



24 Cathedral Road / Heol y Gadeirlan
Cardiff / Caerdydd
CF11 9LJ
Tel / Ffôn: 029 20 320500
Fax / Ffacs: 029 20 320600
Email / Epost: wales@wao.gov.uk
www.wao.gov.uk

Sian Davies
Managing Director
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Council Offices
Holton Road
CF63 4RU

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Dear Sian

Improvement Assessment

In my letter of 11 September 2013 I gave my opinion on whether the Vale of Glamorgan Council (the Council) had discharged its statutory duties in respect of improvement planning.

I am also required, under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) to give an opinion on whether the Council has discharged its duties in respect of improvement reporting and met the requirements of the Measure.

In my opinion, and based on audit work undertaken to date the Council has discharged its improvement reporting duties under the Measure although there is potential to strengthen its arrangements further

I have concluded that the Council discharged its duties because:

- the Council approved and published its Annual Review of Performance 2012-13 (the Review) within the statutory deadline of 31 October 2013;
- the Review assesses the Council's performance in the preceding financial year (2012-13);
- the Review includes details of performance and comparisons as measured by some national statutory performance indicators and the Council subsequently provided a link to all of the national statutory performance indicators which it routinely publishes;
- the Review includes a section outlining the key collaborative activities the Council is involved in and a summary of progress in achieving their outcomes; and
- the Review is available in English and Welsh in hard copy and on the Council's website.

The Council has addressed my previous proposals in respect of the publication of its performance information although there is scope to refine arrangements by:

- Ensuring the Report sets out how the Council has sought to discharge its duties under the Measure.
- Further extending the use of a wider evidence base to strengthen the Council's evaluation of performance. The Review makes good use of case studies and includes reference to more qualitative information than it did last year but the predominant evidence used is still quantitative performance indicators.
- Extending the use of comparative information including historic performance and more targeted comparisons with other similar councils and outlining what the Council has done in light of this information.

Further proposals for improvement/recommendations

I understand the Council is in the process of improving and simplifying its performance management framework placing greater emphasis on self-evaluation and focusing on those activities that have the greatest impact. Therefore I make no new proposals for improvement in this letter. I will continue to monitor and report on the progress made by the Council in implementing the proposals set out in my previous reports and letters.

I will undertake more detailed work on the arrangements that support the Council's performance management and reporting over the following months. I will report this, as well as summarising all of my work and that of relevant regulators during 2013-14, in an Annual Improvement Report for the Council that I will issue by the end of March 2014.

Yours sincerely



HUW VAUGHAN THOMAS

Auditor General for Wales

CC: Lesley Griffiths – Minister for Local Government and Government Business

Steve Barry – Manager

Helen Keatley – Performance Audit Lead

John Golding – Partner Grant Thornton