

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet 8th February 2016

Report of the Leader of the Council

Vale of Glamorgan Council Annual Self-Assessment

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Cabinet with a strategic self-assessment of the Council's performance for the period 2015 -2016 that identifies strengths, achievements, key challenges and areas for improvement.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet consider and endorse the Council's Annual Self-Assessment Report including identified areas for improvement for 2016/17 onwards.
2. That Cabinet endorse the use and contents of the Self-Assessment as the basis for service planning for 2016/17.
3. That this report be referred to all Scrutiny Committees for their consideration as part of the 2016/17 service planning process.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To meet the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to undertake a self-assessment of all Council services and use this information as the basis to drive improvement.
2. To ensure the Council identifies and takes appropriate action to address its improvement priorities.
3. That relevant Scrutiny Committees confirm that the issues identified within the Self-Assessment are a fair reflection of the challenges facing both the Council as a whole and individual Service Directorates and that the information contained in the report is appropriate to inform service planning for 2016/17 onwards.

Background

2. Self-assessments form a core part of the statutory local government inspection processes in Wales. Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, the Council is required to undertake a self-evaluation of all its services and use this information to inform planning for improvement.
3. The Annual Council Reporting Framework for Social Services also requires reporting annually on progress, outcomes and plans for improvement. This builds on the Council's internal assessment of performance. Self-evaluation and reporting also forms a core element of Estyn's Common Inspection Framework and annual self-evaluation.

4. The Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment is a position statement on the Council's performance over the past year in delivering its priorities. It provides an honest and balanced account of the Council's achievements and identifies strengths, areas where further progress is required and the challenges that exist to address in the future. The information contained in the report (in particular the Directorate self-assessments contained in the annex to the report) will inform the Council's Service Plans for 2016/2017.

Relevant Issues and Options

Corporate Annual Self-Assessment

5. Historically the Council has undertaken the self-assessment of its services as part of the service planning process to inform its priorities and areas for improvement. This was primarily performance focused and undertaken on a directorate-by-directorate basis.
6. The Self-Assessment Report ([Appendix 1](#)) demonstrates a refinement in the way annual performance is assessed. The report moves away from a focus solely on service performance to one that incorporates aspects of governance, resource management and collaborative working for the council as a whole. It is intended that this provides a more balanced picture corporately of Council performance and the challenges faced to be used to inform future plans for improvement.
7. The report is based on the key themes of the Wales Audit Office's (WAO) Annual Improvement Report: Performance Management, Governance, Resource Management and Collaboration and Partnerships. The report presents the strengths and areas for improvement relative to each of these themes and draws on an internal assessment of performance data, the Council's Annual Governance Statement, Internal Audit reports, the Annual Improvement Report issued by the WAO, reports by other external regulators and service based information. It also outlines the arrangements that are in place (the processes, systems, governance and policies) to support and identify any improvements in how the Council works and delivers services. Evidence sources are provided for each theme to support the judgements made ([Appendix D](#)). A summary of the Council's key achievements to date in relation the current Corporate Plan is also provided ([Appendix C](#)).
8. The improvement areas identified throughout the self-assessment have been used to inform the development of a Corporate Improvement Action Plan ([Appendix B](#)), and work has already commenced in implementing some of these improvements, which incorporate existing areas of improvement activity.
9. A Corporate Improvement Working Group has been established to drive delivery of the action plan, with regular progress updates being reported to the Council's Corporate Management Team. It is proposed that this group (which comprises representatives from all directorates) be used to further develop the corporate approach to self-assessment and monitor progress made in relation to the Corporate Improvement Action Plan.
10. The Council's self-assessment process will continue to evolve and work is already underway to ensure it dovetails with other forms of self-assessment. This is in line with the wider Local Government agenda as proposed in the recent draft Local Government (Wales) Bill and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. In this respect, the annual self-assessment sets out key actions to improve the Council's

governance arrangements where appropriate and will be published and made available to the Council's regulators to inform their work programme.

Directorate Self-Assessments

11. [Appendix A](#) of the report contains individual self-assessments for each of the Council's Directorates. These provide an overview of performance over the past year against the 2015/16 Service Plans, which were written at a Directorate level. The self-assessments contain a brief position statement and performance overview. The self-assessments then identify the key challenges, risks and priorities for services going forward into 2016/17.
12. In previous years, the self-assessment has formed a part of Service Plan documents. In line with the proposed changes to the Council's Performance Management Framework, this year the self-assessments are being reported to all Scrutiny Committees separately in order to inform Council plans for improvement, including the 2016/17 Service Plans as well as the annual work programme of Scrutiny Committees.
13. It is recommended that this report be referred to all Scrutiny Committees for their consideration. Scrutiny Committees will be requested to consider the content of the report and to confirm that the issues identified within the self-assessment are a fair reflection of the challenges facing both the Council as a whole and individual Service Directorates as well as confirming that the information contained in the report is appropriate to inform service planning for 2016/17 onwards.
14. In 2016/17 Service Plans are being developed at Head of Service level. By doing so and by reporting the self-assessments separately, Service Plans will become more concise, focused and forward looking documents. It is intended that this approach will enhance their ability as key operational documents to further drive performance in individual service areas.
15. In line with the proposed changes to the performance management framework, the content of 2016/17 Service Plans will comprise a brief overview of the challenges facing the service against each of the corporate health perspectives (Risk, Customer Focus, Resources - workforce, finance, assets, ICT, and performance). The Service Plans will include an action plan, informed by the self-assessment. The action plan will details the actions that are to be taken by service areas to deliver the Council's priorities (as contained in the Corporate Plan) and how resources will be used to do so. These will be reported to Elected Members in March as is current practice.
16. Elected Members will be aware that proposals are being developed to make changes to the performance management framework that is used to monitor and evaluate the Council's performance and ability to secure continuous improvement. This work is being informed by existing best practice as identified by the Centre for Public Scrutiny and external regulators. These proposals will involve reporting against the proposed new Corporate Plan Well-being Outcomes through the use of Well-Being Scorecard reports and an overall Corporate Health Scorecard report. These Scorecard reports will demonstrate how individual service plan actions contribute together to achieving the Council's priorities. It is proposed that Members become involved in the development of these Scorecard reports.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

17. The Council's corporate improvement priorities have been informed by the self-assessment. These priorities have resources committed to their achievement (via the Medium Term Financial Plan and annual budget review) or the likely prospect of resources being made available in the period of the plan.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

18. None directly as a result of this report.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

19. Self-assessment is a statutory duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, along with a duty to continually improve.

Crime and Disorder Implications

20. None directly as a result of this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

21. None directly as a result of this report.

Corporate/Service Objectives

22. The self-assessment informs the Council's priorities and plans for improvement. Improving services and outcomes for residents of the Vale of Glamorgan contributes towards effective community leadership.

Policy Framework and Budget

23. Council priorities arising from the self-assessment inform the Corporate Plan and the annual Improvement Plan which form part of the Policy Framework and therefore require Executive agreement from Cabinet.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

24. The report applies to the whole authority and as such no individual ward Member consultation has been undertaken. The content of the Corporate Plan and proposals to amend the performance management framework have been the subject of consultation via Scrutiny Committees.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

25. All. Elected Members will be consulted via Scrutiny Committees.

Background Papers

Vale of Glamorgan Council Annual Self-Assessment 2015 - Appendix 1

Contact Officer

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Officers Consulted

Corporate Management Team

Responsible Officer: Rob Thomas, Managing Director