

Consultation Report: Vale of Glamorgan Council Improvement Objectives 2015/16

Background

The Vale of Glamorgan Council Improvement Objectives for 2015/16 are the product of the ongoing public and stakeholder engagement undertaken by the Council and are informed by the Corporate Plan, the annual service planning process and by the findings of various regulators' assessments. This ensures that the objectives reflect those areas which are considered to be the most important to improve upon in order that we continue to be a successful organisation. However, as well as requiring the Council to report performance against these objectives annually the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires the Council to consult on and publish its Improvement Objectives on an annual basis. To fulfil this requirement a public consultation is required.

Methodology

The consultation of the draft Improvement Objectives was open to all Vale residents and relevant stakeholders. The consultation period ran from 23rd February 2015 to 7th April 2015. To enable residents and stakeholders to make informed comments on the draft Improvement Objectives details of how these were developed along with the full objectives themselves and the rationale underpinning each was made available online via the Vale of Glamorgan Council website. Paper copies of the same information were available upon request.

Respondents were able to share their views on the consultation either online via email or in writing. The consultation was promoted to the public and relevant stakeholders. Information about the consultation featured on the front page of the Council website. The consultation was also promoted via social media.

A list of relevant stakeholders was compiled. This included Town and Community Councils, local businesses, the Council's strategic and LSB partners and a range of voluntary organisations operating in the Vale. Representatives of all of these organisations were contacted directly to inform them of the consultation process.

Results

Consultation with the public and other key stakeholders including Town and Community Councils, local businesses and the Local Service Board

Despite efforts made on behalf of the Council to consult with key strategic partners and other identified stakeholders only three organisations responded to the consultation.

Cardiff and the Vale University Health Board responded in support of the objectives identified, particularly objectives one, two and five. The Health Board indicated that they were pleased to see the Council recognising the need to consult with key strategic partners in relation to the Improvement Objectives. In relation to objective one (to deliver sustainable services...) Cardiff & Vale UHB said, '*We are reassured*

that the rationale for this objective highlights the need for careful consideration to be given to potential equalities implications, ensuring that any potential inequalities are mitigated as far as possible. It was also noted that there was a shared acknowledgement by the Local Service Board of the *'need for partners to work in an integrated way to deal with the severe financial pressures while minimising the risks to the population we jointly serve.'*

In relation to objective two (to support more people towards independence) the Health Board said that they would particularly like to indicate their support for this objective. They added that, *'it would be helpful to ensure a correlation with the 6 themes identified within the final Framework for Older people, which was approved by the Council earlier this financial year.'*

With regard to objective 5 (to reduce the achievement gap between pupils in receipt of free school meals and those who are not), the UHB commented less on the objective itself but more about the rationale, saying; *'it might be helpful to acknowledge the contribution of the LSB poverty workstreams to this objective as prioritised in the Community Strategy Delivery Plan 2014-18. These workstreams aim to align Families First, Communities First and Flying Start programmes to help children, families and communities to escape poverty and will therefore also support achievement of Objective 5.'*

Similar to Cardiff & the Vale University Health Board, Diverse Cymru has responded with a statement of support for all of the improvement objectives identified by the Council and has highlighted two objectives, one and five, and given detailed feedback on those.

The third sector organisation, which promotes equality for all in Wales, noted that they agree that it is vital to look at reshaping services to continue to meet expectations whilst meeting financial austerity measures. However they also note that they are concerned that the rationale document does not reference the need to work with other public and third sector organisations to identify opportunities to work collaboratively to maximise outcomes within budgets. In addition they noted that the need to include people from across protected (equality) groups in this work had been overlooked;

'We feel that opportunities for co-producing services in manners which involve the meaningful and full involvement of members of the community, including people from across the protected characteristic (equality) groups as equal partners in the development, design, commissioning and delivery of services have been overlooked.'

They feel that, in order to meet increasing demand, it is vital to look at more flexible systems of resource allocation and service planning.

With regard to objective five (to reduce the achievement gap...), the organisation have welcomed the objective, however they feel that the focus on pupils in receipt of free school meals overlooks the attainment gap for many young people from protected characteristic groups. Adding that, *'there is evidence that young people from some BME groups and disabled young people in particular have a lower*

achievement in school than non-disabled, white pupils.’ Diverse Cymru recommend expanding this objective to additionally address lower educational attainment amongst young people from protected characteristic groups. They have also suggested specific actions including:

- *proactively address and prevent prejudice-based bullying in schools on all protected characteristics;*
- *improve the support provided by schools-based counselling services to support young people experiencing prejudice-based bullying; and*
- *address the lack of diversity in the curriculum in relation to providing examples and stories relevant to protected characteristic groups across the curriculum, for example LGBT, disabled and BME people in history, amongst other actions.*

Finally, Penarth Town Council Policy and Finance Committee considered the draft Objectives and the Rationale for Improvement Objectives and provided the following feedback.

‘The Town Council supports the Vale of Glamorgan Council’s objectives for the coming year’.

With regard to objective three (to support and enhance the town centres of the Vale of Glamorgan for the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses) the Town Council requests that it is fully involved in the process of improving Penarth town centre.

The Town Council also suggested that with regard to objective four (to reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training NEET) interventions should take place sooner than year 11 and 12, as stated in the rationale document.

Conclusion

All three of the organisations who responded, supported the Improvement Objectives proposed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council for 2015/16. Although they have highlighted objectives one, two, three, four and five and provided further feedback or suggestions on those, none of the organisations opposed the proposed Improvement Objectives.

Consultation with Elected Members

In addition to the public consultation the draft improvement objectives were discussed at meetings of all five of the Vale of Glamorgan Council Scrutiny Committees. Following these discussions the following comments and recommendations were noted:

Scrutiny Committee (Social Care and Health) 9 March 2015

955 IMPROVEMENT PLAN PART 1 (IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2015/16) (DSS) -

The Director of Social Services presented the report the purpose of which was to seek Members’ endorsement of proposed Improvement Objectives for 2015/16.

The Chairman, in referring to Objective 2, queried as to what exactly was meant by the term 'business organisations' and if some examples could be provided. In response, the Director of Social Services explained that this would cover a wide range of organisations that would include independent care and support providers. He cited the example in which an independent care provider had agreed to change to provide a domiciliary care service more targeted on re-ablement service.

A Committee Member queried whether the performance indicators which had been identified in order to measure progress were appropriate and relevant. In answer to this, the Head of Adult Services explained that the two indicators, which were calculated per 1,000 population, on their own would not necessarily provide useful information. However, together they would show that the service was reducing the number of people supported in care homes and was increasing the rate of older people supported within the community. Together these showed that the strategy was working and that intervention services were reducing the need for inappropriate institutionalised care and encouraging people to live more independent lives. It was also important to recognise that the community indicator was not rising as much as the rate of population within this demographic and this was an indicator of good financial management. A Committee Member queried whether the Directorate was happy to be judged on these performance indicators. In response, the Head of Adult Services advised that the Directorate had to come up with a range of indicators to measure progress. From his perspective he liked indicators relating to response times but even then these would not indicate how well care was being provided. At this point the Director of Social Services advised that these would only paint a partial picture and that would be why it was useful for the Committee to be presented with other reports which were more qualitative such as service representations and complaints, case examples, inspection reports, etc.

In response to a query regarding the impact of extra care within the Vale, the Head of Business Management and Innovation stated that this was part of the Older Person's Accommodation Review looking at what sort of services older people would want. The service had received good feedback from people living within extra care facilities and there were hopes to develop this further.

In relation to Objective 5 and specifically the impact on Looked After Children, the Committee was advised that the main focus of this objective would be in relation to school attendance and Personal Education Plans in order for schools to keep abreast of pupil attainment. The service would closely monitor the Personal Education Plans. It had been identified that performance within Key Stage 4 had improved but, as in previous years, this would depend on the cohort of children. The Director of Social Services stated that Looked After Children would be the focus of a national summit of local authorities to be held this week. He praised the allocation of £5m from the Big Lottery Funding to improve the care experience for Looked After Children across Wales. The Vale of Glamorgan in that respect would be well placed as all Looked After Children were being cared for because they needed to be and because the service had a relatively manageable size of Looked After Children population.

Having considered the Improvement Objectives, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the proposed Improvement Objectives for 2015/16 be endorsed.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure the Council identified its key annual improvement priorities for 2015/16 in line with requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measures 2009.

Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment) 10 March 2015

IMPROVEMENT PLAN PART 1 (IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2015/16) (DDS) -

The report outlined that the Corporate Plan was a key means of the Council complying with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 which required the Council to set improvement objectives annually and demonstrate continuous improvement.

For the Development Services Directorate, one objective applied specifically which was within the Committee's remit to consider. However, also of note was the fact that the work of the Committee also contributed towards Objectives 1 and 4. The three objectives being:

- Objective 1: To deliver sustainable services including alternative methods of delivery as part the Council's Reshaping Services Change Programme.
- Objective 3: To support and enhance the town centres of the Vale of Glamorgan for the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses.
- Objective 4: To reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

The Director of Development Services in presenting the report, referred to Objective 3 advising that work had been undertaken with regard to restoring some of the Vale's buildings, renewal area work was now entering into the Upper Holton Road area and various grant programmes had been put in place. The Director also referred to the appointment of a new Town Centre Manager and to the extremely successful events that had been run over the Christmas period in the Barry Town King Square and in Penarth and Llantwit Major.

The Member for Penarth stated that following an unsuccessful bid with regard to a Town centre strategy Penarth Council now needed to urgently recast the strategy and took the opportunity to request the attendance of the Town Centre Manager at a Penarth Town Council meeting to look at alternative proposals. The Director also referred to the number of initiatives that the Creative Rural Communities Team had developed in the rural Vale and referred to the European Funding that had been provided for a number of projects.

Following a concern from a Member of the use of funding in the rural Vale to provide food display cabinets in public houses, the Director advised that this was as a result of an initiative to encourage sustainable communities. It had been a granted funded scheme to target places where there were no shopping facilities and to encourage

sustainability in order to ensure that people who had no access to transport could purchase daily provisions within their community. To this end, the grant funding had been provided for publicans to purchase display cabinets within their pubs in order to assist residents in the communities. Part of the approach was also to assist and promote the sustainability of “pubs” in rural localities which was often the only facility available in an area.

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer also took the opportunity to advise Members that a presentation by the Principal Officer for Creative Rural Communities was to be presented to the Community Liaison Committee on 18th March, 2015 which would include details of the projects being undertaken.

Following consideration of the report it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the proposed Improvement Objectives for 2014/15 be endorsed.

Reason for recommendation

In recognition of the Council’s need to comply with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and in view of the information provided at the meeting.

Scrutiny Committee (Housing and Public Protection) 11 March 2015

IMPROVEMENT PLAN PART 1 (IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2015/16) (DDS) -

Endorsement was sought on the proposed Improvement Objectives for 2015/16.

The proposed Improvement Objectives and associated actions for 2015/16 reflected the eight priority outcomes in the Corporate Plan, ensuring that the Council was focussing on the areas in need of the most improvement.

Five Improvement Objectives were proposed for 2015/16. These included three current objectives to be carried forward from 2014/15 which were long-term strategic priorities for the Council. Additionally, one further objective had been amended and carried forward to reflect an area of focus for further improvement in 2015/16.

No specific objective applied to this Committee but the work of the Committee also contributed towards:

- Objective 1: to deliver sustainable services including alternative methods of delivery as part of the Council’s Reshaping Services Change Programme.
- Objective 2: to support more people towards independence.
- Objective 3: to support and enhance the Town Centres of the Vale of Glamorgan for the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses.

Having considered the report, it was

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the proposed Improvement Objectives for 2014/15 be endorsed.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure the Council identified its key annual improvement priorities for 2015/16 in line with requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) 16 March 2015

IMPROVEMENT PLAN PART 1 (IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2015/16) (DLS) –

The report outlined that the Corporate Plan was a key means of the Council complying with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 which required the Council to set improvement objectives annually and to demonstrate continuous improvement.

The Director of Learning and Skills, in presenting the report, referred to the five improvement objectives that had been proposed for 2015/16, particularly referring to the two objectives (4 and 5) that applied specifically to the Scrutiny Committee, as well as noting that the work of the Committee also contributed towards Objective 1, as detailed below:

- Objective 1: To deliver sustainable services including alternative methods of deliver as part of the Council's Reshaping Services Change Programme
- Objective 4: To reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)
- Objective 5: To support and challenge schools in order to improve pupil attainment levels at Key Stages 2, 3, and 4.

It was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the proposed Improvement Objectives for 2015/16 be endorsed.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that the Council identifies its key annual improvement priorities for 2015/16 in line with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources) 17 March 2015

IMPROVEMENT PLAN PART 1 (IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2015/16) (MD) –

Five Improvement Objectives were proposed for 2015/16. These included three current objectives to be carried forward from 2014/15 which were long term strategic priorities for the Council. Additionally, one further objective had been amended and carried forward to reflect an area of focus for further improvement in 2015/16.

One objective applied specifically to this Committee which was:

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

The Chairman enquired of the Head of Performance and Development as to how the achievement of objectives would be measured in respect of the Council's Reshaping Services agenda. In responding, he indicated that this information was likely to be recorded by utilising existing formats. The Chairman suggested that the information be presented to the Committee in the form of a Gant Chart, capturing information in terms of what was proposed and what had been achieved.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the proposed Improvement Objectives for 2015/16 be endorsed.

Reason for recommendation

That the Council identifies its key annual improvement priorities for 2015/16 in line with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Conclusion

All Scrutiny Committees endorsed the proposed Improvement Objectives for 2015/16.

Amendments Following Consultation

Following consideration by Cabinet and Full Council, relevant amendments will be made to the Improvement Plan prior to being published.