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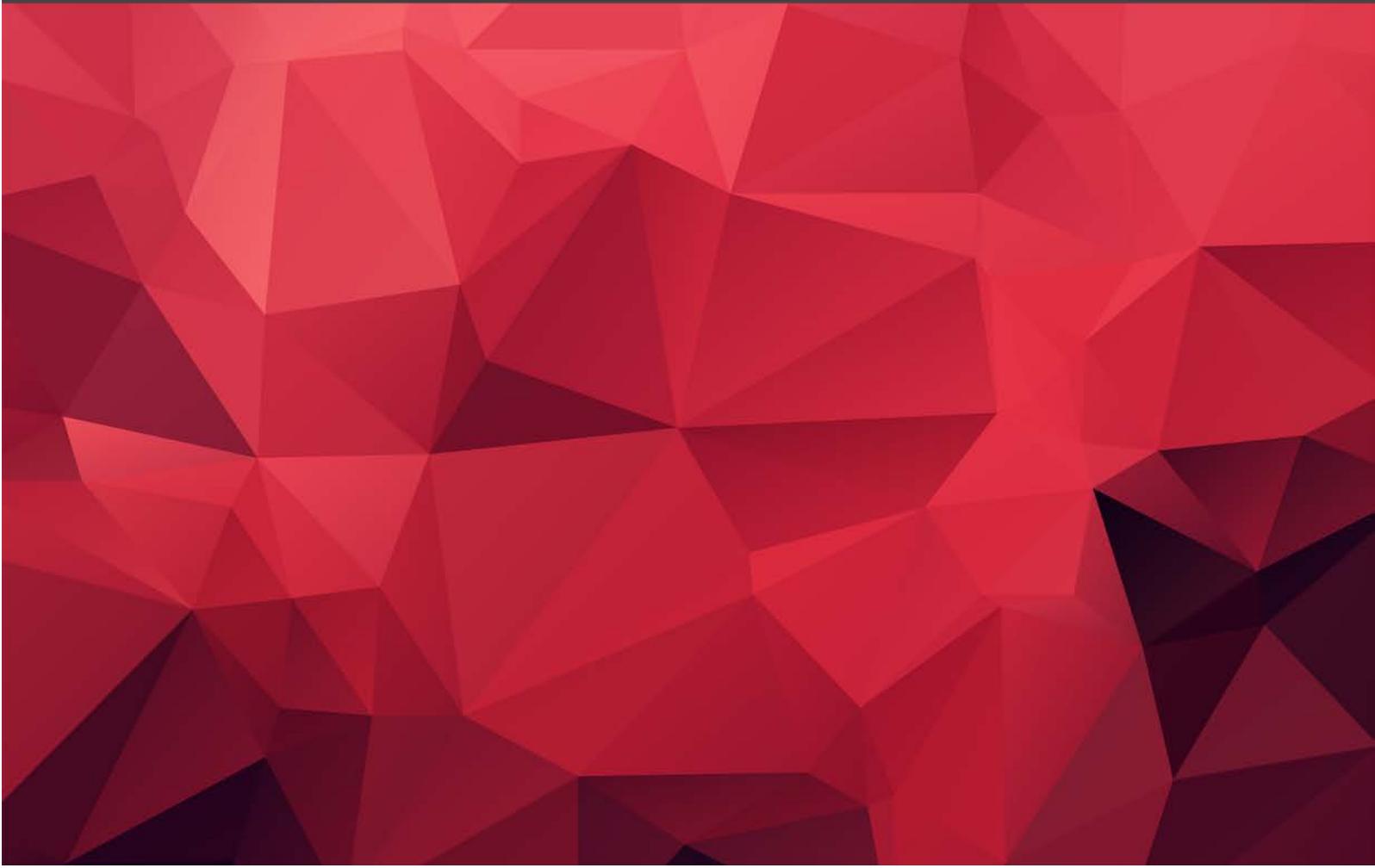
Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

Improvement Assessment 2016-17, Corporate Assessment Follow-Up – **Vale of Glamorgan Council**

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not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd
gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

The team who delivered the work comprised Ian Phillips, Tim Buckle and Steve Barry.

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Summary report

- 1 In August 2016 we published our Corporate Assessment report. Our report made the following proposals for improvement:

Performance management	
P1	Implement proposed changes to the performance management framework, continuing to engage and review arrangements, and ensure they: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• focus performance reporting on the most important areas;• make the connection between the activity undertaken across the organisation and outcomes achieved; and• provide members and senior officers with a more rounded view of performance by setting it in the context of other corporate factors.
P2	Align the target setting process with the service planning process, to ensure that targets are considered in the context of priorities and resources.
Finance	
P3	Include detailed savings monitoring reports as part of wider budget monitoring reports, and identify those proposals that relate to the Reshaping Services Programme.
ICT	
P4	Complete work in progress to establish a vision and objectives for the ICT service to enable it to plan and discharge its role as a corporate enabler.
Asset management	
P5	Accelerate the gathering of buildings compliance data for properties under the Vale of Glamorgan Council's (the Council) control, and ensure it is recorded centrally. Thereafter, accelerate premises managers/duty holders compliance training to ensure that all buildings comply with appropriate statutory, regulatory and corporate standards, and are maintained to an appropriate level.

- 2 This report examines whether the Council is making effective progress against the proposals for improvement issued in the Corporate Assessment (August 2016). We found that **the Council is strengthening its performance management arrangements and is making progress against our proposals for improvement in relation to finance and ICT; however, further work is required to fully address some of the proposals, including the proposal in relation to asset management.**

We came to this conclusion because:

- the Council has implemented proposed changes to its performance management framework and continues to refine its arrangements.
 - the Council's target setting process has been aligned with its service planning process.
 - savings monitoring reports are reported to scrutiny committees on a quarterly basis; however, there remains scope to improve the detail contained with some reports and the interpretation of RAG ratings is not transparent.
 - the Council has finalised its ICT strategy; however, it recognises that this will need to be refined upon completion of the Council's draft Digital Strategy.
 - the Council has not met its target of March 2017 for addressing the proposal for improvement in relation to asset management.
- 3 Our findings in relation to the Council's progress against each proposal for improvement are set out in **Appendix 1**. We intend to give further consideration to the matters that remain outstanding as part of our programme of audit work for 2017-18.

Appendix 1

Proposals for improvement and findings

Proposal for improvement	Follow-up findings
<p>P1 Implement proposed changes to the performance management framework, continuing to engage and review arrangements, and ensure they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus performance reporting on the most important areas; • make the connection between the activity undertaken across the organisation and outcomes achieved; and • provide members and senior officers with a more rounded view of performance by setting it in the context of other corporate factors. 	<p>Complete – the Council has implemented proposed changes to its performance management framework and continues to refine its arrangements. The revised scrutiny committee structure is becoming embedded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council has restructured its scrutiny committees so that the performance information they receive relates to one of the Council’s four overarching well-being outcomes. The outcomes are defined in the Council’s Corporate Plan 2016-2020. • performance reports received by the scrutiny committees contain performance indicators that are linked to the Council’s well-being outcomes. • the Corporate Performance and Resources Committee receives a quarterly Corporate Health report that provides members and senior officers with a more rounded view of performance. For example, it provides snapshots of performance against the four well-being outcomes and the Council’s corporate health priorities. It also includes a section in each performance report on how the Council’s use of resources impacts on its ability to deliver its well-being outcomes and objectives.

Proposal for improvement	Follow-up findings
<p>P2 Align the target setting process with the service planning process, to ensure that targets are considered in the context of priorities and resources.</p>	<p>Complete – the Council’s target setting process has been aligned with its service planning process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all scrutiny committees received target setting reports at the same time as draft service plans in March 2017. This enabled targets to be considered in the context of the Council’s priorities and available resources.
<p>P3 Include detailed savings monitoring reports as part of wider budget monitoring reports, and identify those proposals that relate to the Reshaping Services Programme.</p>	<p>In progress – savings monitoring reports are reported to scrutiny committees on a quarterly basis; however, there remains scope to improve the detail of some reports and the interpretation of RAG ratings is not transparent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quarterly savings reports are now issued to the scrutiny committees and they identify which proposals relate to the Reshaping Services Programme. • the savings reports are of variable quality. The reports to the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee contain significantly more detail than the reports submitted to other scrutiny committees. Reports to the other scrutiny committees do not always clearly explain how savings targets are being met where original savings proposals are not being implemented. They also do not identify savings proposals that have not been progressed and/or delivered intended savings. <p>For example, the savings report that went to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee on 15 February 2017 sets out a target saving of £27,000 for Transport Review and Car Mileage and a projected saving against that target of</p>

Proposal for improvement	Follow-up findings
	<p>£27,000 and a corresponding green RAG status. However, the comment against this projected saving states that this saving ‘can be accommodated within the savings from the Shared Regulatory Service, albeit not on transport savings’. This is not transparent and does not provide members with clear information on the progress in implementing identified savings proposals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the use of RAG ratings in the savings reports is not transparent. There are a number of examples where savings proposals have not delivered their intended savings targets and alternative savings have had to be identified yet RAG ratings against the saving proposals that have not been delivered are reported as ‘green’. For example, the savings report that went to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in February 2017 sets out that the Reshaping Services Tranche 1 has a target saving of £300,000 and a projected saving against that target of £300.000 and a corresponding green RAG status. However, the comment against this projected saving confirms that the savings are being made from elsewhere and not against the Reshaping Services Tranche 1 and a more accurate categorisation of the RAG status would be red with an explanation of how the saving is being made from elsewhere. • we understand that members have also asked for additional information to be included in these reports and that the Council will be working to improve this following the local elections in 2017.

Proposal for improvement	Follow-up findings
<p>P4 Complete work in progress to establish a vision and objectives for the ICT service to enable it to plan and discharge its role as a corporate enabler.</p>	<p>In progress – the Council has finalised its ICT strategy; however, it recognises that this will need to be refined upon completion of the Council’s draft Digital Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet approved the new ICT strategy on 3 April 2017 including aims and objectives; and • the Council recognises that the ICT Strategy will need to be amended once the Council’s draft Digital Strategy is finalised due to the clear links between the two strategies and areas of activity.
<p>P5 Accelerate the gathering of buildings compliance data for properties under the Council’s control, and ensure it is recorded centrally. Thereafter, accelerate premises managers/duty holders compliance training to ensure that all buildings comply with appropriate statutory, regulatory and corporate standards, and are maintained to an appropriate level.</p>	<p>The Council has not met its target of March 2017 for addressing the proposal for improvement in relation to asset management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council has informed us that it has engaged an external company to gather compliance data in relation to properties under the Council’s control where the Council does not already hold this data centrally. However, this work is not yet complete. • whilst consideration has been given to the training needs of officers in relation to buildings compliance, the Council does not yet know which officers will require training as arrangements for the ongoing monitoring of buildings compliance are yet to be determined.

Wales Audit Office

24 Cathedral Road

Cardiff CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales

Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru

24 Heol y Gadeirlan

Caerdydd CF11 9LJ

Ffôn: 029 2032 0500

Ffacs: 029 2032 0600

Ffôn testun: 029 2032 0660

E-bost: post@archwilio.cymru

Gwefan: www.archwilio.cymru