

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 31ST OCTOBER, 2016

REFERENCE FROM HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 12TH OCTOBER, 2016

QUARTER 1 (2016-17) PERFORMANCE REPORT: AN INCLUSIVE AND
SAFE VALE (DEH) –

The Director of Environment and Housing presented the report, the purpose of which was to present the performance results for Quarter 1, 1st April to 30th June, 2016 in relation to the Corporate Plan Well-being Outcome 1, “An Inclusive and Safe Vale”.

The Director advised that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 outlined seven well-being goals which Local Authorities needed to strive to achieve. Therefore, the Council had produced its Corporate Plan which contained four Well-being Outcomes and eight Well-being Objectives. This new approach required significant cross-Directorate working which meant that officers from many different service areas had responsibility for each individual Outcome and Objective.

Section 1 of the performance report related to a summary of performance and highlighted the main developments, achievements and challenges for the Quarter as a whole. The Director advised that for Well-being Outcome 1 there were 16 Corporate Plan actions of which 15 were on track to be delivered and were reporting a green RAG status. A status was not applicable to one action (IS006), as work on aligning activities associated with Families First, Flying Start, Communities First and Supporting People Programmes was scheduled to commence in Quarter 3.

An overall green RAG status had been attributed to Well-being Outcome 1, An Inclusive and Safe Vale, reflecting the positive progress made to date in making a difference to the lives of residents and customers within a highly challenging environment.

The Director advised that an overall amber performance status had been attributed to the quarterly measures reported against this Outcome. In total there were 60 performance measures of which only five were able to be reported on, with performance on or above target for three indicators, while the remaining two were missing target.

The three indicators with a Green status being:

- The number of customers who were satisfied with access to services across all channels
- The total number of subscribers to Vale Connect
- Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant

An Amber status had been assigned to the average number of days to let an empty home, while a Red status was shown for the percentage of housing stock where work that meets the WHQS had been completed.

In highlighting some of the key challenges, the Director referred to the vacant post for the Head of Housing and Building Services which was a key strategic position, particularly in relation to providing momentum on the WHQS programme and as also being lead officer on anti-poverty and financial inclusion. The Director advised that the recruitment process for a replacement was still underway.

The Director also highlighted that sickness absence was being well managed within this service area and there were no corporate risks outlined within the performance report. Tenant satisfaction rates had improved, although some concerns had been raised which would be addressed through an action plan. Some other key achievements and challenges included:

- Wi-Fi coverage at Barry Island
- Developments around the Contact Centre (C1V)
- Plans to develop the first Council homes for 17 years
- The approval of 187 new dwellings between 1st April 2016 and 30th June 2016, of which, 55 (29%) were classed as affordable

One aspect of the performance monitoring report that the Director asked the Committee to consider was in relation to the target of the performance measure around the average number of days to let an empty property. At Quarter 1, this currently stood at 39.7 which was below the original target set of 28 days, and was slightly below the 39.96 days reported within the same time period last year. A review had been undertaken of how performance of this indicator was calculated during 2015/16 and it was apparent that the method of calculation was not in accordance with the principles of Housemark. The report advised that Housemark was the leading provider of integrated data an analysis for both Registered Social Landlords and Local Authority housing providers. When collecting and recording of the Council's data on voids was undertaken using Housemark principles, it enabled the data to be benchmarked, not only in Wales, but across the United Kingdom.

When considering the principles of Housemark and the Council's current position, it was believed that the previous target of 28 days for void properties was too aspirational. It was therefore suggested that this target should be changed to 33 days for 2016/17, which was better than the Housemark median figure of 33.96. In addition, performance would also be recorded cumulatively; therefore improved performance would be needed in Quarters 2 to 4 in order to achieve the suggested new target. For information, Quarter 2 performance and voids using the Housemark principles was 32.76 days, demonstrating that the Council was heading in the right direction to achieve the suggested 33 days target for the full year. The Director also added that a lot more work could be undertaken in 33 days and so properties could be turned around to a better standard which would help maintain good relationships with new tenants.

In explaining further the rationale for the change, the Operational Manager for Public Housing Services stated that the original target had been based on a spot void figure

for March 2016, which was in the region of 30 days and so it was considered that the level of 28 days was achievable. The spot figure only accounted for voids that had been let in the month of March and did not account for void properties where works were ongoing. When reviewing progress toward the target however, it was identified that a significant number of these properties had excessive void return times which had not been accounted for. The cumulative void performance in May showed that the average void period had jumped to around 46 days, which meant that it was extremely unlikely that the Council could achieve a 28 day turnaround time. The Operational Manager for Public Housing Services highlighted that performance was improving and that there were very few refusals based on the quality of premises and that tenants were generally satisfied with the condition of their homes. It was therefore better to have sufficient time in which to refurbish properties that had been vacated and were in a poor state of repair. The Committee, having considered this performance indicator agreed that the target set should be changed to 33 days.

With regard to the commencement of works for new Council houses, the Committee was advised that no specific date had been set although the original plan was for the work to commence during the Christmas period, but it was considered that this was impractical and so the start date had been pushed back to early January.

The Chairman made reference to improvements required around the CCTV operations and was advised that this related primarily to the monitoring of the service and that some performance management issues need to be addressed. A report on the CCTV operations would be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

It was agreed that further clarification would be provided on the following areas:

- The makeup of the Working Group assessing implementation of the new Performance Management framework
- The role of 'Digital Champions'
- Action – RP/A001, the development a programme of community mapping which had been undertaken in the St. Athan Ward.
- Action – CS/A002, the mapping Services provided by Families First, Flying Start, Communities First and Supporting People

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the target set for Performance Indicator HA/M005 – The average number of days to let an empty property, be amended from 28 days to 33 days and for this to be referred to Cabinet for its approval.

(2) T H A T the performance results, the targets and remedial actions taken to address areas of underperformance be noted.

(3) T H A T a report on CCTV operations be presented to Committee at a future meeting.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) In order to amend the performance target set for the average number of days to let an empty property.
- (2) Having considered progress to date in achieving key outcomes in line with the Corporate Plan Well-being Outcome 1 – Citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan have a good quality of life and feel part of the local community.
- (3) For the Committee's consideration.