



VALE of GLAMORGAN COUNCIL  
**IMPROVEMENT PLAN SUMMARY**  
PERFORMANCE REVIEW of 2015 - 16

Strong  
Communities  
with a Bright  
Future



## ○ INTRODUCTION

This review looks back at how we did on delivering the Improvement Objectives that we set ourselves in our forward looking plan, Improvement Plan Part I: Improvement Objectives 2015/16 published in April 2015. Five Improvement Objectives were identified during 2015/16 and this report will provide a summary of our progress to date in achieving these.

### ● How did we do against our Improvement Objectives?

Despite challenging times for the Council in terms of the services we deliver and the funding available to us, we have concluded that we have successfully achieved the majority of outcomes set out in our Improvement Objectives for 2015/16. However, these Objectives will continue to remain a focus for improvement and a priority for the Council in the long term. Our new Corporate Plan (2016-20) reflects this ongoing work.

### ● What we said we would do

### How this links to our Corporate Plan (2013-7) priorities

### Our evaluation

Deliver sustainable services including alternative methods of delivery as part the Council's Reshaping Services Change Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reshaping Services Change Programme</li> <li>● Improving Access to Council Services</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
Support more people towards independence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Health, Social Care and Wellbeing: Safeguarding Vulnerable Members of the Community</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
Support and enhance the town centres of the Vale of Glamorgan for the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regeneration: Sustaining vibrant communities</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
Reduce the number of young people who are not in employment education or training (NEET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learning and Skills: Improving skills, knowledge and opportunities</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
Reduce the achievement gap between pupils in receipt of free school meals and those who are not.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learning and Skills: Improving skills, knowledge and opportunities</li> </ul>	<b>Partially Achieved</b>



## Year in Review - Our Main Achievements



We increased and widely promoted opportunities for public speaking and involvement at Scrutiny and Planning Committee meetings, ensuring that citizens have a meaningful say in matters affecting them whilst providing the Council with information to assist with effective decision making.

Our recycling rate of 64.54% exceeds the national statutory target of 58% and ranks us as the 3rd top performing Council in Wales.



The “Big Fill” initiative has improved our highways and reduced liability claims, contributing towards increasing public satisfaction.

“Get the Vale online” is ensuring that Vale residents are supported to develop their digital skills. This initiative also contributes to the Council’s goal to tackle poverty and social and digital exclusion.



Six parks within the Vale have been awarded Green Flag status, one more than last year. This has recognised the high quality green spaces provided in the Vale. Three Green Flag Community Awards were also achieved, recognising the high quality green spaces managed by voluntary groups ensuring a safe place for residents of all ages to come together to socialise and learn.

330 new users signed up to the Telecare service, 21 more than last year. The increase in uptake and efficient installation has enabled more people to remain within their own homes safely and with a better quality of life, a key priority for the Council.



All Council housing has undergone internal improvements and we remain on track for all Council housing stock to be fully compliant with the Wales Housing Quality Standards by 2017. Tenant satisfaction with the quality of the final improvements undertaken as part of WHQS remains high at 9.15 (average satisfaction is scored between 1 and 10).

158 additional affordable housing units were delivered in 2015/16. Of these, 55 were adapted or accessible which has enabled the Council to increase the availability of decent, affordable and accessible homes to the public.



Improvements continue to be made to the Vale’s town centres as part of the Council’s adopted framework. This has contributed to increased vitality of our main town centres, offering businesses, residents and visitors an improved environment. Vacancy rates in all our main town centres have improved, some substantially, further demonstrating business confidence in our town centres.

We are working with private and public sector organisations and schools to increase participation in leisure activities. The Vale was ranked 3rd in the most recent Sport Wales school sport survey. The active adult survey ranked us the best performing Council in Wales, in terms of the “hooked on sport” criteria. Our work to increase opportunities for the disabled to participate in physical activity earned us the Bronze award for InSport from Disability Sport Wales, the highest award available.





Our Regulators for schools, ESTYN have noted the strong progress made by the Council to contribute to improving pupil attainment. During the 2014/15 academic year, standards have improved across the board with all key performance indicators. In nearly all cases the rate of improvement has been greater in the Vale than the Wales average. All schools inspected during the year were judged to be good or excellent.

Pupil attendance in secondary schools has increased by 0.5% to 94.7% during the 2014/15 academic year, backed by our collaboration with schools. This ranked us 3rd in Wales. Primary school attendance in the Vale of Glamorgan was 95.3% which meant we maintained our 4th ranked position in Wales.



We are engaging more adult learners to improve their skills. A “progression route planner” has been introduced to identify gaps in provision and is enabling us to better target priority learners. Community Learning has improved through the efforts of all aspects of a more co-ordinated way of working with completion, attainment and success rates at 92%, well above the national average of 84%.

We have successfully promoted the uptake of public transport concessionary schemes. Uptake for the over 60s concessionary bus passes has increased from 82% to 92% in 2015/16 ranking us 3rd in Wales. There was a 59% increase in passenger journeys on our Greenlinks Community bus scheme since 2013.

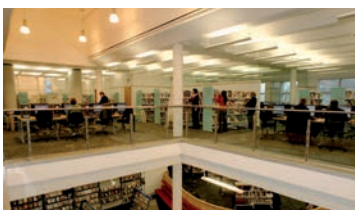


Through effective partnership working, we are reducing the levels of young people in the Vale who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Overall NEET levels have reduced from 3.8% in 2014/15 to 1.93% in 2015/16.

Five seaside locations in the Vale of Glamorgan have received national coast awards, including two prestigious Blue Flag awards, as part of Keep Wales Tidy's Seaside Awards 2016. The Blue Flag for beaches is acknowledged in 46 countries around the world and aims to raise environmental awareness and promote good environmental behaviour among tourists and locals and best practice among beach and marina management staff.



We secured more than £8m of funding for community investment through Section 106 agreements attached to planning approvals during 2015/16. This money has been used to fund additional school places, new public transport links, improved pavements and cycle paths, public art schemes, upgrades to parks and children's play areas as well as financing opportunities for training and development. Examples include the expansion of Llanfair Primary School and Ysgol Dewi Sant, upgrades to the Gileston Road and St. Athan crossroads, improvements to the Barry Island Causeway, new pedestrian crossings at Buttrills Road and Holton Road, new bus shelters in Barry and Llandough, the Port Road cycleway in Barry, the refurbishment of the George Street play area in Barry, and the Buddy bench scheme at Llangan Primary School.





Through improved intervention and re-ablement via a joint service partnership arrangement with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, more Vale residents are able to attain greater levels of independence. The service has an excellent record at supporting people to achieve full independence, with over 80% of people who received a service being judged to have improved levels of independence.

The average delivery time to complete a Disabled Facility Grant continues to improve despite an increase in demand. This is contributing to residents being able to retain their independence for longer. On average works are being completed within 178 days compared to 199 days in the previous year, ranking us 4th in Wales. Customer satisfaction remains high at 97%.



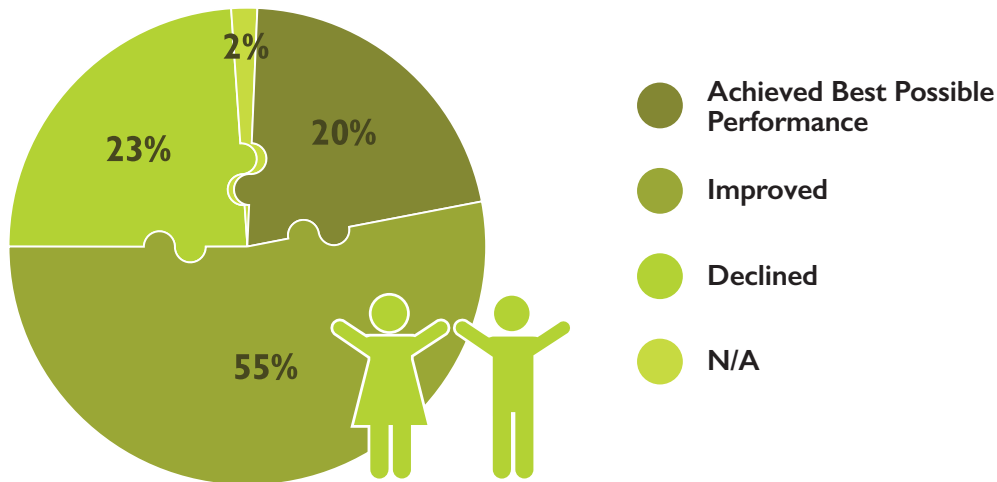
## PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

For the second year in a row, the Council is ranked as the top performing Council in Wales with the most indicators (26) in the top quarter of Welsh authorities. 55% of indicators showed an improvement on the previous year's performance.

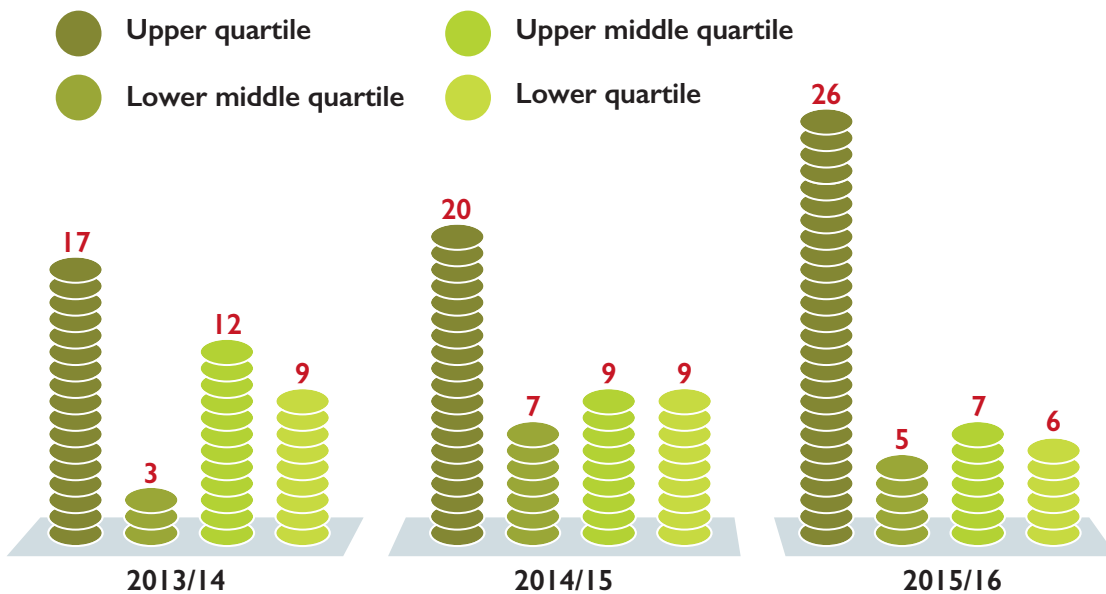
The Vale's performance was better than the Welsh average in 75% (33) of comparable indicators against the South East Wales Region. When compared with all Welsh councils the Vale's performance was 77% (34).

This is based on data that was collected in the form of 44 national performance indicators in 2015/16. Of these 43 have data that can be compared with the previous year. The graphs below show that the Vale has continued to perform well when compared with other councils in Wales.

### Summary of Performance for 2015/16



### Number of Indicators by Quartile between 2013/14 to 2015/16



(Based on published LGDU data: 19 August 2016)

The areas we performed best (ranked first in Wales) are:

- No pupils including looked after children left compulsory education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification;
- 100% of special education needs statements were issued within 26 weeks (including and excluding exceptions);
- 100% of all adult protection referral risks were managed;
- 100% of carers needs were assessed;
- We maintained contact with 100% of looked after children aged 19;
- All looked after children whom we have maintained contact with are known to be in suitable, non-emergency accommodation at age 19;
- Ensured 100% of relevant children have pathway plans.

We also recognise that we need to improve in those areas where we are performing in the bottom quartile when compared with the rest of Wales. These issues are being addressed within relevant Council plans and include:

- Visits to sports and leisure centres;
- Food establishments broadly compliant with food hygiene standards;
- Principal roads in poor condition;
- Initial assessments where the child has been seen by a social worker;
- Adult care plans that were due that were reviewed during the year.

## ○ PARTNERSHIP WORKING and COLLABORATION

We continue to work in partnership with a range of public, private and third sector organisations on a local, regional and national basis to tackle some of the complex issues facing our citizens and communities. These partnerships allow us to work effectively and efficiently to improve services for our citizens. Highlighted below are some of our main achievements during 2015/16.



- The work of the Strategic Housing Group contributed to 158 additional affordable housing units being delivered in 2015/16. Of these, 55 were adapted or accessible which has enabled the Council to increase the availability of decent, affordable and accessible homes to the public.



- The first year of the Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) has been focused on the development of the new operating model agreed by the three councils across the Vale, Bridgend and Cardiff. A key achievement in 2015/16 has been to deliver business as usual through the change process, with minimal impact on customers. In addition the service is now generating income by charging for its business advice and training services through new ways of working.
- The contract for Prosiect Gwyrdd formally commenced on 1st April 2016, with significant savings having already been made through diverting waste to the plant much earlier than scheduled. The recycling of the Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA) from Prosiect Gwyrdd and Trident Park since August 2015 has helped the Council improve its overall performance and will contribute towards ensuring that it meets national targets for recycling. During 2015/16 the Council achieved a 64.54% recycling rate which exceeds the statutory target of 58%, and ranked us 3rd in Wales. In addition to the added benefit of waste recovery, the Vale has reduced the amount of waste it sends to landfill to 5.7%. Prosiect Gwyrdd made £500k savings in 2015/16 and is projected to save £1m in 2016/17.
- The co-location of the Council's community resources team and the UHB together with the third sector into specifically designed joint accommodation in Barry hospital is delivering a more efficient service with officers working more closely together. This is contributing to more timely reviews and assessments of cases and support provided, as well as faster overall response times by the service. The service is contributing to more Vale residents retaining their independence for longer.



## ○ WHAT OUR REGULATORS SAY ABOUT US



WALES AUDIT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

During 2016 the Wales Audit Office undertook a Corporate Assessment at the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The purpose of the assessment (undertaken once every four years) is to answer one key question: whether as a local authority we are capable of delivering the priorities we have set ourselves and improved outcomes for Vale citizens.

According to the Wales Audit Office the Vale of Glamorgan Council,

**“Has a clear vision of what it wants to achieve and is making positive changes which should ensure it is well placed to continue securing improvement”**

The report highlighted that:

- The Council's vision reflects local needs and national priorities and that senior political and officer leadership is engaging effectively with staff to support change and planning for the future.



- The change agenda is supported by effective leadership, and there are clear lines of responsibility which are securing improvement.
- Effective governance arrangements have secured improvements and that scrutiny arrangements have been refined to evaluate outcomes, with information about the Council's performance being readily available.
- The human resources service and extensive staff engagement is supporting Council priorities and the change agenda.

A number of proposals for improvement were made specifically focusing on embedding our developing performance management improvements, refining information to support our financial savings plans and asset management work as well as ensuring ICT services fully support the Council's improvement agenda. Work is well underway to address these. You can view our Corporate Assessment Report at [www.wao.gov.uk](http://www.wao.gov.uk)

## ○ WHAT OUR RESIDENTS SAY ABOUT US



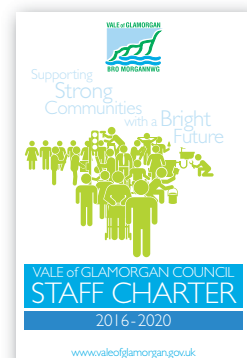
Encouraging our customers to share their views and experiences of our services helps us to improve our services. It also provides us with an indication of how we are performing as a Council from the public's perspective. The next survey is due during the winter of 2016.

Based on findings from the most recent Public Opinion Survey conducted in 2014/15, we are generally performing well in terms of overall satisfaction with Council services. Although there has been some decline in satisfaction rates across the broad range of services since 2012, satisfaction levels remain positive. The majority of respondents (84%) said they were satisfied overall with the services provided by the Council compared to 93% in the 2012/13 survey. The drop in satisfaction levels between 2012/13 to 2014/15 could partly be attributable to the impact of budget cuts to public services over the last couple of years. These findings have been used by council services to inform service improvements.

## ○ WHAT OUR STAFF SAY ABOUT US

**We know that our staff: their skills, capacity and commitment are the key to delivering and improving council services. In 2015 the Council embarked upon a significant programme of engagement with staff from across all service areas to discuss the challenges facing the Council over the next few years and the response to such challenges through the Council's Reshaping Services programme.**

This work has culminated in the development of the Council's first staff charter which was launched in September 2016. The Staff Charter emphasises our commitment to all employees to work effectively in partnership with them to ensure the best possible council services for the communities of the Vale of Glamorgan. The UK Public Sector Personnel Managers Conference presented the Council with an award recognising our staff engagement work.



## OUR BUDGET

Our annual revenue budget for 2015/16 was £212.355 million. We spent £45 million on capital projects financed by a combination of borrowing, grants, capital receipts and revenue contributions.

During 2015/16 we made good progress in achieving savings of £7.2 million in efficiency and other savings. However, considerably more work needs to be done in order to achieve the required savings for 2016/17 and beyond (£25.4 million between 2016/17 and 2018/19).

## WHERE THE COUNCIL'S MONEY COMES FROM



Decisions relating to our budget for the year were informed by our consultation with Vale residents and our key partners. The findings also informed the Council's Reshaping Services programme. Vale residents indicated that they support further investigation of the range of alternative forms of service delivery set out in the Reshaping Services Strategy.

## 2015/16 COST OF COUNCIL SERVICES



## OUR IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES IN DETAIL

### 1 To deliver sustainable services including alternative methods of delivery as part of the Council's Reshaping Services Change Programme.

On balance we have achieved our intended goals for the year. However, the Reshaping Services Change Programme remains a priority for the Council going forward. During 2015/16:

- Our 2015/16 savings targets were met.
- The involvement of a range of stakeholders in the Council's Change programme has significantly increased.
- Our savings targets for tranche 1 projects are on track to be delivered.
- A significant programme of staff engagement has already delivered a range of products and outcomes which are informing the way the Council is managed.

### 2 To support more people towards independence.

Our conclusion is that we have achieved what we said we would do in 2015/16. We know this because:

- Further investment in rehabilitation and re-ablement services in the Vale is enabling individuals to attain greater levels of independence. Over 80% of people who received a service have improved their levels of independence.
- The increased take up of assistive technologies such as Telecare has enabled more people to remain in their own homes safely and with a better quality of life.
- We supported more service users with financial assessments and benefits advice which have enabled them to make well informed choices and contributed to them maintaining their independence for longer.
- Through our Supporting People services we are helping more vulnerable people to retain their independence and improve their overall well-being. 100% of past and current service users reported satisfaction with the support provided to enable them to maintain their independence.
- Our continued improvement in delivery times for home adaptations is contributing to residents being able to retain their independence for longer.

### 3 To support and enhance the town centres of the Vale of Glamorgan for the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses.

Our intended outcomes for 2015/16 have been achieved. We know this because:

- Through various initiatives we are increasing investment in our town centres to make them more attractive and viable options for businesses, residents and visitors. Vacancy rates in our main town centres have improved demonstrating business confidence in these areas.
- We continue to work in partnership to maximise opportunities to increase the Vale's attractiveness as a tourism destination. According to the STEAM research, tourism in the Vale grew by 5% in 2015 with visitor numbers in excess of 3.96 million which represents a 5.6% increase on the previous year. The number of full time equivalent jobs supported by tourism increased to 2,947, a 5.7% increase on the previous year. The total economic impact of the tourism in the Vale was £219.71 million, an increase of 4.7% on the previous year.

#### 4 To reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

Our conclusion is that we have achieved our intended goals for the year. We know this because:

- We have seen a continued reduction in overall NEET levels from 3.8% in 2013/15 to 1.93% this year through a coordinated approach delivered with partners.
- There has been a continued reduction in NEET levels at Years 11, 12 and 13. Our coordinated approach has enabled us to identify vulnerable young people earlier and ensure they receive timely and appropriate support.
- Over 95% of 16-18 year olds are in education, training or employment compared to 93% last year.
- We continue to maximise our use of the voluntary sector and training providers to increase opportunities to reduce NEET levels.

#### 5 To reduce the achievement gap between pupils in receipt of free school meals and those who are not.

Our conclusion is that on balance we have partially achieved our intended goals for 2015/16. We know this because:

- Overall, standards have improved in all key performance indicators and in nearly all cases the rate of improvement has been greater in the Vale than in the Wales average. School attendance remains in the top 25% of performers in Wales for both secondary and primary schools.
- Through our proactive work with schools, no students left compulsory education without an approved qualification and we are taking decisive action to address any underperformance in schools in order to improve attainment levels further.
- In all the main performance indicators across all phases of education, the performance of pupils entitled to free school meals has improved since 2012, but not always at the same rate as their peers. Since 2012, in the Foundation Phase and at key stage 3, the performance of pupils entitled to free school meals in the Vale has improved at a greater rate than that of their peers. This has narrowed the difference in performance between pupils entitled to free school meals when compared with their peers. However, over the same period in key stage 2 and key stage 4 the improvement trend for this group of pupils is less consistent than for their peers.
- We recognise that despite improvements to date, the standards achieved by children entitled to free school meals do not yet meet those of other children in all key stages and this remains a key focus for improvement and a priority for Council in the long term.



## ○ FINDING OUT MORE

If you have any comments after reading this summary, or want to find out more please let us know by contacting us at:

- **In writing:** Performance & Development, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, CF63 4RU
- **By email:** [improvements@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:improvements@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)
- **By phone:** 01446 700111

You can get involved in the Council's consultation and engagement activities by joining our citizens' panel, Vale Viewpoint, and participate in consultations being conducted by, or on behalf of, the Council and its partners, the Public Service Board. Simply complete the brief online form.

