Health Wales, Welsh Government and the Police to develop and disseminate guidance for students in respect of Covid-19 restrictions. As a direct result of commercial and licensed premises in Cardiff being closed for a high proportion of the year, activity levels within the Night Time Noise team have been at a minimal level, which has resulted in a £32k underspend on this heading. Cardiff Port Health Authority has an £11k underspend, which is the result of staff seconded to support the TTP initiatives.
- 2.76** Overall, the Vale has an underspend of £20k. The Licensing Service has a £12k underspend, which is the result of a part time vacant post not being filled in the year. The £13k overspend within the Burial section reflects a higher than average number of public health funerals undertaken this year. There is no indication that any of the funerals have been Covid-19 related. The Pest Control Service has a £4k underspend. The Kennelling and Vets Service continues to emulate the reduction in pressures experienced at Bridgend, and as a result has a £17k underspend.

Net Position

2.77 In accordance with the Joint Working Agreement (JWA), income budgets remain the responsibility of each Partner Authority and are shown in this report for completeness. The following table illustrates the provisional outturn underspend of £411k, against a net budget of £6.083m.

Authority	Gross	Unaudited	Outturn
	Budget	Outturn	Variance
	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	1,271	1,213	58
Cardiff	3,464	3,215	249
Vale	1,348	1,279	69
Total Net Expenditure	6,083	5,707	376

2.78 A full breakdown of the projected net outturn position is illustrated in **Appendix 4**.

2.79 The forecast net position for Bridgend is an underspend of £58k against a net budget of £1.271m, which is the result the £114k gross expenditure underspend being partially offset by a £56k shortfall in income received. Core income has under achieved the budget by £2k. Licensing income has under achieved the budget by £54k, which may be partially due to the vehicle licenses being extended in line the Government's extension of MOT's to August 2020. Due to a reduction in taxi activity levels, the license sales are performing below budgeted activity levels. Bridgend have confirmed that they have submitted claims to WG in respect of the Covid-19 income loss grant.

2.80 The net position for Cardiff is an underspend of £249k against a net budget of £3.464m. The 2020/21 income budgets held by Cardiff have been reduced by £260k, when compared to the 2019/20 income budgets. This has resulted in a £172k over recovery of income being achieved in the year. Cardiff have confirmed that claims were submitted to WG in respect of the Covid-19 income losses grant. Core has exceeded the income budget by £14k. HMO Cathays and HMO Plasnewydd have exceeded their combined income budget by £17k. The Licensing Section has exceeded the £850k income budget by £108k. Cardiff Port Health Authority is funded by precepts and has therefore fully achieved the budget. The Student Liaison Initiative has exceeded the £17k income budget by £33k.

2.81 The net outturn position for the Vale of Glamorgan is a net overall underspend of £69k, against a net budget of £1.348m. Core and Licensing have both exceeded the income budgets by £5k each, resulting in an overall £10k income in excess of budget. Included within this position are £22k received within Licensing and £8k received by Pest Control in respect of the Welsh Government income loss grant. Pest Control met the income budget.

Challenges moving forward

2.82 Over the last six years, the SRS has consolidated service delivery in accord with the agreed standards. The service has engaged with a wider range of partners to play a significant role in tackling the spread of coronavirus. At the time of writing this report, infection rates have dropped, but the country is now having to consider how it deals with new variants of the virus and its impact on society. Consequently, the Key Milestones for 2021/22 include:

- *Delivery of the SRS Business Plan 2020-2021 and the associated corporate priorities assigned to the SRS by the partner councils*
- *To support the partner councils and other agencies to manage the impact of Covid-19*
- *To monitor the implementation of new legislation and any requirements imposed by such legislation upon the Service*
- *To review the impact of the coronavirus on service delivery mechanisms and the achievement of targets against the established performance metrics.*

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

3.1 The Annual report demonstrates the partner Councils' commitment to improving social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being and promoting sustainable development in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Equalities, Sustainability and safeguarding issues have all been taken into account when drafting this plan. Our work with stakeholders seeking to ensure that our early intervention and prevention activities maintain wellbeing in the SRS region is a crucial element of our approach to protect local people and the environment.

3.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires the SRS to underpin decision making by contributing to the seven well-being goals of the Act, following the five ways of working, and consequently undertaking actions that will have a positive impact on people living in the future as well as those living today. The SRS Business Plan contains a number of initiatives that contribute to the well being objectives. Section 6 of the Business Plan illustrates how the SRS priorities interface with the well being goals on matters such as safeguarding the vulnerable and protecting the environment and forms the basis for the Annual report.

3.3 Aligning the Well-being Goals of the Act enables us to evidence our contribution to the National Well-being Goals. Promoting the five ways of working is reflected in our

approach to integrated business planning. Setting consistently challenging yet realistic steps and performance improvement targets, the SRS is able to clearly demonstrate progress towards achieving the national goals by the production of the Annual report.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

4.1 The implications are set out in the body of the report.

Employment

4.2 The implications of the budget reductions undertaken in 2020/21 are set out in the body of the report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

4.3 The partner Councils have a duty to improve under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The report outlines achievements in 2020/21 for the matters assigned to the Shared Regulatory Service. The Joint Working Agreement executed on 10 April 2015 and amended July 2017 sets out the obligations placed upon the partner Councils in delivery of the Shared Regulatory Service.

5. Background Papers

- Appendix 1 – SRS Performance Measures 2020/ 2021
- Appendix 2 – SRS Covid activities 2020/21
- Appendix 3 – SRS Prosecution Statistics 2020 / 2021
- Appendix 4 – Projected Gross Revenue Outturn Position and Projected Net Outturn Position