

VALE of GLAMORGAN

Policy and Communications Team Plan 2013/14



BRO MORGANNWG

Team Manager	Bev Noon
Service Plan	Corporate and Customer Services
Date signed off	27 June 2013
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Outcome 1: Our customers have access to a broad range of efficient, sustainable services which meet their needs, in a way that is convenient to them.

Objective 1: To encourage our customers to use the most appropriate, lowest-cost way of dealing with the council, and ensure a positive customer service.

Context for this objective:

The council has an award-winning website, which had over 27,700 unique weekly visits and 10,000 pages in 2011/12. The 2012 public opinion survey shows that 72% of residents have regular access to a PC (up from 58% in 2009), and libraries provide free use of information technology. 59% of internet users have accessed the council's website (up from 36% in 2009). By re-basing the results on all residents (including those without internet access), the proportion of Vale residents using the Council website over the past three years has doubled from 21% to 42%.

The council's channel strategy aims to shift as many customer enquiries and service requests as possible to the website, as this is the council's lowest cost communications channel. The current website was developed by the communications team and ICT in 2006 and it has been further developed to encourage channel shift, for example the introduction of the prominent 'Do it on line' facility on the homepage.

The website's Content Management System (CMS) was introduced in 2006 and is no longer supported by the supplier at the end of March 2013, requiring a new CMS to be developed. The new CMS has required the transfer of the former website pages (those considered 'customer useful' of the 10,000 plus pages). The new CMS also offers the opportunity to develop a new website that would continue to improve customer service over the coming years.

The Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Public Sector Equality Duty places specific duties which require listed public authorities to collect, analyse and use equality information to improve services for protected groups. Risks of non-achievement of this duty include non compliance orders, damaging publicity, poor reputation

amongst service users and the cost of fines for non-compliance. Opportunities include improved service delivery and better targeted services to meet known and understood customer service needs.

The council published its Strategic Equality Plan in April 2012 to assist in fulfilling its duties in respect of these duties. The council also has an approved Welsh Language Scheme, agreed in March 2011.

The Strategic Equality Plan has an associated action plan, and there are considerable workforce planning issues arising from that plan. A new training programme has been devised to enable council staff and elected members to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes to provide improved and accessible services to people with protected characteristics.

The New Welsh Language Measure will present a challenge as the Council must comply with new Welsh Language Standards rather than its own scheme. The Council will be scored against the standards, and can face considerable fines if not compliant. Although the standards have not yet been confirmed by the Welsh Language Commissioner, it is expected that the requirements will be considerably greater than the Council's existing Welsh Language Scheme. While this will promote the local equalities agenda, the workforce planning implications are significant, in that greater Welsh language skills will be needed by our staff, which will need to be provided through both increased language training and recruitment. Extra translation facilities will be needed, either through recruitment or in collaboration with our partners.

Effective consultation and engagement is the key method by which we can gain an understanding of how our residents prefer to make contact with the Council and why they are reluctant to shift towards lower cost alternatives. We must understand residents' objections to and concerns about channel shift before we can address them.

It is a priority of the Council to meet the needs and references of all its customers, in an efficient and cost effective way. Our channel strategy is focused on encouraging customers to use the lowest cost, most appropriate channel for their enquiry, which means directing them to self service options on our website.

Ref.	During 2013-14 we plan to:	Outcomes we'll achieve from this action are:	High , medium or low priority	Officer responsible for achieving this action	Start Date	Finish Date	How will the work be resourced?:	Progress
	Develop the website to enhance the customer experience and to encourage citizen engagement.	A redesigned website that is clear, attractive and easy to use. The site will include new sections to engage residents.	H	AC	Nov 2012	Mar 2014	Within current resources.	Website redesign is completed. Once final technical problems are resolved by ICT the website will be published and work can start on the development of new sections.
	Implement the new Welsh language standards.	The Standards are mainstreamed into the work of the Council	H	LB	Jan 2014	Dec 2015	As yet unknown	
	Update CMT and members on the new standards once approved by the WG	Standards are clarified	H	LB	Jan 2014 (estimate)	Mar 2014	Within current resources	Awaiting WG clarification
	Inform all relevant staff of the requirements and	Staff are aware of their	H	LB	Apr 2014	Sep 2014	Will require consultancy	As above

	provide briefing sessions	obligations under the Standards					support- estimate to be provided	
	Compile an action plan and add to Service Plans	Implementation is monitored	H	LB/SJ	Oct 2014	Dec 2014	Within current resources	
	Increase the number of Welsh learners and training sessions.	The number of Welsh speakers in the Council is increased	M	LB	Mar 2014	Dec 2015	Continue to work with the Welsh for Adults team and to increase awareness with managers.	Taster sessions have been held as well as informal classes.
	Hold further taster events/informal sessions for staff	Encourage more staff to join formal classes	M	LB	Apr 2014	Aug 2014	WEA/Welsh for adults payment to tutor	
	Raise awareness within the council of the benefits of improving the linguistic skills of the workforce	Managers will be supportive of applications from staff.	M	LB	Mar 2014	Aug 2014	Possible consultancy support	
	Evaluate the effectiveness of the WL training programme.	Managers are aware of the long term benefits of Welsh language training	H	LB	Jan 2014	Sep 2014	Possible consultancy support	Evaluation has taken place for 2011-12 and has commenced for 2012-13

	Develop the language skills of elected members.	Members will have access to courses and are aware of the benefits of improving their linguistic skills.	M	LB	Apr 2014	Sep 2014	Possible consultancy support	Awareness sessions have been held and a survey of skills has taken place
	1. Ensure that members are aware of training opportunities	Members are able to access the same courses as staff	M	LB	Jan 2014	May 2014	LB with support	
	2. Encourage members to use Welsh language skills which they have	Residents are aware of the linguistic skills of members	M	LB	Mar 2014	Sep 2014	LB with support	Informal sessions are open to elected members
	Encourage the Rainbow Group to become independent and engage with it.	The group becomes a critical friends group for the council and we are made aware of the needs of BME women	H	LB	Jun 2013	Sep 2013	REF support	Yoga sessions were supported by the Council in 2012/13
	Liaise with Race Equality First to organise funding and continue to meet with the	The group continues to develop and is on a stable	H	LB	Jul 2013	Sep 2013	REF support	A first meeting needs to be arranged with LB and REF

	group.	financial footing						
	Organise and monitor activities of the group for the next year	The group continues to provide leisure activities for their members	H	LB	Sep 2013	Sep 2014	Support of the Yoga classes	
	Monitor the efficiency of the new discrimination service.	Evidence is able to be analysed to assess the success of the new service	H	LB	Jul 2013	Jul 2014	Equalities budget	Two quarters reports have been received
	Review monthly reports and hold regular meetings with CAB.	Monthly reports are analysed and compared to monitor take up of the service	H	LB	Sep 2013	Jul 2014	Equalities budget	
	Monitor use of the service to ensure value for money for the Council	Residents are aware of the service and use it when needed	H	LB	Sep 2013	Jul 2014	Within current resources	Continue with advertising the service – liaise with other council departments
	Implement a new equalities training programme.	Equalities training is more targeted, effective and is undertaken by	H	NH	Apr 2013	Mar 2014	Equalities budget	

		majority of staff.						
	Improve the awareness of the council's workforce in cultural and disability awareness so that they are able to respond to community needs appropriately.	Equalities training is more targeted, effective and is undertaken by majority of staff.	H	NH	Apr 2013	Mar 2014	Equalities budget	
	Attend DMTs to appraise managers of plans and identify groups of staff	Training will be delivered that is accessible to staff and takes into account the current level of understanding of equality issues.		NH	May 2013	Jul 2013	Equalities budget	This process has started. Outstanding meetings programmed for July.
	Deliver a programme of awareness raising training through e-learning modules and trainer led events.	Levels of understanding of responsibilities under equality law and needs of protected groups is enhanced		NH	Jul 2013	Mar 2014	Equalities budget	E-learning modules shortlisted. Trainer identified.

		across the council.						
	Analyse the training needs of Cabinet Members so that equality training can be targeted appropriately.	Training is targeted	H	NH	Oct 2013	Dec 2013	Within existing resources	
	Devise evaluation tools to measure the impact of equalities training.	Equalities training is more targeted and effective.		NH	Jul 2013	Mar 2014	Within existing resources	
	Evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme.	Equalities training is more targeted and effective.		NH	Jan 2014	Mar 2014	Within existing resources	
	Increase the number of services available via self service on the Council website.	More customers will 'self-serve' using the website rather than more costly channels such as face-to-face/telephone	H	AC	Jul 2013	Mar 2014	Within current resources.	
	Develop social media as a channel for handling customer enquiries	More customers will use social media and the website (when	M	AC	Sep 2013	Jan 2014	Within current resources.	The number of residents contacting the council via social

		they are pushed via social media to that channel) to contact the council rather than more costly channels.						media is already increasing. Major events or news has a marked effect on engagement via these channels.
	Increase the skills and flexibility of our staff to manage technological changes, especially in maintaining and enhancing the website and in growing use of social media.	Staff use social media and the website to professionally and proactively communicate with customers, so improving customer service and engagement.	M	AC	Sep 2013	Mar 2014	External training resources may be required.	The communications manager already advises and encourages staff in the use of social media.
	Develop the language skills of the council's workforce to enable the Welsh Language Standards to be implemented effectively.	More staff are able to provide a service to customers in Welsh		LB	Sep 2013	Sep 2014		Work is taking place to encourage staff to learn Welsh
	Continue to work with the Welsh for	Advertise courses		LB	Sep 2013	Sep 2014	Within current resources.	

	Adults team to attract new learners	extensively and contact users on the Linguistic Skills database						
	Raise awareness with managers of the importance of training	Arrange for senior managers to receive fresh awareness training		LB	Sep 2013	Dec 2013	Consultancy support	This has been done in the past but needs to be refreshed with the Welsh Standards in mind.
	Monitor the effectiveness of courses	Managers are aware of the success of staff		LB	Mar 2014	Sep 2014		
	Implement a public awareness campaign to help promote understanding of protected characteristics, and subsequently evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign.	Good relations are fostered between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. Improved public understanding of needs of protected groups. An identified need of protected		NH	Sep 2013	Mar 2014	Work with Communications team on design of campaign	

		groups is met.						
	Produce second annual equality monitoring report to monitor progress against objectives.	Shared knowledge of how equality objectives are progressing.	H	NH	Oct 2013	Dec 2013	Within existing resources	First annual equality monitoring report produced and published.
	Tackle digital inclusion in the most digitally disadvantaged groups.	To reduce the number of people living in the Vale that do not use the internet at all.	H	BN	Jun 2013	Dec 2013	Officer time 15 days	

Outcome 1: Our customers have access to a broad range of efficient, sustainable services which meet their needs, in a way that is convenient to them.

Objective 2: To develop more integrated service delivery.

Context for this objective:

The council has entered into an agreement with the Welsh Government (called an Outcome Agreement) based on the premise that the council and WG share common objectives and that this agreement could assist in achieving these objectives. WG pays a grant to the council to incentivise achievement of targets, to the value of £1.2 million annually. The current Outcome Agreement was signed in February 2011, for the period 2010 - 2013 and revised slightly in August 2011.

To date, the council has achieved 100% of its incentive grants annually, and the department coordinates annual reporting in order to draw down this grant. A new Outcome Agreement will be progressed for the period 2013-16, and this takes months of painstaking negotiation.

Town and Community Councils provide the third tier of government, and operate at a local level, close to their communities. In order to improve relationships and provide a more joined-up governance, a charter was developed in 2008, outlining how the unitary and town and community councils would work more closely together. An action plan was developed to facilitate the implementation of the charter.

Following local elections in 2012, the charter will be reviewed and revised and a new action plan developed. A questionnaire was circulated to Vale Council officers and to clerks of the signatory town and community councils during 2012. The general feeling is that relationships between town and community councils and the unitary council have improved in recent years; no one surveyed felt that relationships had worsened. However, it also found that there are several areas where more work is required to improve relationships further.

The Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Public Sector Equality Duty places specific duties which require listed

public authorities to collect, analyse and use equality information to improve services for protected groups. These duties can only be achieved with the entire council and its partners working to achieve our equalities objectives. With this in mind, we have been working over recent years to mainstream equalities issues, making them a responsibility of all managers and partners in setting their business and strategic plans.

The communications unit works with council directorates and partners to publicise partnership working to customers, to ensure that customers are fully aware of the services on offer and how they are provided.

Consultation and engagement are essential to gaining an understanding of our customers across the whole of the public sector. The citizens' panel Vale Viewpoint has been re-developed to enable the Local Service Board to develop a greater understanding of our citizens and to develop services that are fit for purpose and meet their needs.

Ref.	During 2013-14 we plan to:	Outcomes we'll achieve from this action are:	High , medium or low priority	Officer responsible for achieving this action	Start Date	Finish Date	How will the work be resourced?:	Progress
	Report on achievement of the final year of the current Outcome Agreement (2010-13).	Incentive grant achieved	H	BN	Jun 2013	Sep 2014	Existing resources	
	Negotiate a new Outcome Agreement with the Welsh Government.	Agreement in place	H	BN	Jul 2013	Feb 2014	Existing resources	

	Collect data for 2012/13 from departments in preparation for the next monitoring report	Data is collated and managers are able to compare with 2011/12	H	LB	May 2013	Dec 2013	Help from IDT	LB has sent a reminder w/c 20 th May.
	Collect information from different departments	More departments are made aware of the need to monitor service use	H	LB	Sep 2013	Dec 2013	Help from IDT	
	Implement recommendations of the internal audit report on equality impact assessments	Continue to develop and extend the reach of impact assessment.	H	NH	Sep 2013	Mar 2014		
	Review form and guidance.	Easier to use form and enhanced guidance for managers and officers involved in process	H	NH	Jan 2014	Mar 2014		Review after review of process for schools and incorporate any lessons learnt. Review of process for schools started in June 2013.
	Arrange refresher training.	Managers reminded of	H	NH	Oct 2013	Mar 2014		

		process. Other staff involved to receive training for a more comprehensive understanding in teams.						
	Integrate equality objectives into strategic plans and monitor actions in our Strategic Equalities Plan.	Equalities objectives are mainstreamed and monitored for completion.	H	NH	Commenced	Mar 2014	Existing resources	Some actions are in 2013/14 service plans; Annual monitoring report agreed; regular updates to ECF
	Review the charter and develop a new action plan.	Improved relationships with town and community councils	M	BN	Apr 2013	Dec 2014	Existing resources	
	Produce a standard monitoring form with guidance on collecting and monitoring equality data for use throughout the council.	Service Monitoring Information is collected in the same way throughout the Council	M	LB	Jun 2013	Dec 2013		A form has been prepared – not all characteristics are monitored in every area.
	Review data collection on protected	Gaps are identified and managers are	M	LB	Jan 2014	Dec 2014		This will form part of the Annual

	characteristics, identify gaps and establish a system for collating information for a corporate overview and annual reporting.	aware of this.						Monitoring Report
	Work with Heads of Service to develop action plans to improve data collection and reporting where there are information gaps to facilitate regular analysis of how services are used by each protected group.	Service Monitoring will form part of the Service Planning process	H	LB	Dec 2013	Dec 2014		
	Work with the following services intensively to bring them up to level 4 of the VES: Human Resources (L3), Children and Young People's Services		H	NH	Jun 2013	Mar 2014	Existing resources	

	(L2), Business Management and Innovation (L3), School Improvement (L3), Building and Vehicle Services (L3), Visible Services (L2), Democratic Services (L1)							
	Design and implement a campaign to help people understand what we are doing and why, in respect of monitoring use of services by protected characteristic.	People understand what we are doing and why, in respect of monitoring use of services by protected characteristic.	M	LB	Apr 2013	Dec 2013	Existing resources	Campaign designed based on Stonewall leaflet and this is being promoted with the staff survey being sent out at the end of June. It can also be used by services.

Outcome 1: The Council has a clear strategic direction which is well communicated to residents.

Objective 3: To align the objectives and ways of working in the Council with our partners in order to meet community need.

Context for this objective:

The Vale of Glamorgan Council, like all other local authorities, seeks to achieve the highest possible standards of service delivery to meet the needs and aspirations of its local communities. We are therefore continually striving to improve services. The ongoing budget pressures created by the national financial settlement for local government however means that the Council has to continually rethink how it does things and work more effectively with our partners in the public, private, voluntary and community groups to enable us to continue to meet the needs of local communities.

A key priority for the council is to improve and increase partnership working, focusing on prioritising community issues, aligning our approaches and combining resources where appropriate to deliver better outcomes for our communities. The council has a duty to collaborate to deliver efficient and citizen focused outcomes for communities. A key driver for the service is the requirement to build strong collaborative links across public, private and voluntary sector organisations enabling the council to more effectively meet the needs of local communities. The local Government Measure (Wales) 2009 underpins our work in ensuring that the council works effectively with partners to deliver key outcomes for citizens and communities of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Ref.	During 2013-14 we plan to:	Outcomes we'll achieve from this action are:	High , medium or low priority	Officer responsible for achieving this action	Start Date	Finish Date	How will the work be resourced?:	Progress
	Further develop the Arts Connect collaboration.	Arts Connect has a strategic focus and leadership	M	BN	Commenced	Mar 2014	Further £5.5K identified	
	Agree a revised Arts Connect Memorandum of Understanding.	Continued membership of and benefits from Arts connect	H	BN	Sep 2013	Mar 2014		
	Implement projects to promote access to the arts for looked after children and adults with dementia.	Provide arts activities and creative opportunities for looked after children and adults with dementia.	H	TH	Sep 2013	Sep 2015	ACW Application made with Arts Connect.	Consultation carried out in each local authority area.

Outcome 2: The Council has a clear strategic direction which is well communicated to residents.

Objective 4: To continuously improve to be a top performing Council.

Context for this objective:

An overarching objective of Corporate and Customer Services is to drive continuous improvement across all council services, in so doing meeting the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 in full. The Council has statutory duty to continuously improve.

Corporate and Customer Services makes a significant contribution to national and local priorities through its role in facilitating the Council's internal planning processes and via wider community planning for the Vale of Glamorgan. This includes a leadership role in embedding major cross-cutting issues such as collaboration, sustainability and equality across council services and activities.

On a day to day basis, Corporate and Customer Services also has a lead role in embedding within the Council a corporate approach to policy development, performance management and improvement, consultation and engagement, communications, partnership working, equalities, sustainability and collaboration.

In recent years, Corporate and Customer Services has experienced increased demand for our services to deliver major change in the Council. At the same time, the resources available to us are reducing consequently we increasingly have to do more with less.

In the context of the various modernisation and improvement initiatives emanating from the central and Welsh governments, Corporate and Customer Services faces a challenging few years. Efficiency and delivery of customer focussed outcomes continue to be the driving forces on the service's agenda in response to the increasing pressures on local government funding.

Of particular significance are the changes in the local partnership environment, and the welfare system. The

Localism Bill 2011 also promises changes greater influence for communities in relation to services and planning decisions. The central government's Big Society agenda also proposes the opening up of public services to private and third sector providers to increase choice. All these various improvement initiatives need to be reflected in our corporate and service plans.

There is a legal basis under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, Part 1 for effective business planning arrangements to drive improvement within the council. A key challenge for Corporate and Customer Services is to ensure that year on year the council's core self assessment and business planning processes (service planning) and performance management arrangements are robust and drive continuous improvement which will stand up to scrutiny from our external regulators. Year on year reviews of our core processes ensure that improvements are made to reflect new legislative requirements and any recommendations from our regulators in their annual review of our corporate governance arrangements within the council.

The development of improvement objectives and improvement reporting (through the council's improvement plan) are a statutory duty, and require a significant staffing resources and time commitment. Performance reporting is highly regulated, and this work is coordinated through the Corporate and Customer Services department.

Service planning arrangements have been revised this year in response to last year's Annual Improvement Assessment with plans now detailing more customer focused outcomes. Training has been provided for senior managers in becoming more outcome focused, although this work will need to continue to become embedded in the working arrangements of the council. Further work is planned in the coming year to improve how we report against achievement of our outcomes.

Our corporate performance management software, Ffynnon, a key tool in monitoring and reporting performance across the council is to be replaced during 2014/15. We will need to establish appropriate contingency arrangements internally to ensure a smooth transition to the new system, including adequate resources to support the building of a new reporting framework in the replacement for Ffynnon and training of managers and councillors in its use. There is a risk that the software procured will not be suited to the

requirements of the Council, particularly in light of new service planning arrangements. Our contingency arrangements will therefore need to address this possibility and this issue will be closely monitored during 2013/14 and it will be important that the Council's Ffynnon project team contributes to the WG consultation on the procurement process.

A new framework in Ffynnon is being developed to go live 1 July 2013, in line with timescales for quarter one reporting. The new framework will reflect the changes made in the recent corporate restructure and revised service planning arrangements.

A key role of the service is to routinely assess performance of all council services identifying areas for improvement and provide targeted support in addressing under performance issues before they escalate. This process also helps inform our annual improvement objectives, which we publish annually in April. These are the key areas within the council where we will target our improvements for the coming year.

Our recent annual performance assessment (2011/12 data) indicated that the council is performing well in comparison with its neighbours. Performance was above the Welsh average for 88 of the key national indicators reported on for 2011/12 and below the Welsh average for 54. Of these, 59 indicators were in the top quartile, the most of any council in Wales. Our priority for the coming year is to improve performance in the areas where the council was not meeting the Welsh average, particularly in the case of the 37 performance indicators that were in the bottom quartile nationally for 2011/12.

In response to areas identified to be under performing through our annual assessment of performance, a number of reviews were completed in 2011/12. This has included projects on ICT, disabled facilities grants and (young people not in education training or employment (NEETs)). Whilst performance for disabled facilities grants continues to improve, performance is still below the Welsh average and efforts are now being concentrated on addressing complex cases involving children and young people which is impacting negatively on time taken to implement adaptations overall.

A complete review of the council's performance indicators has been undertaken. A number of new indicators have been added which aim to measure the impact that the delivery of a service has had on the

service users. An exercise was also undertaken to identify where performance indicators were not best measuring our performance against our objectives, and a number of outdated indicators have subsequently been removed. Additionally, the council continues to collect all national performance indicators upon which we have a statutory duty to report.

The Equality Act requires councils to report on performance on an annual basis and monitoring systems do not currently record much of the data. The department is working with managers to improve the monitoring data that is collected, reported and used, as a basis for ensuring that all of members of our community receive access to essential services.

Consultation and engagement are essential to gaining an understanding of the extent to which we meet our residents needs and whether or not we do so in a way that is convenient to them. Service delivery cannot be improved without engaging service users in the process.

A key risk for the service is that due to continued budgetary cuts, limitations in terms of workforce size and restrictions on resources, the council's ability to continuously improve will be impaired. In light of this, our priority as a service will be in making focused improvements in those areas that have been identified as particularly low-performing and which will have significant impact on our customers and local communities. In some instances where performance is particularly good, it may be a significant achievement for this to be maintained despite resources being limited.

As part of our lead role in coordinating the regulatory work programme of the Council we will continue to support services in preparation for and post regulatory assessments, for example the upcoming Estyn review of Education Services in 2013. Services are being supported in developing a corporate approach towards implementing the requirements of the Welfare Reform Act. The department is coordinating a corporate approach to safeguarding children and adults.

The service takes a lead role in ensuring local and national elections run smoothly and in accordance with Electoral Commission performance standards. The council is committed to increasing the number of citizens on the Vale of Glamorgan electoral register and encouraging them to vote at elections.

Increasing customer satisfaction and improving how customers access services is a key priority for the Council. The communications team provides professional media and communications services to the council's directorates and provides a number of effective 'owned' communications channels. Past MORI research for the Local Government Association has indicated that good communication between a council and its residents is the main driver for overall satisfaction with council services. Councils who are best at informing their residents about what they do, tend to be the most popular and well-regarded, irrespective of council tax levels and actual satisfaction with service delivery. MORI research has also found that councils that keep their staff well informed are rewarded with more motivated staff.

Overall satisfaction with the information received from the Council has remained fairly consistent over the past few years, with 76% saying they were satisfied overall compared to 77% in 2009.

Overall satisfaction with services provided amongst residents was high, with 9 in 10 (93%) stating they were satisfied ('Very' or 'Fairly'). Only 7% said they were dissatisfied overall. This compares was similar to satisfaction levels in 2009, when a slightly higher number (96%) of residents were satisfied. However, in 2012, those stating they are 'very' satisfied with the services provided is lower than in 2009, with just under a third (31%) saying this, compared to almost 4 in 10 (37%) saying they were 'very' satisfied in 2009.

Although the council has discontinued its highly regarded 'Vale Waves' quarterly newspaper, other, less expensive, means of communicating with residents have taken its place. The council's website, e-newsletter (with over 600 subscribers) and social media (Twitter with over 4,000 followers and Facebook with 400 'friends') have replaced the newspaper, but we are still building up a following.

The Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Public Sector Equality Duty places specific duties which require listed public authorities to collect, analyse and use equality information to improve services for protected groups. Our equalities objectives are robust and set the direction for the council to become an organisation that recognises differences and serves our entire population.

Ref.	During 2013-14 we plan to:	Outcomes we'll achieve from this action are:	High , medium or low priority	Officer responsible for achieving this action	Start Date	Finish Date	How will the work be resourced?:	Progress
	Maintain level 3 of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard.	Good environmental standards help us to meet our responsibilities under the SD Bill	H	BN	Oct 2013	Mar 2014	Existing resources	
	Agree the structure for assessment in Feb/Mar 2014.	Good environmental standards help us to meet our responsibilities under the SD Bill	H	BN	May 2013	Jul 2013	Possibility of some budget savings	
CC04/A029	Review and improve the annual service planning process in consultation with Wales Audit Office.	The service planning process is streamlined. Service plans provide good planning tools for services and are informative for Councillors and residents.	H	JA	Aug 2013	Sep 2013	No additional funding. This work will be undertaken by IDT.	

	Review service planning arrangements for 2013/14 to identify further areas for development.	Review findings inform service planning developments for the 2014/15 planning cycle.	H	JA	Aug 2013	Sep 2013	1 FTE for 2 days	
	Agree revised arrangements for 2014/15, in consultation key stakeholders including WAO and CMT.	More streamlined process incorporating key requirements for self assessment in line with LGM.	H	JA	Aug 2013	Sep 2013	1 FTE for 1 week	
	Schedule and deliver revised service planning workshops.	Service plan owners are equipped to produce informative service plans incorporating key requirements.	H	JA	Aug 2013	Dec 2013	3 FTEs for 1 month	
CC04/A030	Contribute to WG consultation on shaping requirements for the replacement of Ffynnon and	PAN Wales is a useful tool for the Council, enabling effective	H	CC	Apr 2013	Jun 2014	0.25 FTE	

	implement adequate contingency arrangements to ensure smooth transition to the new system.	performance management.						
CC04/A030	Build the revised, simplified Ffynnon framework for 2013/14.	Staff have access to performance information in Ffynnon that is easy to find and the system is prepared for migration.	H	CC	Apr 2013	Jun 2013	1 FTE for 3 weeks.	
CC04/A030	Arrange and attend Ffynnon user groups and Welsh Government PAN Wales workshops and contribute in a way which represents the interests of the Vale.	The new Ffynnon system meets our requirements in compromise with our public sector partners.	H	CC	Apr 2013	Jun 2014	1 FTE for 5 days a year.	
CC04/A030	Develop a project plan to aid the	Staff are fully prepared for the	H	CC	Jan 2014	Mar 2014	1 FTE for 5 days over 3	

	implementation of the new PAN Wales system and outline a training programme for staff.	implementation of new performance management software.					months.	
CC04/A030	Carry out day to day administration of the Ffynnon framework to ensure that it runs smoothly and is fully prepared for migration.	Staff have access to performance information in Ffynnon that is easy to find and the system is prepared for migration.	H	CC	Apr 2013	Mar 2014	1 FTE for 3 hours per week.	
CC04/A031	Roll out team plans which reflect new service planning arrangements and support managers through this process.	Team Plans are consistent with service plans.	H	JA	Apr 2013	Jul 2013	No additional funding. Additional work to be undertaken by IDT. 2 FTEs for 1 week.	New arrangements rolled out accompanied by training and additional support where requested.
	Deliver team planning workshops to team plan owners.	Team Plans are consistent with service plans. Team managers are equipped to produce quality	H	JA	Apr 2013	Jul 2013	2 FTEs for 1 week.	Completed for all directorates and team plan owners.

		plans.						
	Sample team plans and provide feedback to managers	Team plans improve in quality, year on year.	H	JA	Jul 2013	Oct 2013	Work to be undertaken by IDT. 2 FTEs for 1 week.	
	Identify areas of under performance and target improvement work at those areas.		H	SJ	Apr 2013	Mar 2014	Within existing resources	DFG action plan nearing completion. Partnerships review complete, NEETs strategy and action plan implemented.
	Advertise the council's Facebook page to build up a larger following.	Number of residents using the council's Facebook page is increased, so improving engagement and decreasing contact via more expensive channels.	H	AC	Jun 2013	Dec 2013	£200 x 2 campaigns from current communications team budget; savings to be made on Christmas opening times advertising.	June campaign completed. Number of 'likes' increased from approx 600 to almost 2,000. Campaign to be repeated in December.
	Monitor the achievement of equality	Information is gathered and publicised on	H	NH	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Within existing resources	

	improvements across service areas.	good equality practices across the Council.						
	Introduce means of gathering this information regularly and systematically	Information is gathered and publicised on good equality practices across the Council.	H	NH	Aug 2013	Mar 2014	Within existing resources	Some information has already been included in the Strategic Equality Plan and draft equality policy.
	Gather the information and analyse it.	Information is gathered and publicised on good equality practices across the Council.	H	NH	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Within existing resources	
	Review the use of the hate crime help line to establish current benchmark of use and identify barriers to reporting hate crimes.	Improved public confidence in using the help line.	H	NH	Jul 2013	Mar 2014	Within existing resources	
	Establish current usage through	Benchmark established	H	NH	Jul 2013	Aug 2013	Within existing	

	Safer Vale	against which improvements can be measured.					resources	
	Liaise with Safer Vale and Community Cohesion to identify barriers to use	Information gathered on current understanding of what barriers may be.	H	NH	Jul 2013	Sep 2013	Within existing resources	Meetings have taken place with Community Cohesion Officer. Meeting with Safer Vale to be arranged.
	Review the hate crime reporting system and incorporate the capacity to record protected characteristics (where this can be done confidentially and sensitively) so that reports can be analysed by these characteristics.	Improved understanding of where hate crime is targeted.	H	NH	Aug 2013	Oct 2013	Within existing resources	
	Develop and implement an awareness campaign to	Improved knowledge of help line and understanding of	H	NH	Nov 2013	Aug 2014	Use of Race Equality First	

	promote the hate crime help line, including guidance on what constitutes harassment and how use of advocacy services can be accommodated.	importance of reporting.						
	Provide support for the follow up of the Estyn reports.	To improve the practice in the education service so that the Vale is a top performing council in education.	H	SJ/AB	Jun 2013	Mar 2014	2 FTE x 4 weeks	Initial conversations with Chief L & Skills Officer underway.
	Prepare post inspection action plans for ACL and schools service.	To improve the practice in the education service so that the Vale is a top performing council in education.	H	SJ	Jun 2013	Sep 2013	1 FTE x 4 weeks	ACL PIAP completed.
	Resolve issues regarding the	So that officers have the		AB	May 2013	Dec 2013	1 day officer time	

	support provided to the department.	administrative support they need to work effectively and efficiently.						
	Develop a list of equalities training undertaken by all departmental staff in the past five years.	There is a comprehensive list from which gaps can be identified.	M	AB	Jun 2013	Aug 2013	3 x days FTE	
	Coordinate a forward work programme for Corporate Management Team.	To ensure that all items that require follow-up action are completed and closed down.	H	AB	Monthly		0.5 days officer time each month	
SDWG action plan	Put in place a training and awareness raising programme focusing on what is meant by SD and individual issues, for example biodiversity and energy.	Increased understanding of SD and why it is important.	H	BN	Mar 2013	Sep 2013	Officer time to amend and load an e-learning package. Promotional work.	
SDWG	Develop a	Increased	M	BN	1/10/13	31/3/14	Officer days x 2	

action plan	communication plan for the new SD legislation	understanding of SD and why it is important.						
	Review the staff travel plan and promote it to staff	Reduce carbon footprint of staff travelling to, from and for work.	H	SJ	30/6/13	30/9/13	Officer days x 15	Bid placed with SEWTA. Staff survey developed, working group and responsibilities established.

Outcome 2: The Council has a clear strategic direction which is well communicated to residents.

Objective 5: To communicate decisions in a transparent manner to local people and our staff

Context for this objective:

The communications team provides professional external and internal communications for all council directorates. It provides both a reactive and proactive public relations and media management service, with 721 press enquiries and 350 press releases issued in 2011/12.

Relationships with the local and national media are generally good. The communications team prepares daily media briefings for officers and elected members, so that they are aware of all stories involving local government issues. It also deals with crisis communications, handling press statements and providing expert media advice to all directorates.

The Council's website is a key medium for keeping local people informed. For example, on election night, the communications team provided updates throughout the night in both English and Welsh, keeping people informed immediately of election results. During periods of adverse weather, the website is updated from 6.00 am, keeping parents informed of school closures immediately as they happen.

The website and social media are continuing to develop, making the work of the council more efficient. However, the communications team will need to work more flexibly over the coming years to enable it to cope with its increasing workload.

The council supports Bro Radio, the local community radio station based at the HUB, which operates primarily with volunteers. As well as providing good media experience for young people hoping to work in the media field, the radio provides a valuable communication tool to get across key messages from the council and to promote events and activities.

The Communications team ensures that information reaches our Welsh speaking customers, through the

provision of Welsh translation service, including the Welsh language website. It provides a publications and graphic design service, which promotes good quality documents, securing a professional reputation and high brand recognition of the council's logo. It undertakes an annual publications survey, and has been able to drive up the quality of the publications issued by the council over recent years.

For staff, It provides a daily news bulletin, monthly Core Brief, intranet and 'Staffroom' e-newsletter.

Ref.	During 2013-14 we plan to:	Outcomes we'll achieve from this action are:	High , medium or low priority	Officer responsible for achieving this action	Start Date	Finish Date	How will the work be resourced?:	Progress
	Progress the implementation of the action plans developed as a result of the Staff Survey and the Public Opinion Survey.	At two way element to Core Brief will be developed that will increase levels of employee engagement by creating a link between staff and senior officers. Services will continue to be developed and refined in line	H	RJ	April 2013	Mar 2014	Within current resources	

		with customer feedback.						
	Further develop the Staffroom e-newsletter.	Staff Room to be made available to staff without council computer access, so increasing the number of staff receiving council internal communication.	M	AC	Sep 2013	Mar 2014	Within current resources	
ICSR	Improve access to internal communications for non-office based staff.	Staff who are not office based have better access to internal communications.	M	AC	Sep 2013	Mar 2014	Within current resources	
ICSR	Work with relevant managers and Unions to improve access to communications for hard-to-reach groups.	More staff from hard to reach groups have access to council internal information.	M	AC	Aug 2013	Mar 2014	Within current resources	
ICSR	Investigate why 4% of staff don't have access to Staffnet.	Access to StaffNet is improved.	M	AC	Aug 2013	Sep 3013	Within current resources	
ICSR	Review core brief	Access to Core	M	AC	Aug 2013	Sep 2013	Within	

	distribution list.	Brief is improved.					current resources	
ICSR	Update the internal communications strategy following the next staff survey.	Communications are improved in line with staff needs.	H	AC	Apr 2014	Nov 2014	Within current resources	
	Provide content management assistance to the department.	To ensure that relevant pages on the Staffnet are up-to-date.	H	AB	Monthly	Monthly		
	Provide a monthly Departmental Core Brief to the department.	To disseminate information to departmental staff so that they are informed of developments.	H	AB	Monthly	Monthly	Core brief circulated electronically	

Outcome 3: Residents feel a sense of engagement and pride in their local community.

Objective 6: To encourage people to take pride and be involved in their local community.

Context for this objective:

The communications unit uses a variety of channels to promote the county and community life. Our communications channels are also used to promote a wide variety of events.

The department provides a professional arts service to the council's directorates, local arts community, residents and professional arts organisations and individuals. The arts encompasses a wide range of activity, including the visual arts, crafts, dance, drama, music, literature, film, theatre, festivals and other events.

There are many community organisations in the Vale that foster creative talent. We provide advice and support to assist groups in developing and continuing to thrive. They include: St Donats Arts Centre; Barry Memorial Hall and Theatre; Paget Rooms, Penarth; Market Theatre, Cowbridge; the Washington Gallery, Penarth; Coed Hills Rural Art Space, St Hilary; Canonhill Arts Space, Barry; Ffotogallery at Turner House, Penarth.

Art Central gallery provides a varied monthly programme of exhibitions including local groups, individual and international artists. It is open to the community to visit, free of charge, enabling open access to the arts.

Significant Public Art opportunities throughout the Vale engage the local community in developing local, professionally designed and installed art work. Artists work with children, young people and other members of the local community to enable access to the arts.

As an audience member, participant or volunteer participation in the arts opens up new experiences for people, enabling opportunities to learn new skills, discover personal creativity and enhancing the quality of life. The development and sharing of these skills with others in their local community generates a sense of

engagement and pride, playing a key role in bringing communities together.

The arts attract tourism and visitors to the area, generating a positive economic impact on the creative industries and local businesses. Research into the craft industry in rural Wales identified over 2500 craftspeople working in Wales, twice the proportion in the rest of the UK. The arts and creative industries are important employers; one in every 40 people is earning a living from the arts economy or the work it creates.

More than three quarters of adults (76%) in Wales support the view that access to arts and culture makes Wales a better place to live (Source: Arts in Wales Survey 2005). The arts have long been associated with a positive effect on both health and wellbeing. To enable access to arts opportunities we support and promote touring arts programmes to residential homes, community centres and hospitals working with organisations such as Live Music Now! Wales, the Arts Council for Wales Night Out Theatre scheme, storytelling and other community outreach events. We encourage and support and third sector arts venues and arts organisations to engage with the community offering activities within and out side their venues.

Research has identified that singing and musical activity has a significantly positive effect on those suffering with dementia and Alzheimer's. The Chelsea and Westminster Hospital found that live music helped to diminish the levels of anxiety of patients receiving day chemotherapy; while patients exposed to visual arts and live music during the preoperative process in a day surgery unit had lower levels of anxiety and depression. (Arts Council for Wales: Arts, Health and Wellbeing Strategy).

In February 1997 the British Medical Journal reported the findings of a Swedish study of lifestyle and health. The University of Umea found that people who regularly attend cultural events live longer. They attribute this not to better health among those with higher incomes, but suggest that the arts can stimulate the immune system. (Use or Ornament, Francois Matrasso 1997.)

The Mayor is the First Citizen of the Vale of Glamorgan and a figure of authority who connects the present day with history and acts as a symbol of continuity. The Mayor's Office provides support to enable them to fulfil this role as well as act as an ambassador for the Council.

Ref.	During 2013-14 we plan to:	Outcomes we'll achieve from this action are:	High , medium or low priority	Officer responsible for achieving this action	Start Date	Finish Date	How will the work be resourced?:	Progress
	Work with the newly appointed Community Cohesion Officer to develop local engagement projects that will empower hard to reach communities in the Vale.	All communities within the Vale will through their empowerment gain the confidence to meaningfully influence the decisions that affect them.	M	RJ	Apr 2013	Mar 2014	Within existing resources	
	Develop new strategic regional Arts Connect initiatives to engage the local community and link strategically the regional communities in arts participation and attendance.	Increased participation in the arts	M	BN	Commenced	Mar 2014	£5.5m additional funding identified	
	Review Arts	Positive value of	M	BN	Sep 2013	Mar 2014	Existing	

	Connect in 2014 with a view to renewing the 'Memorandum of Understanding' for a further time scale.	collaboration identified and recognised					resources	
	Lead the Arts Connect Advance Dance training pilot initiative in creating stepping stones to enable local involvement in national dance events.	Encourage and support young dancers to increase their dance skills, adopt new dance challenges, and be better equipped to progress to National Youth Dance Wales (NYDW).	M	TH	Jun 2013	Jun 2014	Existing Resources & ACW Funding Application	Advance Dance has already auditioned and selected young dance participants from all unitary authority regions for the first year pilot scheme for dance development training to enable access to national dance development initiatives.
	Engage the community in developing new public art initiatives.	Strategically deliver public art initiatives that are embraced by the community attract tourism and create a	H	TH	Jun 2013	Dec 2014	Dependent on section 106 percent for art Regeneration funding initiatives	A number of Public Art, initiatives have been implemented and completed throughout the

		<p>sense of place. Provide high quality professional training in 'developing art in the public realm' for local government officers, Members and other interested parties.</p>					and other external funding opportunities.	<p>Vale. Currently working with Ixia – Public Art Think Tank (Birmingham) to develop a public art training conference at Art Central Nov 2013. Currently working with Arts Connect in partnership with ACW officers to devise and develop further training Initiatives art in the public realm' regionally and nationally.</p>
	Map existing Public Art sites.	<p>Detailing the Vales existing public art collection. Engaging with the wider community, promoting tourism, whilst providing an</p>	M	TH	Jul 2013	Aug 2014	Existing resources	<p>Made enquires with VOGC ICT Department regarding the practicalities of developing a map web page for public art.</p>

		opportunity for future mapping of new Public Art works.						
	Review and revise the Arts Strategy.	Effective planning for the future of arts in the Vale.	M	BN	Jun 2013	Mar 2014	£5.5K identified to fund	
	Develop the Arts Council for Wales's collector plan initiative at Art Central Gallery.	To increase sales opportunities operate an interest-free credit service supported by the ACW to assist in the purchase of contemporary art & craft at Art Central gallery.	M	TH	Jul 2013	Apr 2014	Existing resources	ACW web site to source collector plan information for suitability.
	Increase schools activity and attendance at Art Central Gallery.	Art Central gallery is a regularly used as an educational resource for schools as part of the national curriculum	M	TH	Sep 2013	Dec 2014	Existing resources	Schools and college exhibitions visits and workshop activity already taken place in the gallery with future programming and

		requirements.						development opportunities in place. Regular schools marketing implemented.
	Improve data collection for the arts.	Collate case study evidence	H	TH	Sep 2013	Apr 2015	Existing resources	
	Develop relationships with Cardiff and the Vale Health service and arts partners to develop arts and health opportunities locally and regionally.	Participation in and attendance at Arts and health activity delivered in partnership locally and regionally	H	TH	Sep 2013	Sep 2015	Additional funding ACW and Arts Connect.	Funding application already made to the ACW for an arts and health projects for a series of music and reminiscence projects run across the Arts Connect area with adults with dementia in a residential or day centre setting.
	Parade and salute in Penarth for the Royal Welsh to exercise their right to march through the County.	Civic and community pride Recognition of the service of the members of the Armed Forces	M	CA	Commenced	Nov 2013	Existing Resources	Meetings already taken place with the relevant organisations. Next meeting in September 2013

	Promote the Barry Women's Trail.	Community pride and recognition of women in the community	M	BN	Commenced	Mar 2014	Existing resources	
	Develop a Penarth Women's Trail.	Community pride and recognition of women in the community	M	BN	Jun 2013	Mar 2014	£500 for leaflets plus officer time (4 x 3 days)	
	Unveiling Ceremony of the Merchant Navy Memorial Anchor at Barry Waterfront	Community pride and recognition of the service of the Merchant Navy in the two World Wars	M	CA	Jun 2013	Sept / Oct 2013	Existing Resources	Discussions already taken place. Meeting to be arranged to agree a date and finalise arrangements
	Commonwealth Day Flag Raising	Community awareness of Commonwealth Day	M	CA	Commenced	March 2014	Existing Resources	Notification already received. Awaiting further information
	WWI Centenary Commemoration Events	Community awareness. Recognition of Armed Forces	M	CA	Sep 2013	July 2014	Existing Resources	

Outcome 3: Residents feel a sense of engagement and pride in their local community.

Objective 7: To develop the methods by which we engage our residents in decision making enabling the Council and partners to work with communities to create solutions to the problems that affect them.

Context for this objective:

The Council is constantly working to improve the methods by which we engage our communities in decision making. Effective consultation and engagement will be vital tools in helping the council meet the challenges that we will face in the future and in gaining an improved understanding of our residents' needs will allow us to rationalise the services that we provide effectively.

In addition to the increased demand for effective consultation there is currently significant pressure both internally and externally to improve the way in which we engage our residents:

- Engagement is one of the Core Values set out in the revised Corporate Plan. The plan gives a commitment that “before making significant decisions we will engage with the individuals, groups and communities who are affected by them”.
- The Council’s Cabinet has stated its intention to better engage residents and service users in decision making and improving the way in which the Council undertakes consultation projects.
- The Local Government Measure 2011 stresses the importance of engaging service users in improving services and also obliges Councils to “measure improvement from the service user’s perspective”.
- In May 2012 the Wales Audit Office published a report, ‘Public Engagement in Local Government’. The report concluded that “public engagement activity frequently lacks strategic direction and co-ordination; feedback is rarely provided to the public; and monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the public engagement are weak”.
- Engagement is becoming an issue of ever greater importance for Welsh Government and this is reflected in the guidance it issues to local authorities.

These factors provide us with an opportunity and an impetus to significantly develop the way in which we work.

Communicating with residents effectively helps to maintain the council's reputation and increases satisfaction with council services. The communications team has developed the council's Twitter account as a useful feedback tool. There are now over 4,000 followers, many of whom are delighted by explanations and answers to questions raised in 'tweets'. Because it is a two-way communication, it also allows us to follow key issues for members of the public and put forward their suggestions to service areas.

There is also a feedback service on the website, asking whether users found pages useful. Where suggestions are made, we actively implement them to make it more user-friendly and relevant.

As a corporate communications team, we actively promote ways that residents can get involved in decision-making, through consultations and events.

The Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Public Sector Equality Duty places specific duties which require listed public authorities to collect, analyse and use equality information to improve services for protected groups. Our Strategic Equalities Plan commits the council to improving communication with protected groups, so that services are more fit for purpose and meet the needs of the whole of the community.

Ref.	During 2013-14 we plan to:	Outcomes we'll achieve from this action are:	High , medium or low priority	Officer responsible for achieving this action	Start Date	Finish Date	How will the work be resourced?:	Progress
	Develop an Information and Engagement	This will provide the framework for a coherent and	H	RJ	Apr 2013	Jun 2014	Within existing resources	

	Strategy for the LSB to improve engagement with local residents. This includes: improved capacity for a sustainable business intelligence function to be available to the LSB.	coordinated approach to public engagement across LSB partner organisations						
	Develop an improved and more effective public opinion survey that allows us to gather data to inform future decisions as well as providing feedback on Council services.	An improved public opinion survey will provide the organisation with robust evidence of our residents' priorities for future service development as well as robust data to inform a wide range of performance indicators	H	RJ	Jun 2013	Sep 2013	Within existing resources	
	Develop an improved staff survey that allows	An improved staff attitude survey will provide	H	RJ	Sep 2013	Dec 2013	Within existing resources	

	us to effectively monitor levels of employee engagement.	robust employee engagement data to inform the Workforce Plan						
	Train managers to engage effectively with stakeholders.	Effective Public Engagement training will provide all managers within the organisation with a shared understanding of the rationale behind public engagement, the pressures on the Council to improve the way in which it engages stakeholders and what constitutes effective engagement	H	RJ	April 2013	June 2013	Within existing resources	Completed
	Raise staff awareness of engagement guidelines throughout the	Increased awareness of the new corporate standards for public	H	RJ	Apr 2013	Sep 2013	Within existing resources	

	Council.	engagement and the guidance that accompanies these will result in a greater understanding of how the Council should seek to engage stakeholders in its work						
	Evaluate and report on whether guidance has resulted in people with protected characteristics being more involved in decisions about services.	Effective evaluation of the impact on the new guidelines on the involvement of residents with protected characteristics will provide a measure of success	H	RJ	Jan 2014	Mar 2014	Within existing resources	
	Further increase the number of methods by which all partners can engage Vale residents in making	An increased number of methods and corporate tools will allow the Council and other	M	RJ	Apr 2013	Mar 2014	Within existing resources	

	the decisions that affect them.	partner organisations to engage a greater number of stakeholders in meaningful engagement						
	Develop guidance on involving people with protected characteristics in developing, reviewing or changing services and making decisions that affect services, including providing feedback to them on the results of their involvement.	Improved guidance will compliment the range of engagement tools on offer and allow the Council and other partner organisations to engage a greater number of stakeholders in meaningful engagement	M	RJ	Apr 2013	Sep 2013	Within existing resources	
	Produce guidance on producing accessible Council documents written in plain English so that there is a corporate approach to publishing	Staff have a better understanding of how to communicate effectively with protected groups.	M	NH	Sep 2013	Dec 2013	Within current resources	

	accessible documents.							
	Raise staff awareness of new guidance.	Staff produce accessible documents.	M	AC			Within current resources	
	Develop and implement controls to ensure only documents meeting these standards are published.	Published documents are consistently accessible.	M	NH	Jan 2013	Feb 2014	Within existing resources	
	Review documents published since the introduction of the new standards to evaluate whether there has been an improvement and take appropriate action to maintain new standards.	Assurance that documents are accessible or identification of remedial action to be taken.	M	NH	Mar 2014	Mar 2014	Within existing resources	
	Produce guidance on engaging and consulting with protected groups.	More effective engagement takes place with protected groups.	H	NH	Oct 2013	Dec 2013	Within existing resources	
	Evaluate and report on whether guidance has resulted in people	Assurance that engagement is taking place when it should	H	NH	Apr 2015	Jul 2015	Within existing resources.	

	with protected characteristics being more involved in decisions about services.	and that the needs of protected groups are being taken into account in service provision.						
	Evaluate progress on achieving equality objectives.	Identified improvements achieved. Is this above?	H	NH	Oct 2013	Dec 2013	Within existing resources	Information will be included in the second annual equality monitoring report.