



# VALE of GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

## PUBLIC SUMMARY

September 2018

Strong  
Communities  
with a Bright  
Future

## What is the Annual Report?

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (LGM) and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFG) both place specific duties on the Council in relation to objective setting and reporting duties. Under the WBFG Act, the Council is required to publish its annual Well-being Objectives by 31st March and review these annually to ensure they remain relevant. Under the LGM, we are also required to publish two documents each year: the first is a forward looking Improvement Plan setting out our improvement priorities (known as Improvement Objectives) for the financial year ahead; and the second is an **Annual Report** reflecting back on the performance of the Improvement Plan. This Annual Report looks back at how we did on delivering our improvement priorities (Well-being Objectives) as set out in the Vale of Glamorgan Improvement Plan Part 1 for 2017/18.

## How did we do against our Well-being (Improvement) Objectives?

**Our Overall RAG status for the Corporate Plan for 2017/18 is AMBER**

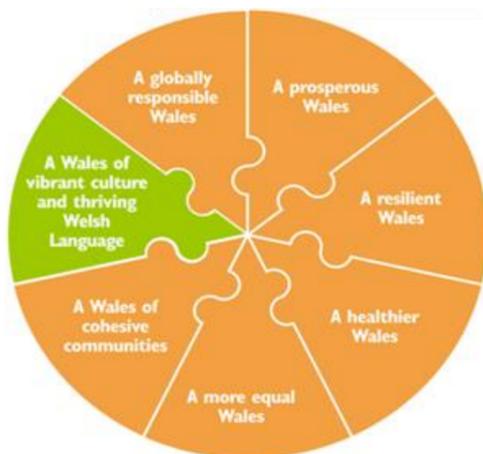


3 of our 4 Corporate Plan Well-being Outcomes were attributed an **overall performance status of AMBER** reflecting the strong progress made in delivering our improvement priorities for 2017/18. The fourth Well-being Outcome (Active and Healthy Vale) achieved a **GREEN** status. We also made excellent progress in supporting Council services in the implementation of its Well-being (Improvement) Objectives and this is reflected in the Green performance status attributed at the end of year.

We have delivered the majority of planned activities for 2017/18 but we recognise that there are challenging times ahead. Resources are diminishing, yet demands on services continue to rise and the impact of austerity continues to be felt. The success achieved to date represents the start of what will be a long programme of initiatives aimed at the long term vision of the Council - strong communities with a bright future.

## Our contribution to the national Well-being goals

Our Corporate Plan has been structured around the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 it is based around four Well-being Outcomes and eight Well-being Objectives. This forms the framework of the Corporate Plan which can be aligned in a cross-cutting way to the seven Well-being Goals of the Act. Our Well-being Objectives reflect what the Council is trying to achieve and addresses immediate issues as well as having longer term benefits. In delivering these objectives we are **contributing to the seven Well-being Goals** and ensuring that the needs of Vale citizens of all ages and future generations are at the forefront of service delivery.



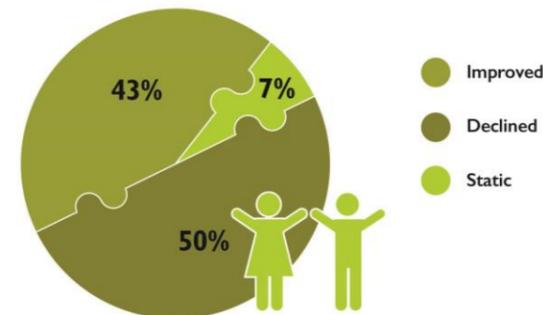
Overall, **strong progress has been made during the first two years of our Corporate Plan** delivery, thereby contributing positively to the national Well-being goals in Wales. However, we still have two years remaining in the Plan and continue to deliver on our long term priorities aimed at building strong communities with a bright future.

## How did our performance rank against other Welsh local authorities?

Each year, the Local Government Data Unit (now Data Cymru) publishes local authority performance information on a range of services making it possible to compare the performance of the 22 Welsh local authorities across those services. This benchmarking exercise confirms that we continue to be the **top performing local authority in Wales for the fourth year running**.

Currently, 10 out of 20 indicators (50%) are in the top quartile of performers in Wales. These were in areas such as preventing homelessness, highways cleanliness standards, our response to fly tipping incidents, participation in leisure activities, pupil attainment at GCSE level, young people who are known not to be in education, employment or training, pupil attendance in primary and secondary school and speed of determining planning applications. Overall, the Vale performed better than the Welsh average in all but 2 indicators (90%). When compared against South East Wales local authorities, 67% (12) of our measures also performed better than the average for this family group. Nevertheless, we also recognise improvements can be made to those areas where we are performing in the lower to bottom quartiles when compared with the rest of Wales. These areas relate to the condition of our roads and participation in recycling waste.

### Summary of Performance for 2017/18

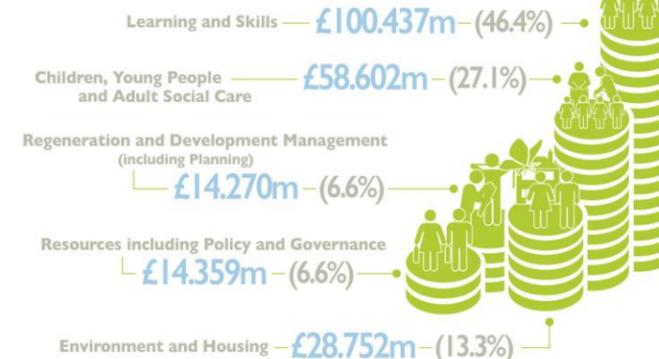


### Percentage of Indicators by quartile between 2016/17 to 2017/18



## Our Budget

### HOW WE SPENT OUR MONEY in 2017/18



Our annual revenue budget for 2017/18 was £215.72 million. This is made up of 56% Welsh Government Revenue Support Grant, 22% Council tax, 11% fees and charges and our share of the Non-Domestic Rates pool (11%).

At end of year, the Council reported a **breakeven position for its revenue budget**. We spent £215.72m on delivering council services between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018. With a population of 128,891, this equates to approximately £1,673.66 per person. Learning and Skills and Social Care accounted for 73.5% of the Council's budgeted expenditure in 2017/18.

We have an excellent track record over many years of bringing in total expenditure on or below budget and as a result, have been able to use the flexibility of balances to help maintain low Council Tax rises compared to the rest of Wales, enhance services and provide valuable additional funding to the capital programme when necessary. However, as highlighted in our Medium Term Financial Plan, in the current climate of diminishing budgets, difficult decisions need to be taken in relation to the delivery of services so that spending can be contained within resources. Whilst alternative approaches are being considered in order to ensure the sustainability of valued services for the future as part of the Council's transformational programme (Reshaping services), it remains increasingly challenging to safeguard the continuing delivery of all valued services, especially in light of the fact that the Vale remains one of the lowest funded councils in Wales.

## What our Auditors said about us

Our 2017/18 Annual Improvement Report from the Wales Audit Office concluded that overall, the Council is **meeting its requirements in relation to continuous improvement**. It also highlighted that the Council: complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources; complied with its statutory improvement and reporting duties; and has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. A number of proposals for improvement were also made specifically focusing on strengthening scrutiny arrangements within the Council to enable us to respond to future challenges and have greater impact. Work is underway to address these proposals.

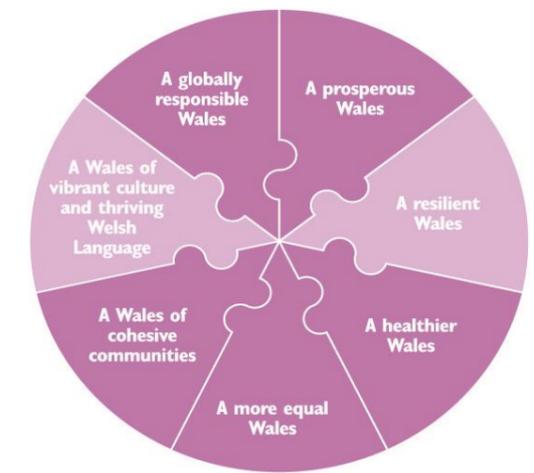
## Citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan have a good quality of life and feel part of the local community

### Improvement Objective 1: Reduce poverty and social exclusion

Tackling poverty is a key priority for our Public Services Board. By working towards this objective we can ensure residents and visitors feel safe and part of the local community.

### Improvement Objective 2: Providing decent homes and safe communities

Having a decent home and feeling safe within the community is a key contributing factor to people's sense of well-being. Work will be undertaken to improve access to the quality of housing as well as promoting community safety. Through retaining our own housing stock, the Council will continue to focus on ensuring residents have access to quality homes.



## Our overall performance status for 'An Inclusive and Safe Vale' is AMBER

### Our achievements during 2017/18



- In line with our Digital Strategy, we have continued to improve the digital skills of residents via the well-established 'Get the Vale Online' initiative with regular digital drop-ins held across the Vale. 167 learners received 860 hours of training and we engaged 14 new volunteer Digital Champions. 100% of learners stated they felt more confident using a computer and rated the initiative 'good' or 'excellent'.



- We worked in partnership to address concerns around Universal credit (UC) and during the year, successfully secured £188,211 for our tenants by way of additional benefits, reduced bills and grants. 100% of all Council tenants including UC tenants, received money advice support contributing to a 97% tenancy sustainment rate, which has contributed to preventing homelessness during the year.
- A positive prevention action taken by us was successful in preventing homelessness in 72% of households cases compared to 69% in 2016/17. This success has been aided by the additional support services such as Gwalia and Gofal Shelter Cymru introduced during the year.
- We have proactively promoted the Welsh Water Help U scheme for low income households. 487 applications were supported which entitled tenants to gain a rebate, cleared outstanding balances or produced a credit that has been refunded to the tenants. The support has helped tenants maintain their payments moving forward.



- Our Communities First programmes, which concluded in March 2018, have supported over 280 people into work and 633 young people with their transition from Primary to Secondary School. The programmes have also assisted young people on the Transition Programme to undertake 1,424 hours of volunteering and helped 2,668 individuals to access our Health and Well-being projects.



- Safeguarding the vulnerable is a central theme to the activities undertaken by the Shared Regulatory Services (SRS). During the year, 542 cases, enquiries and referrals were dealt with by the SRS Safeguarding Team. 763 people were reached through education and awareness training activities in relation to scams and doorstep crime and 80 victims of doorstep crime and scams were supported. In addition, 24 call blockers were installed and 6 rapid responses made to concerned or intimidated residents where traders were present at their homes or due to return.



- Successfully concluding and achieving compliance with Welsh Housing Quality Standards has ensured that our 3,876 homes are of good quality and suitable for the needs of existing and future council tenants.
- We reduced the time taken to let an empty property from 28 days in 2016/17 to 19 days in 2017/18. This improvement in turnaround has allowed tenants to move into their new homes quickly. This performance is in the top quartile of Housing organisations across England and Wales.



- We delivered 225 additional affordable housing units for households in need. This included a two unit supported accommodation project in partnership with Children's Services as part of our commitment to 'provide appropriate accommodation and support services for particular vulnerable groups'. This facility will provide temporary housing with high levels of support for vulnerable care leavers with very complex needs which could not be met in a traditional supported housing scheme.



- The Council has invested £9,553,247 into the Castleland Renewal Area over the past 7 years, aimed at reversing the decline of Barry town and the surrounding residential area. The scheme, which concluded this year, has upgraded 1,225 properties, made improvements to Holton Road Primary School and Holton Road and invested £2.5m in 487 homes to improve energy efficiency.



- Our Families First initiative continues to provide good quality and well managed services to support children, young people and families. 98% of service users reported that they were satisfied with the services provided, a further improvement of 97% satisfaction last year. During 2017/18, 233 children out of 274 (85%) achieved the expected outcomes (Outcome 5+) for the Foundation Phase, exceeding the target of 60% set for the year.

### Our challenges going forward



- We recognise that more needs to be done to promote digital inclusion across targeted groups, and further progress is anticipated during 2018/19, following the Council's adoption of a new Digital Strategy.
- Whilst the UK Government has guaranteed all committed Rural Development Plan funding until 2020, uncertainty remains about the levels of funding after 2020. This may impact on the resilience of Creative Rural Communities following the UK decision to exit the European Union. Future allocations of any replacement funding for Economic Development or rural funding remain unclear and will be heavily influenced by Westminster Policy.



- The transitional homelessness fund provided by Welsh Government ended in March 2018. However, some critical posts within the Council's Housing Solutions and Options Service continue to be funded through this money. This has been highlighted as a cost pressure for 2018/19 for additional funding in order to maintain the required level of homelessness prevention in accordance with the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- Having identified that our current controls for the management of building compliance, and in particular, 'compliance data' for our Corporate Building stock could be improved, we have responded positively by restructuring the Corporate Compliance Team to enable better management of compliance data along with appropriate resources to ensure an accurate and up to date public buildings database. Going forward, the potential financial costs associated with addressing any non-compliance issues in relation to the Council's building assets will be a challenge given reducing budgets. This will have to be considered as part of the budget setting process later in 2018/19.



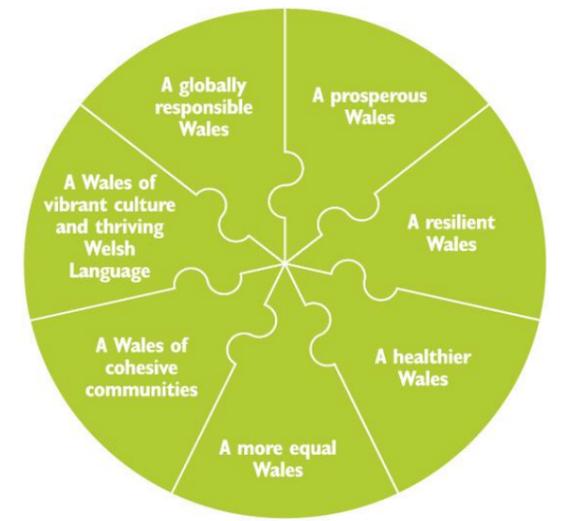
The Vale of Glamorgan has a strong and sustainable economy and the local environment is safeguarded for present and future generations.

### Improvement Objective 3: Promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment

To continue to build on our successful track record of delivering regeneration projects across the Vale whilst working with our partners as part of the Cardiff Capital Region to maximise opportunities for job creation.

### Improvement Objective 4: Promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment

We recognise and value our unique environment and aim to protect it for future generations whilst enjoying its beauty and diversity. Adopting a more sustainable approach to development enables us to maximise land use for purposes of housing, employment, retail, tourism, transport, minerals, waste and the community both now and in the future.



**Our overall RAG status for 'An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale' is AMBER**

### Our achievements during 2017/18

-  The Vale continues to flourish as a “go to” destination all year round. During the year, we hosted a number of events to support local businesses and encourage tourism including the Penarth Arts Trail, Coastal Craft Festival, Circus of the Sea, Barry Island Aquathlon and the Holton Road Christmas Market. Other initiatives include camping and outdoor activities at our Country Parks. The STEAM survey (2017) highlighted that visitor numbers to the Vale have increased from 3.97m in 2016 to 4.16m in 2017, bringing in £236.81 million in revenue to the area.
-  The majority of visitors to the Vale of Glamorgan, indicated that they are likely to return in future (95%) and 90% said they would definitely visit again (higher than the all Wales average of 86%) according to the Wales Visitor Survey (2017).
-  96% of visitors would return to Barry Island resort and 91% would recommend the resort as a destination to their friends and family (Barry Island Customer Satisfaction Survey, Summer of 2017).
-  As part of the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR)/City Deal, we have agreed a £379m investment to support the development of a compound semiconductor industry cluster in south-east Wales. It has also secured in-principle support for the £180m re-development of Cardiff’s main transport hub with £40m of City Deal funding. These investments alongside several other key projects are expected to bring in significant private sector investment over the next five years and the creation of thousands of high-tech jobs within the region therefore maximising economic growth in the area.
-  The proactive promotion of the St. Athan Aerospace Park under the City Deal has already created 100 jobs with 650 opportunities envisaged when fully operational in 2019.
-  The Council secured £8,109,968 of funding for community investment through Section S106 agreements attached to planning approvals during 2017/18. This money is being 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, and opportunities for training and development.

-  We exceeded our statutory target for reducing waste and increasing recycling. Over 63% of our waste was recycled against a statutory target of 58%. Existing initiatives such as Prosiest Gwyrdd and the Waste Transfer Site have contributed to this performance and have enabled further investment in waste minimisation initiatives.
-  Cleanliness standards of our highways (99.5%) and streets (71%) remain high and we have been proactive in dealing with 100% of reported incidents of fly tipping ranking us 1<sup>st</sup> in Wales in these areas.
-  In recognition of our good quality parks and green spaces, we successfully retained our 7 Green Flag awards and achieved a further 8 Green Flag Community awards during the year. 6 of our beaches achieved awards guaranteeing visitors a clean, safe and attractive well maintained environment.
-  The Council met the commitments for the year under the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme and have signed up to ReFit (an energy efficiency programme) which will further reduce the carbon emissions from our activities.
-  Our Active Travel Maps have been updated following public consultation and this is providing residents with comprehensive information to travel efficiently and safely throughout the Vale. £467,018 was spent during 2017/18 on enhancements to active travel and sustainable transport schemes using Section 106 contributions. These include: the Footway/cycle scheme in Cosmeston Park to link Dinas Powys to Penarth; the High Street/Broad Street Barry traffic management improvements and a footway; a Cycle Way Scheme on Harbour Road Car Park; footpath improvements in Cowbridge; and provided school cycle stands for Llandough Primary School. The Greenlinks scheme has continued to offer a much-needed service to citizens of the Vale who cannot otherwise access public transport. This includes Social Services clients, following the success of the recent pilot project transporting young carers.
-  We implemented a comprehensive programme of regeneration across the Vale through the Rural Local Development Strategy (which commissioned 29 projects during the year) and the Town Centres Framework. These have actively involved residents in the development and delivery of community improvements including events, environmental improvements and establishment of a Business Improvement District, all of which are aimed at rejuvenating our towns to ensure they remain attractive and viable.

### Our challenges going forward

-  The loss of external funding remains a key challenge, particularly after 2020. We must mitigate against the on-going uncertainty arising from Britain exiting the European Union by securing additional funding from Welsh Government to deliver key regeneration projects for the local community.
- Whilst progress to date in relation to the Cardiff Capital Region (City Deal) is positive, we need to ensure that going forward the interests of the Vale of Glamorgan continue to be effectively promoted. Of particular relevance is the need to promote the Airport and St. Athan as centres for economic growth and job creation, improving strategic access to the Vale, increasing the supply of affordable housing and the ongoing subsidised regeneration of Barry
- The Welsh Planning system is going through unprecedented change as a result of the introduction of three main pieces of legislation; this comes at a time of reducing budgets.
- Our road network is a deteriorating asset which requires continual and significant investment in excess of £2million a year in order to maintain a safe standard. This remains a challenge given the limited investment available for maintenance.



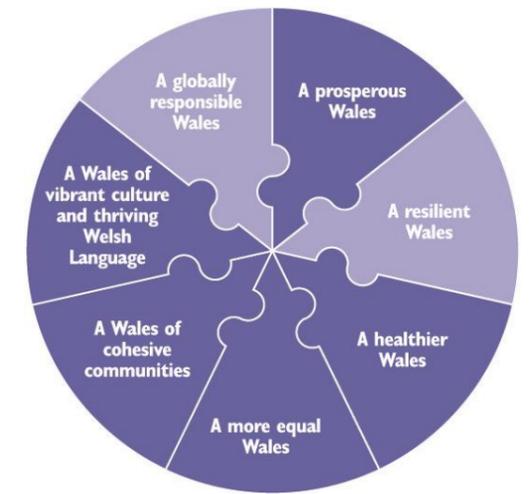
## All Vale of Glamorgan citizens have opportunities to achieve their full potential

### Improvement Objective 5: Raising overall standards of achievement

Our ambition is to ensure that education outcomes are the best in Wales and match those of the most successful authorities in England with similar social-economic profiles

### Improvement Objective 6: Valuing culture and diversity

We respect and value diversity within our communities and recognise the importance of promoting equality of opportunity and the Welsh language. We recognise the importance of encouraging people of all ages to enjoy our unique heritage and culture.



## Our overall RAG status for 'An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale' is AMBER

### Our achievements during 2017/18



- Under the School Reorganisation and Investment and the 21st Century Schools Programmes, we have successfully delivered on a number of schemes this year. For example the Llantwit Learning Community has addressed the surplus capacity in Llantwit Major School and we have opened a new nursery unit at Fairfield Primary School.



- No schools are in the statutory follow up category (Significant Improvement or Special Measures) and just one school remains in Estyn's follow up category of Estyn Review.
- We are one of the top quartile performers in Wales for pupil attendance in both primary and secondary schools. Our success has been the result of our effective collaboration with schools.



- Standards during 2016/17 academic year have improved in the majority of key performance indicators and in nearly all cases the rate of improvement has been greater in the Vale than in the Wales average.



- A Cardiff and Vale College review of the Vale Learning Centre found that it offers 'good provision with good prospects for improvement to all residents and adult learner success rates continue to be high at 94%.



- We further enhanced and promoted Welsh language opportunities throughout the Vale. During 2017/18, 19,500 people participated in a range of Welsh Language activities through the promotional partnership we have with Menter Bro Morgannwg. We continue to promote Welsh language classes in the work place and during 2017/18, 80 staff enrolled on a Welsh Language course.



- The percentage of Year 11 leavers who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) has continued to reduce for the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year to 0.95%, ranking us third in Wales for our performance. Equally our performance in relation to the percentage of year 12 leavers who are NEET has also reduced to 0.65%.



- The Council itself has also taken direct action in creating jobs and training opportunities for young people through an apprenticeship scheme and locally funded initiatives. During 2017/18 our Inspire to Work project worked with 55 young people aged 16-25. 15 of these entered employment and 17 achieved recognised qualifications.



- No pupils in local authority care have left compulsory education, training or work-based learning without an approved external qualification. This performance ranks us in the top quartile of Welsh local authorities.



- The Council is a Stonewall Diversity Champion and remains committed to ensuring it has an inclusive work place for all lesbian, gay, bi and trans-sexual staff. Good progress has been made in implementing the action plan in response to our assessment.



- The Libraries Service have recently implemented the All Wales Library Management System which promotes the sharing of resources and collections and enable customers to search library collections (bi-lingually) throughout Wales. This gives customers access to a wide range of resources for learning, teaching and research.

### Our challenges going forward



- Raising attainment levels against a national reduction in funding and an increase in pupil numbers attending Vale schools presents significant challenges for the future. The Council's total gross schools budgeted expenditure per pupil for 2017/18 was £5,022, the lowest in Wales and £606 below the Wales average of £5,628.
- Narrowing the gap in attainment between pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not remains a challenge.
- Growing numbers of children with additional learning needs/complex issues and increasing customer expectations continues to place additional pressure on both central education resources and on individual schools' budgets at a time when budgets are reducing.
- The number of young people who are NEET has reduced steadily over the past few years nevertheless, it remains a priority for the Council with a specific focus on Year 13 NEETs which currently stands at 2.85%.
- The launch of the Cymraeg Strategy and Welsh Government's review of the Welsh Education Strategy Plan will have a substantial impact on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme, as well as financial implications in delivering appropriate specialist or transitional support through the medium of Welsh.
- Whilst progress has been made in respect of the take up of adult community learning, there is a danger that these opportunities may not be sustainable under reduced funding.
- Sustaining visitor numbers at our libraries will continue to be an ongoing challenge, as visitor numbers fell by 5% in 2017/18. The Council has launched its Open+ out of hours access scheme in the County Library, Barry which is expected to increase footfall.

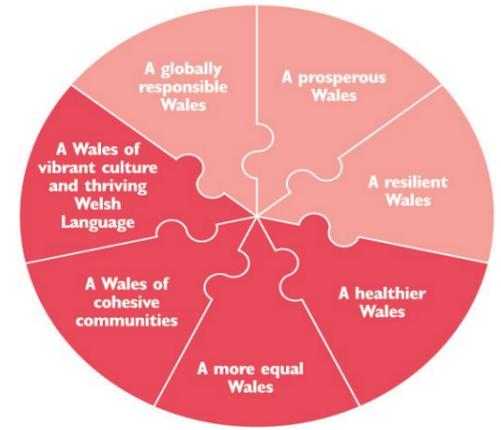
## Residents of the Vale of Glamorgan lead healthy lives and vulnerable people are protected and supported

### Improvement Objective 7: Encouraging and promoting active and healthy lifestyles

Prevention and early intervention is integral to improving people's well-being and promoting good health. There also needs to be a greater emphasis on encouraging participation in physical activities to support healthy lifestyles and improve the quality of life.

### Improvement Objective 8: Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting independent living

We recognise the importance of tackling health inequalities and safeguarding our most vulnerable residents. By working with partners we can join up and improve health and social care services that put the needs of the customer first and make a significant difference to the well-being of our most vulnerable residents, families and carers.



## Our overall RAG status for 'An Active and Healthy Vale' is GREEN

### Our achievements during 2017/18



- The Vale was the top performing authority in Wales for visits to local authority sports and leisure facilities, with 11,368 visits per 1,000 population.
- Increased participation in sports and physical activity and are ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in Wales for active participation with 69% of adults indicating they participate in sport and physical activity.



- We increased opportunities for disabled people to participate in physical activity resulted in a Bronze award for InSport from Disability Sport Wales, the highest award available at the time.
- 546 disabled club members and 618 disability sports session members attended 50 inclusive or specific disability opportunities across the Vale.



- The Council retained 7 Green Flags as recognition of our excellent parks and green spaces. 8 Green Flag Community Awards were also awarded during the year, 3 more than last year.
- 3 Blue Flags were awarded for our 'gold standard' beaches at Whitmore Bay, Southerndown and Penarth Marina, the only Welsh Marina to receive such an award. Cold Knap also received a seaside award.



- Successfully launching the 'Your Choice' Pilot, an Outcome Focused Case Management and Measurement system give service users the freedom to define their care needs and outcomes.
- The development of a 6 bed reablement unit to alleviate pressure on hospital beds has also resulted in a reduction in care package costs and lengthy hospital stays.
- We co-located the Integrated Autism Team at Hafan Dawel. This multi-disciplinary team has given service users access to a broader range of support services to meet their needs.



- We successfully launched the DEWIS Cymru Information Portal; an online resource for accessing well-being information across Wales.
- 69.5% of adult services social care enquires were resolved at the single point of contact (via the Contact Centre).



- By adopting a more targeted approach, 75.03% of children were supported to remain living with their family during 2017/18.
- We developed and implemented with key partners a Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and a Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework tool that is now embedded across Social Services.



- Our Play Development team reached an estimated 2,000 families across our event programme. Two play schemes were operated during the schools holidays and accessed via 158 children and 2 play schemes for disabled children reached 236 children and young people at Ysgol-y-Deri.



- The Council successfully relocated the mental health services for older people to Llandough Hospital which has also allowed us to co-locate our Community Mental Health Team for older people with specialist mental health services ensuring people can get the right type of services at the right time.
- 75.86% of the service users requiring it completed a substance misuse treatment programme, which exceeds the national average of 72%. 79% of clients reported an improvement in their quality of life.

### Our challenges going forward



- Sustaining and improving participation levels in physical activity at a time of diminishing resources and the potential for regionalisation of funding e.g. Sports Development.
- Balancing the need to deliver an ambitious play programme in line with legislation at a time a time when funding is reducing.
- Capacity and capability to meet the growing demand for Social Services to ensure that needs can be met. Increasing number of children and young people and their families and adults are presenting with more complex needs which is placing increased pressure on our services resulting in more costly interventions/support.
- Although we continue to perform solidly in relation to Delayed Transfers of Care (DToc) (discharge from hospital), the inability to further reduce delayed transfers of care through our Accommodation Solutions service due to financial limitations remains a challenge.
- Despite our progressive approach to working with partners, collaborative initiatives can be slow especially in relation to developing alternative service delivery models where services are increasingly dependent on grant funding to develop and commission innovative services. Any delays at the regional level impact on our progress on integrating adult health and social care services.





## Integrated Planning is the key factor for success...

..... it involves adopting an integrated approach to risk management, financial management, workforce planning, performance management and information management.

All aspects of what we do are based around our five ways of working.

- INTEGRATION
- COLLABORATION
- INVOLVEMENT
- PREVENTION
- LONG TERM

## Our overall RAG status for 'Corporate Health is GREEN

### Our achievements during 2017/18



- We maintained a highly skilled and resilient workforce by introducing the Management Competency Framework, revised the 'Welcome to the Vale' induction, developed new online training modules, a staff recognition scheme and an annual awards event. Such activities have helped contribute to a 72% positive rating in our recent staff survey.
- Staff turnover has continued to decrease from 10.4% in 2016/17 to 8.88% in 2017/18 and voluntary turnover levels have also decreased in the majority of service areas.



- We improved outcomes for our Vale citizens through delivery of our Capital programme. The Council spent 86% of its £51.432 million capital budget on improving the learning environment in schools, achieving Welsh Housing Quality Standards as part of the housing improvement programme, improvements to the highway infrastructure and regeneration of areas such as Gibbonsdown and Buttrills wards.
- £2.998million of savings (representing 75% of the required target of £4.017million set for the year), were achieved without detriment to service delivery or customer satisfaction.



- We further reduced the amount and costs of accommodation used by the Council to deliver services by discontinuing with leasehold arrangements of Provincial House and the completion and disposal of the Dinas Powys St Cyres School site. Centralising our services has enabled us to make financial savings (whilst contributing to capital receipts) and deliver more efficient and agile services.



- The development of a Digital Strategy sets out the vision for how we will make best use of technology to deliver services in a more effective and efficient way. A key focus this year has been on 'Digital Workforce'. Streamlining ICT software services as part of the new Neighbourhood Services and Transport model has enabled us to deliver a more efficient and agile services to our residents in relation to waste management, cleansing and transport services.



- Customer satisfaction with our services remains high. Over 99% of people who contacted us were satisfied with access to services across all channels. In addition, 77% of all queries to the Contact Centre (C1V) were resolved at first contact.



- We strengthened our approach to risk management through the development of a new strategy and reporting process that looks at risk in a more cross-cutting way. This new mechanism ensures that we adopt a robust approach to how we manage and mitigate our risks to service delivery.



- Publishing the Vale of Glamorgan Well-being Plan 'Our Vale Our Future' sets out how partners will work together to improve the well-being of citizens across the Vale.
- By collaborating with our partners and stakeholders we are ensuring that we are best placed to mitigate the effects budgetary pressures on service delivery. Our key strategic collaborations include the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Inspire to Achieve/Inspire to Work, the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service, Cardiff Organic Waste Treatment, Cardiff and Vale Community Learning Partnership, Welsh Community Care Information Service, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service, the Integrated Care Fund and the Strategic Housing Group.

### Our challenges going forward



- We have a successful track record of delivering a balanced budget. However the need to make efficiencies and budget savings, will become more and more challenging in the coming years. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan projects that £20.94m of savings is required between 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- Despite the focus placed on managing staff sickness, absence levels have increased by 1.26 days per full time equivalent (FTE) during 2017/18. Across the Council, 10.14 working days were lost per FTE compared to 8.88 days in 2016/17. Whilst staff turnover levels have decreased we still find it challenging to retain skilled staff over the long term and have introduced several initiatives and succession planning to improve staff retention.
- The potential financial costs associated with addressing any non-compliance issues associated with the Council's building assets will be a challenge given reducing budgets.
- Welsh Government's emerging proposals relating to Local Government Reform will continue to impact Council services specifically in identifying and pursuing long term, beneficial collaboration.
- Implementing our Digital Strategy will be challenging given the pace of technological change, the costs associated with financing new forms of technology and the impact that this ambitious Strategy has on the need to up-skill the workforce.
- Managing demand and expectations for our services when resources are diminishing is increasingly challenging. The focus needs to be on how we use our resources effectively via the Reshaping Programme.

### How to get involved

You can get involved by joining Vale Viewpoint (our Citizens Panel) and participate in consultations. Simply complete the brief [online form](#). Scrutiny Committees are open to the public and you can get involved by requesting that a service area/matter be considered by completing a [Consideration for Review form](#) or you can register to speak on the Council's [website](#). **To comment on the Annual Report or to propose new Well-being (Improvement) Objectives, contact us at: Email: [improvements@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:improvements@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Letters: Performance & Development, Vale of Glamorgan, Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, CF63 4RU Phone: 01446 700111**