'Shaping the Future – Meeting the Challenges Together'

Vale of Glamorgan Local Service Board
Local Service Forum
9th December 2014

Conference Report

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Aims of the Conference

The Vale Local Service Board (LSB) hosted its annual Local Service Forum event on the 9th December 2014 at Barry Memorial Hall. The theme of this year's event was 'Shaping the Future – Meeting the Challenges Together' and the purpose of the conference was to bring together representatives from a wide range of organisations that provide services in the Vale, enabling stakeholders to hear about the challenges facing partners and to consider how we can work together to deliver services differently.

Rachel Connor, Executive Director of Vale Centre for Voluntary Services was the host for the day on behalf of the Local Service Board and Councillor Neil Moore, Leader of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Chair of the Vale LSB welcomed everyone to the conference. Rachel highlighted that the objective for the day was to understand why we need to reshape services, the opportunities this brings and how we can work together to meet the challenge.

Councillor Moore highlighted that the forum is an opportunity for us all to learn from each other and share our ideas and knowledge. During a time when we are experiencing so many challenges in so many different ways and with so much change across all sectors, it is vital that partners come together, to talk about the pressures that we are facing and to listen to concerns about the impact of any changes to services those pressures may bring as a result.

The forum provides an opportunity to hear from a range of speakers about the reality of the challenges being faced in terms of reduced resources coupled with increasing demand and expectations. The forum is also an opportunity to focus on what we can do to mitigate the impact of significant budget cuts and to consider how we can work together to develop new and innovative ways of delivering our services. Councillor Moore emphasised that we need to be realistic about the resources we have and work together

to ensure resources are targeted where there is the greatest need - and where they can have maximum benefit.

It was also highlighted that the findings of the event would form a key element of consultation on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Reshaping Services Strategy and these discussions form just part of the work being undertaken to ensure partners and local organisations are effectively engaged in the process.

Conference Attendance and Format

The event was attended by approximately 80 delegates from the public, private and third sector along with representation from community groups and Town and Community Councils. The day was structured around a number of presentations which focused on the challenges partners face with shrinking budgets and an increase in demand for services. The presentations given included the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Reshaping Services Strategy, challenges facing Cardiff and Vale UHB and the role the third sector can play in meeting these challenges.

The presentations were followed by discussion groups with delegates being given the opportunity to feed in suggestions on alternative methods of service delivery, how we can engage partners and communities in the process and to discuss the associated opportunities and risks. The discussion groups were insightful with partners keen to consider ways of working differently to change how we deliver our services to benefit our customers and to make savings. Following these discussions a question and answer panel session took place.

At the end of the event, delegates were offered the opportunity to tour the new Golau Caredig Extra Care Facility as an example of good partnership working in the Vale.

Presentations

Reshaping Services: A New Change Programme for the Council - Huw Isaac, Head of Performance and Development, Vale of Glamorgan Council.

The focus of the presentation was on the challenge the Council faces to meet the savings necessary over the forthcoming years. It was highlighted that the Council needs to make approximately £32 million savings over the next three years, and this coupled with an increasing demand for services, means that 'business as usual' is no longer an option. As a result the Council has launched a Reshaping Services Strategy.

Huw advised that the aim of the strategy is to reshape the Council to meet the future needs of citizens in a time of unprecedented financial challenges, in order to do so the Council will need to find alternative, more efficient ways of delivering services. An overview of various alternative delivery methods was provided including more 'traditional' approaches to make savings in addition to more 'radical' options such as joint provision with other public sector bodies, delivery by external partners, Council owned companies and co-production.

It was emphasised that the strategy is evolving with the input of a wide range of stakeholders and is underpinned by the need to understand customer behaviour and service demand. The forum therefore provides an opportunity for partners to input into the process.

The presentation also provided delegates with an overview of the timescales involved. The Council is currently reviewing all services and holding a series of challenge meetings to effectively determine which services should be the focus of attention. There is a three to five year timeline for the process and therefore a need to determine which services will be remodelled when. Huw discussed the challenges facing the Council with this new way of working and ended by asking partners what the challenges are for them.

Challenges and Choices Facing the UHB – Maria Battle, Chair of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

Following Huw's presentation, Maria gave an introduction to Cardiff and Vale UHB and highlighted some of the similar challenges facing the health board.

Maria highlighted how the UHB will also need to make significant savings over the coming years in addition to contending with a number of factors which all increase demand for

services. Across Cardiff and the Vale, population growth, an ageing population, a higher birth rate and deprivation, coupled with the UHB receiving the lowest amount of funding per head of population across all health boards in Wales will result in significant strain on services.

Additional challenges facing the health board such as 'out of life' medical and IT equipment, the University Hospital Wales acting as a specialist centre providing regional services and the health board picking up complex services from other UHB areas , all result in the need for us to look at different ways of delivering services in the future.

Maria gave an overview of the health board's 'Caring for People, Keeping People Well' strategy to meet these rising challenges and outlined the UHB's vision to be seen as the UK's leading integrated health care organisation by 2024.

Maria ended by emphasising the opportunities that the challenges facing both the UHB and the Council present and stressed the importance of looking for collective solutions. There is a need to work quickly to break through the barriers to develop solutions, helped by the fact that we already have the building blocks to work together.

How the Third Sector Can Help Reshape Services – Constance Adams, Senior Policy Officer and Gareth Coles, Public Services Delivery Officer, Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

Constance provided a background to the Wales Council for Voluntary Action and, taking into account the messages delivered in the earlier presentations, how the third sector can help transform service delivery. Constance also discussed in more detail some of the concepts for alternative methods of service delivery.

One of the key messages from the presentation was that we must put people at the centre of delivering our services. Starting with the person rather than systems can help empower the person to take part in service delivery, reduce demands and achieve better outcomes.

The third sector can play a pivotal role in helping to achieve the desired outcomes of reshaping services and in order to realise this a number of key elements were highlighted. There is a need to ensure we engage meaningfully, bringing the community together to understand what matters to people, utilise funding to maximise partnership working, grow capacity and map assets and services. Constance also highlighted the continuous cycle of evaluating what works and what doesn't to celebrate successes and learn from failures.

The importance of taking an 'asset-based' commissioning approach was emphasised with a focus being needed on communities/ neighbourhoods, seeing them as contributors and developing potential as opposed to focusing on individuals who need 'fixing' by responding to problems.

The presentation also looked at the need to commission services differently, and focus on loans and investments as opposed to procuring services. Gareth introduced delegates to the Wales Wellbeing Bond, an invest to save approach to provide up-front investment in partnerships between the public and third sectors that can create savings through preventative programmes. Gareth advised that the finance is provided through the WCVA Communities Investment Fund, where new services that lead to bankable savings and improved wellbeing are developed between partners, therefore sharing the risk. If successful, repaid money is reinvested into the fund.

Gareth gave an example where the fund had been used to finance a project which ultimately reduced the number of anti-depressant prescriptions within a community, reducing costs to the health board. The presentation ended with an offer from the WCVA to work with partners to develop projects utilising the fund.

Discussion Groups

Following the presentations, delegates were allocated to discussion groups and asked to consider a number of topics in relation to reshaping services, taking into account the messages given through the presentations. Discussions were framed around the areas of assets, opportunities, engagement and risks and each group was allocated one area to focus on. A summary of key points raised around each of these topics is provided below.

| Assets | Opportunities | Engagement | Risks |
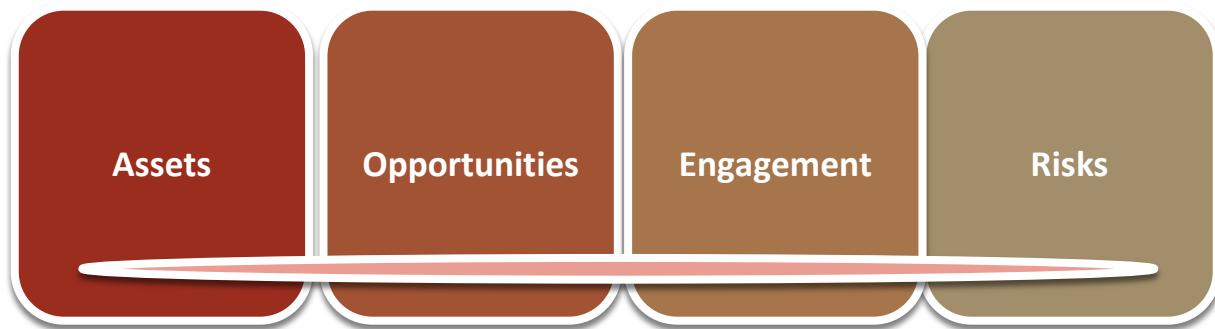
Assets

Delegates were asked to consider a number of themes such as identifying assets that exist in the Vale, considering what our customers value, any positives we can build on and any structures already in place to support co-production.

Some of the comments/ observations made during discussions included:

- Low cost ideas should be used to utilise the natural assets that exist within the Vale more effectively. The use of allotments was cited as an example due to the various agendas the benefits contribute to. For example allotments provide the opportunity to be outdoors, provide exercise, produce cheaper, home grown, fresh food and may even improve cooking skills. Ideas such as this are beneficial now but the health benefits arising may reduce demand for services in the future.

- When considering community owned ventures, Town and Community Councils should be seen as an asset to be utilised to support co-production, however it is also important to consider the long term sustainability of Town and Community Councils themselves. It was advised that Town and Community Councils form a specific strand of the Council's Reshaping Services Programme and the local authority will work with them to identify what they would be interested in providing and to develop capacity.

- It was suggested that an asset mapping exercise should take place to build on the work already undertaken by the LSB Asset Management Group. In addition to physical assets that exist, it was suggested that this exercise should also take into account the 'social capital' that exists within our communities as this can also be seen as an asset we need to tap into.

- The need to promote volunteering within communities was discussed along with ways to encourage more people to volunteer. It was highlighted that a key element to ensuring alternative models of service delivery such as co-production are successful, is the need to communicate effectively with residents to ensure they understand the contribution needed from the community. The time-banking model was cited as an example of ways to encourage more participation in volunteering.

Opportunities

Delegates asked to consider this discussion topic contemplated a number of questions such as what the opportunities for change are, the potential for co-production of services, who else could provide services and how should we embrace the opportunity to be more innovative.

Some of the comments/ observations made during discussions included:

- There is a need for more awareness of what different organisations can offer in order to 'pick and choose parts' from different providers to provide the service. It was questioned whether we currently have the right culture/ mind-set for this.

- It was highlighted that we need to stop protecting ourselves and think more about the service user. Comments were made that people often want to protect their own funding, in order to do more with less we need to stop protecting our agencies and

start thinking about what we can do for others with the little we have. There is also a need to share more information.

- Community enterprise was recognised as a good idea but this will still require an element of monitoring as it is important that we don't lose expertise and professionalism. There is a challenge in ensuring we identify the right services to be delivered through alternative means.

- It was also suggested that we need to carefully consider evidence as in some cases it may be that we are in fact overproviding services.

- There is a need to open up our remits and rather than be told what to do by funders, we should be presenting what we can do by working together and removing layers of prescription. This is also the case for those organisations that fund services.

- Comments were made that this is a period of culture change and delegates were excited by the opportunities it will provide.

Engagement

This discussion focused on how we engage with the community during the process to understand the outcomes that matter to them and ensure people are aware of the changes that are required and why. Delegates were also asked to consider the engagement process with other organisations/ service providers.

Some of the comments/ observations made during discussions included:

- Any process of reforming services must start with the service user (be that the patient, resident, tenant etc.) and it is important to find out what the service user needs, not what service users want and not what we think they want. It is important that in light of the savings that need to be made, we focus on providing what is needed/ required.

- Community organisations can act as a conduit for views. Organisations such as housing associations and care providers have a lot of contact with citizens and during these interactions they can act as both advocates and 'earpieces' for organisations.

- Community groups are also essential in engaging hard to reach and seldom heard groups. It was recognised that many effective community forums already exist in the Vale.

- The idea of having a group of 'community connectors/ researchers' was seen as useful although this needs to be an open/transparent group and not an interest group.

- Overcoming negativity is a huge challenge. However, this *can* be done if the correct information is provided and people are engaged in the correct way. We need a variety of engagement methods including more innovative ones such as social media.

- A wide range of methods/mechanisms must be used simultaneously. We have many of these in place, what we need is to better coordinate our use of them.

- There can often be too much focus on funding/services being cut and although clearly this is of great concern to the public, focusing on this distracts from the promotion of the challenges and changes arising from the process.

- There is a need to ensure we use plain English, in particular the term 'co-production' was given as an example whereby the public may not fully understand what this means.

- It was highlighted that during the engagement process, we must be prepared to hear things we don't want to.

Risks

Delegates focusing on this topic were asked to consider what the risks associated with reshaping services are, any barriers that exist to prevent others from providing services, risks associated with co-production and ultimately whether these risks should be taken.

Some of the comments/ observations made during discussions included:

- There is a risk that the quality of service offered will suffer as a result of the need to make savings.

- Potential local government mergers were highlighted as a risk to the process as it may be difficult to make decisions on certain services in light of an unknown landscape.

- Accountability for services was seen as a major risk and delegates questioned that if services are operating in a co-production model then who owns the risk? The public demand accountability from their services and collective accountability is therefore a huge challenge for co-production.

- The risk to reputation in circumstances where something does go wrong was also identified and it was highlighted that responsibilities will need to be allocated carefully and appropriately.

- Handing over control/ responsibility for services was seen as a barrier to alternative models of service delivery as this requires a culture change.

- A lack of cohesion was seen as a real risk, with subsequent danger of duplication and/or people and services 'falling between the gaps'. Fragmentation becomes more of a risk where service delivery is more devolved and when there are more organisations involved. It was also felt that the more we separate out our services the more difficult it is for service users to engage.

- Sustainability was identified as a risk. In light of the savings that need to be made now, we might not have enough time to plan for reshaping services in the most effective way. There was also a discussion on the risk of closing down services before we go through the process of identifying individuals and groups who can take those services over.

- In response to the above risks identified, one group also turned the debate around and delegates left with the thought of what the risks would be if we don't do anything.

Panel Session

Each of the discussion groups were asked to formulate a question to put to the panel during a question and answer session. The panel consisted of earlier speakers, Councillor Moore, Maria Battle and Constance Adams. There were a number of interesting questions put to the panel and a number of discussions took place, largely reflecting the messages delivered during the presentations and within the group sessions.

One of the main topics raised during the session was regarding the risks arising from reshaping services. There was a clear consensus amongst the panel that in light of the challenges we are all facing, we must be prepared to take these risks as if we take no action we can't fail but cannot be successful either. It was highlighted that we need to ensure we follow the correct process for planning changes to services, as through this process risks will be planned for and so long as this is well managed, we must take these risks. Events such as the forum will help ensure we plan for reshaping services correctly. Honesty and trust were seen as vital to mitigating any risks and the panel highlighted how we must be honest if something hasn't worked, be prepared to share responsibility and not place blame with other organisations, rather we should learn from

any failures and celebrate successes. There is a need for ownership as a partnership and we must change the mindset of entering into a project with the expectation that one organisation is the lead and therefore holds all responsibility.

Another central theme to the discussions was the need to engage the community in the process, both in terms of keeping them informed with developments and consulting on any proposals, and with regards to tapping into the assets that exist within communities. The knowledge

and skills that communities hold are seen as integral to reshaping services successfully and

a need to ensure people recognise themselves as part of the solution, and understand why change is needed, is essential. It was recognised that we have less resource available but should ensure some of this goes into encouraging volunteers and tapping into the 'social capital' that exists. It was felt that some discretionary services may be most at risk but are central to improving wellbeing and we therefore need to engage the community to help ensure these services can continue. The time-banking model was again highlighted as an effective way to harness this.

Finally there was some concern raised that the unknown landscape surrounding local government reorganisation may lead to some stagnation in the process. The panel recognised the need to be mindful of any potential reorganisation and the need to plan ahead for this, however the panel highlighted that we must put people as the central focus to reshaping services as regardless of structures, people's lives will continue. We have a responsibility to maintain services and the most pertinent item on the agenda should be that we cannot continue as we are. It was highlighted that regional and partnership working is already taking place across both geographical and organisational boundaries and we must continue to build on this.

Concluding Remarks

Rachel Connor thanked everyone for attending and for the contributions made to the discussions and highlighted a number of key points that had arisen.

One of the key messages emerging from the event is that it is clear we are facing challenging times and we cannot continue to work in the way we have been. If there is less to spend we need to work together to deliver services in alternative ways and this requires a culture change from all – commissioners, providers and recipients of services. Despite the challenges facing us all, there is reason to be enthusiastic and by working together and being brave we can deliver services more efficiently for less. What is essential is that any failures are not criticised but learnt from and we celebrate our successes to share lessons with others.

Next Steps

It was emphasised that the event is part of an ongoing dialogue about the need to change how services are provided and to develop new ways of working.

All of the comments made during the discussion groups will feed into the Vale of Glamorgan Council's consultation on the Reshaping Services Strategy. The conference report will also be discussed at a future Vale Local Service Board meeting to inform thinking around future areas of collaborative activity and all delegates in attendance will be invited to attend any follow-up events held.

Appendix 1: Conference Feedback

At the end of the event, delegates were asked to complete an evaluation form and overall the responses were very positive. Approximately 50% of delegates provided feedback.

The three presentations given were all rated as 'good' or 'very good' and equally the discussion groups were rated as either 'useful' or 'very useful' by all delegates who completed the evaluation form. The topic discussed was seen as highly relevant, however, some respondents stated that more time should have been given to the discussion groups.

The panel session that ended the morning was also seen as worthwhile with over 85% of respondents rating the session as 'useful' or 'very useful'. Whilst the panel was seen as an essential chance to engage, there were reasons given for marking the panel as 'not useful' such as the length of the answers given and the view that it repeated some of what had already been discussed.

When asked for more general comments about the event, feedback was again positive. The forum was seen as a useful tool to bring people together and the wide range of participants was commented on. The day was viewed as well-structured and the theme of the day was seen as an essential topic for discussion.

"very helpful to focus the mind on service development"

"good emphasis on developing shared partnership provision"

"a very useful event which has presented an honest picture while also highlighting the enthusiasm for change and progression of service improvement"

"A thought provoking event"

"wide range of stakeholders in attendance leading to diverse views and opinions"

The final question on the feedback form asked for suggestions for topics at next year's event, this included several comments suggesting that clear outcomes from the morning are needed and that an update during the year either as a document or a follow-up event would be useful.

"1 year on, what have we achieved?"

"there must be good follow on communication"

"A progress update"

"follow up forum with projects tried and celebrated and lessons learned"

In addition to comments stating that the day was well organised, both the venue and the catering were rated as good or above.

It is clear from the feedback that the event was of considerable use to the attendees and has helped to engage a wide range of stakeholders in the process of reshaping services. The discussions and issues raised during the morning need to be built on to ensure that the enthusiasm and appetite for change is harnessed over the coming year.

Appendix 2: List of Attendees

Delegate	Organisation
Alan Roderick	Cardiff and Vale UHB
Alex Yates	Vale of Glamorgan Council – Performance and Development
Alison Steere	Vale Volunteer Bureau
Aliya Mohammed	Race Equality First
Amy Troy	Department of Work and Pensions
Anna Rees	Waterloo Foundation
Anne Parkin	Cardiff and Vale College
Anne Wei	Cardiff and Vale UHB
Bob Guy	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Development Services
Carl Evans	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service
Carole Tyley	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Community Learning and Resources
Carys Lord	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Social Services
Ceinwen Frost	Cardiff and Vale UHB
Cerianne Gratton	All Care Cardiff
Chris Edwards	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Library Service
Colin Davies	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Communities First
Constance Adams	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Councillor Brian Hill	Llandough Community Council
Councillor Christopher Williams	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Councillor Conway Hawkins	Wick Community Council
Councillor Geoff Simpson	Llanfair Community Council
Councillor Ian Pearson	Peterston Super Ely Community Council
Councillor Lis Burnett	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Councillor Neil Moore	Leader of the Vale of Glamorgan Council
Councillor Peter Knapp	Cowbridge Town Council
Councillor Rosanne Reeves	Dinas Powys Community Council
Dave Browne	Cardiff and Vale Credit Union
Deb Maule	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Children and Young People's Partnership
Dr. Glyn Cox	RWE nPower
Dr. Sian Griffiths	Public Health Wales

Delegate	Organisation
Elisa Faulkner	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Housing Services
Emma Smith	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Planning and Transport
Francesca Howorth	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Strategy and Partnership
Gareth Coles	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Garry Davies	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service
Gwyn Phillips	Hafod Housing Association
Hannah Davies	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Media and Engagement
Helen Moses	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Strategy and Partnership
Howard Thomas	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service
Huw Isaac	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Performance and Development
Ian Jones	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Housing Services
Jane Clay	Cardiff and Vale Citizen's Advice Bureau
Jane Lewis	Hafod Care Association
Jason Wroe	Newydd Housing Association
John Harrison	Natural Resources Wales
Karen Thomas	United Welsh Housing Association
Kevin Howell	Newydd Housing Association
Lance Carver	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Social Services
Lynda Wallis	Vale 50+ Strategy Forum
Lynn Morgan	United Welsh Housing Association
Maria Battle	Cardiff and Vale UHB
Mark Davies	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Children and Young People's Partnership
Martine Coles	Vale of Glamorgan Council – School Improvement and Inclusion
Maureen Neave	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Benefits
Meredith Gardiner	Cardiff and Vale UHB/ Vale of Glamorgan Council
Mikki Down	Careers Wales
Miles Punter	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Visible Services and Housing
Natalie Sargent	Vale Volunteer Bureau
Norman Jenkins	Creative Rural Communities
Paul James	South Wales Police
Paul Roberts	Newydd Housing Association

Delegate	Organisation
Paul Tinkler	South Wales Police
Paul Warren	Diverse Cymru
Phil Evans	Vale of Glamorgan Council – Social Services
Rachel Connor	Vale Centre for Voluntary Services
Rachel Heath-Davies	Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Welsh for Adults Centre
Rob Jones	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Media and Engagement
Rob Thomas	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Development Services
Rose Whittle	Cardiff and Vale UHB
Shelley Lloyd	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Children and Young People's Partnership
Sian Davies	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Managing Director
Stewart Kelly	Hafod Care Association
Tina Simmons	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Youth Service
Tony Curliss	Vale of Glamorgan Council - Customer Relations
Trina Nealon	Public Health Wales
Wendy Harvey	All Care Cardiff
Will Hills	The People's Business Wales