

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 10TH JUNE, 2026

REFERENCE FROM CABINET: 26TH MARCH, 2026

“C244 PEOPLE STRATEGY 2026 - 2030 (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE) –

The Leader presented the report to seek Cabinet approval for the People Strategy 2026, which set out the Council’s strategic priorities for workforce development, organisational culture, leadership, skills, recruitment, retention and employee experience.

Councillor Wilson referred to the People Strategy document attached as Appendix One to the report which illustrated the culture of the organisation as being inclusive, wanting to listen and looking to develop its staff. All Councillors could be champions of the Council and advocate Local Government as a career path.

The Leader said that support for staff was important and there were a number of staff who joined the Authority from a year out of University or on work experience who returned to the Authority later on and often worked up through the organisation through their careers, as well as those who had been encouraged to complete Masters and other Postgraduate Degrees whilst working for the Council.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the content of the People Strategy 2026 (Appendix One) be noted as the Council’s strategic framework for workforce and organisational development and the supporting Action Plan (Appendix Two) on how the strategy will be delivered.
- (2) T H A T the report be referred to Resources Scrutiny Committee for its consideration and to provide any recommendations back to Cabinet for its consideration to enable the Strategy to be finalised.
- (3) T H A T, subject to Resolution (2), and should the Scrutiny Committee have no recommendations to make, that Cabinet would consider the strategy and action plan following consultation as described in the report as endorsed and approved.
- (4) T H A T Cabinet receive an update on the progress made as part of the regular performance reports and in standalone reports as necessary.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) To inform Cabinet's consideration of the People Strategy and accompanying action plan.
- (2) To enable Cabinet to consider the consultation feedback and subsequent changes and for the Scrutiny Committee to consider the same and provide feedback to Cabinet.
- (3) To ensure the Council had a clear, forward-looking People Strategy that enabled it to attract, retain and develop a skilled, resilient and engaged workforce capable of delivering high-quality services.
- (4) To enable Cabinet to review and consider progress made against the People Strategy as stated in the Action Plan.”

Attached as Appendix – Report to Cabinet: 26th March, 2026

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 26 March 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Resources Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	People Strategy 2026 - 2030
Purpose of Report:	To seek Cabinet approval for the People Strategy 2026, which sets out the Council's strategic priorities for workforce development, organisational culture, leadership, skills, recruitment, retention and employee experience.
Report Owner:	Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources
Responsible Officer:	Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Consultation has been undertaken on the draft People Strategy and associated action plan, in consideration of Vale 2030 and the Reshaping Programme. This included consultation with our Headteachers, staff, trade unions, Vale of Glamorgan Council staff networks (Diverse, GLAM and Abl), key partners, such as Cardiff and Vale Health Board and Natural Resources Wales, wider service users and Insight Board.
Policy Framework:	This report is matter for Executive decision by the Cabinet.
Executive Summary: The revised People Strategy is a key strategic enabler, setting the vision and direction for all people related activity across the organisation. Aligning with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, it makes a clear statement about how the Council values and treats its staff and the culture it wishes to foster to deliver excellent customer service for our citizens. It also outlines how the Council will provide everyone with a supportive and nurturing working environment to achieve and support the vision of 'strong communities with a brighter future' and deliver Vale 2030.	

The People Strategy 2026-30 provides a refreshed and forward-looking framework for how the Council will support, develop and empower its workforce.

It identifies strategic priorities aligned to organisational objectives, national policy expectations and future workforce demands with our citizens at the heart of everything we do.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes the content of the People Strategy 2026 (Appendix One) as the Council's strategic framework for workforce and organisational development and the supporting action plan (Appendix Two) on how the strategy will be delivered.
2. That Cabinet refers this report to Resources Scrutiny Committee for its consideration and to provide any recommendations back to Cabinet for its consideration to enable the Strategy to be finalised.
3. That, subject to Recommendation (2), and should the Scrutiny Committee have no recommendations to make, that Cabinet would consider the strategy and action plan following consultation as described in the report as endorsed and approved.
4. That Cabinet receive an update on the progress made as part of the regular performance reports and in standalone reports as necessary.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To inform Cabinet's consideration of the People Strategy and accompanying action plan.
2. To enable Cabinet to consider the consultation feedback and subsequent changes and for the Scrutiny Committee to consider the same and provide feedback to Cabinet.
3. To ensure the Council has a clear, forward-looking People Strategy that enables it to attract, retain and develop a skilled, resilient and engaged workforce capable of delivering high-quality services.
4. To enable Cabinet to review and consider progress made against the People Strategy as stated in the Action Plan.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's current People Strategy is due for renewal with the previous strategy spanning 2023-2025, aligning to the Council's corporate planning process.
- 1.2 The 2023 – 2025 strategy delivered clear successes including:
 - Developing and embedding the foundation phase of our strategic workforce planning process
 - reduced absences rates
 - a reduced gender and ethnicity pay gap
 - a reduction vacancy gap (particularly within our social services teams)
 - a revised reward platform and wellbeing programme
 - a strong staff engagement score during the 2025 staff engagement survey.
- 1.3 Significant changes in the labour market, technological developments, service redesign, new statutory duties and the launch of the Council's corporate plan,

Vale 2030 in 2025 require an updated Strategy that reflects current and future needs.

- 1.4** Alongside those changes and the associated data, in 2024 and 2025 there was the publication of revised census and Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data, which provided the Council with significant up-to-date insight in the population of the Vale of Glamorgan. This insight has been used to develop the strategy and its associated action plan to best meet the needs of our citizens. This data and insight will be published alongside the final version of the People Strategy.
- 1.5** In 2024, the Council's Panel Peer Assessment described the Council as a 'values led' Council and the revised People Strategy places our organisational values at the heart of people related activity, informing the objectives of the strategy and guiding its actions.
- 1.6** Consultation commenced in the summer of 2025 and continued until October, to ensure as wide an audience was consulted with. This consultation included our Staff Network Groups (GLAM, Diverse, Abl), Trade Union colleagues (via monthly meetings, Joint Consultative Forum, Change Forum and terms and conditions review), Insight Board, Headteachers, Heads of Service, Staff and many of our key partners, including Public Health Wales, Cardiff and Vale Health Board and Natural Resources Wales. Feedback throughout the process was considered by our newly formed People Board, a cross section of staff representing all disciplines who will track and measure the success of the new strategy moving forward.
- 1.7** All feedback was incorporated in either the overarching People Strategy or its associated action plan.
- 1.8** All consultation feedback was provided via the Strategic Leadership Team meeting in September 2025 with a follow up session held with the Senior Leadership Team to present the final draft Strategy and action plan in February 2026.
- 1.9** This report, the People Strategy and action plan are presented to Cabinet for approval and scrutiny by Resources Scrutiny Committee.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The People Strategy is a key strategic document, setting the vision for all people related activity across the organisation and is a key part of the integrated planning framework.
- 2.2** Aligning with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, it makes a clear statement about how the Council values and treats its staff and the culture it wishes to foster. It also outlines how we will provide everyone with a supportive and nurturing working environment to achieve and support our vision of 'strong communities with a bright future.' It is deliberately written as a document for our current and future colleagues.

- 2.3** Underpinning the Strategy will be a drive to ensure our citizens are at the heart of everything we do, being the best we can be, improve our digital capability and communications with staff across all our directorates on all people matters, engaging in ongoing and meaningful dialogue with our staff, trade unions and partner organisations on how we can work together to achieve the best outcomes for all.
- 2.4** The People Strategy (Appendix One) has four over-arching themes, strongly aligned to Vale 2030 our Reshaping Programme. They make contributions across all of Vale 2030's objectives, and particularly around Being the Best Council we can be and delivery excellent customer service;
- 2.5** These themes are:

Being Future-Fit

We are committed to supporting everyone to meet the changing needs of our communities. This means giving opportunities for career development, developing the skills we will need in the future and giving opportunities to use your skills in different ways in the Council.

A great place to work

At the heart of the Vale Way is making the Vale Council a great place to work now and in the future. This reflects our commitments to diversity, inclusivity and engagement, giving you the essentials needed to be your best at work.

Making a difference

Vale 2030 shows the contribution you make to the lives of our residents, both current and future generations. We want to support you to make the impact that's needed through our work and deliver Vale 2030.

Leadership

We want to support our leadership colleagues to focus on empowering colleagues at all levels to take action and decisions, create clear pathways for future leaders to develop and thrive, and develop emotionally intelligent leaders.

- 2.6** Each of the above have a well-focused action plan (attached at Appendix Two) which are aligned to our Reshaping plan and Directorate Plans. The action plan will be tracked through the expansion of our digital dashboards and reported regularly via our People Board and Insight Board as well as providing the focus of discussion at all departmental meetings. These will be reported quarterly through our Strategic Leadership Team as part of the annual forward work programme and to Members as part of regular performance reporting.
- 2.7** Consultation on the draft People Strategy has been undertaken using a variety of different methods, from attendance at meetings (Directorate Management Teams) and consultative groups, to surveys (Staff Survey 2023 and 2025) and

wider circulation of the People Strategy Document. This includes schools, via our Headteachers group and Headteachers steering group, Equalities Consultative Forum, Heads of Service, our trade union colleagues via the Joint Consultative Forum, Change Forum and Terms and Conditions Review, Insight Board, our Staff networks (Including GLAM, Diverse and Abl). The People Strategy has also been considered by our key partners, for example Public Health Wales and Cardiff and Vale Health Board.

2.8 In drafting the People Strategy for 2026 the following have also been considered, in addition to the wider consultation process:

- Vale 2030
- Annual Self-Assessment Report
- Corporate Risk Register
- Strategic Equalities Plan
- Digital Strategy
- Our wider partnerships such as the Public Services Board, Regional Partnership Board, Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru and the Welsh Local Government Association.

2.9 It is acknowledged that the People Strategy has been developed at a time when it is clear that the years ahead will present many challenges for the organisation and also for our residents, local organisations and businesses. In developing the strategy there has been much discussion about the continued impact of the cost-of-living crisis, the need for us to continue our commitments as part of Project Zero and the need to make the organisation more resilient in response to increasing demand for services, significant financial pressures and workforce challenges. The Council is not alone in facing these challenges and recognises the need to keep embedding the Well-being of Future Generations Act in our work and that the five ways of working and our contribution to the national Well-being Goals must remain at the forefront.

2.10 The wider results of the consultation process are detailed in Appendix Three.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The People Strategy and supporting documents all align strongly to Vale 2030, particularly 'Being the best Council we can be' and will support the delivery of all of our Wellbeing Objectives, seeking to provide the foundation and direction of travel of all people related activity to provide a nurturing and supportive working environment for our staff to provide the best possible service to our citizens and the communities we serve.
- 3.2** The Strategy and supporting documents take into consideration our Reshaping Programme, Project Zero and Public Participation Strategy and aims to be an enabler for this activity.

- 3.3** The Strategy reflects on a period of significant collaborative working, firmly embedding this within the next steps the organisation will take.
- 3.4** The Strategy takes a longer-term view of the Council's workforce needs, demonstrates integration through its development and delivery, has involved many different groups and organisations in being drafted, will support preventative work across the organisation and its delivery will continue to demonstrate the importance of collaboration.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** The People Strategy includes commitments to support Project Zero, notably in the adoption of 'green' Human Resources practices and will support the delivery of the challenge plan.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** There are no additional financial implications to the development and recommendation to adopt the People Strategy. However, it should be noted that certain activity and developments that sit below the strategy, such as the skills mapping process and review of reward may have financial implications. These will be brought separately to Cabinet for recommendation and approval as appropriate and will be fully cognisant of the Council's financial circumstances.

Employment

- 5.2** The People Strategy sets out our overarching strategic approach and the direction of travel in relation to how we recruit, engage and develop our workforce.
- 5.3** It provides a foundation for the continued development of our employee culture and aims to support the development of an environment based on inclusivity, trust and mutual respect. Allowing our employees to flourish by being themselves and providing a nurturing supportive environment for our staff to develop to their full potential, be the best they can be to deliver excellent customer service to our communities and citizens.
- 5.4** The development of a People Strategy is seen as best practice, providing transparency on the approach to the delivery of People services and providing a 'lens' to our staff and potential staff on the type of organisation we seek to become.
- 5.5** A clear and transparent People Strategy and operational action plan provides the mechanism to measure and audit activity, to deliver continuous improvement and a transformative culture.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.6 There are no associated legal implications to the proposals, any legal positions on any associated supporting documents, such as reviewing of reward will be brought separately with the legal position clearly documented.
- 5.7 Work on an Equality Impact Assessment has been underway in parallel with the People Strategy and will be published alongside the final Strategy.
- 5.8 The Equality Impact Assessment identifies the need to progress the following as part of the delivery of the People Strategy:
- **Ensure fair and inclusive recruitment practices** by reviewing job design, advertising methods, and selection processes to remove barriers for under-represented groups and promote a diverse workforce.
 - **Assess access to development and progression opportunities** to confirm that all employees—regardless of protected characteristic—can participate in training, talent pathways, and leadership programmes.
 - **Evaluate workplace policies and culture** to identify any unintended disadvantage and to strengthen approaches that support dignity, psychological safety, and belonging for all staff.
 - **Evaluate workspace design** to ensure early identification of potential hazards and the provision of inclusive and safe working environments, which are accessible to all.
 - **Identify potential differential impacts of organisational change**, ensuring that restructuring, new ways of working, or digital transformation do not disproportionately affect specific groups.
 - **Embed ongoing monitoring and engagement** through employee data, staff networks, and regular consultation to ensure equality considerations remain active, evidence-based, and responsive.

6. Background Papers

None.



People Strategy

2026/30



Vale of Glamorgan Council



The People Strategy

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Foreword

Welcome to the People Strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan Council — our commitment to putting our colleagues at the heart of everything we do.

The People Strategy is our strategy for you, our colleagues - current and future – and shows how we will attract, keep and develop and support you to be the best you can be as our most important asset. The work we do within the Council and beyond, in our communities is only possible because of the people who work here and how we work together to deliver our vision of strong communities with a bright future.

Over the last five years, we've seen real progress in our Reshaping Programme to transform services and deliver better outcomes whilst supporting you, our employees as the Council embraces different ways of working.

We have developed new reward and wellbeing platforms, which have been supported and informed by feedback from you, our Occupational Health team and wellbeing champions.

Supporting Directorates where we have seen real challenges in recruitment, we have developed greater career and development pathways and are making better use of data to support all services to make more informed decisions around aspects that are important to them.

Our OD and Learning Team have broadened our training and development programme both one line and face to face, creating more learning opportunities and created a new staff induction programme, *Welcome to the Vale*. Our Learning Café has been revamped providing even greater opportunities for you to share your experiences across key themes and creating platforms to grow and learn together. Our Health, Safety and Wellbeing team have strengthened partnerships, which have seen improved working practices and safer more sustainable working environments through regular audits.

This has all taken place ,whilst transforming our own service through improved digital platforms, for which our payroll teams have received external recognition as being leaders in their field.

We can be proud of the outcomes achieved, a continued growth in employee engagement, a reduction in staff absence, improved diversity trends, a reduced gender and ethnicity pay gap and an increase in applications to those seeking to work for us.

This strategy is designed to build on this, in line with **Vale 2030** which commits us to being **clear, honest, inclusive, and community focused**. Our People Strategy is about real people, real lives, and real impact, communicated in a way that reflects who we are and what we stand for.

Looking ahead, this People Strategy will build on our strengths. It will:

- **Empower our workforce** with training, flexible development, and access to wellbeing support.
- **Embed our values**—open, ambitious, together, proud—into everything we do, supported by clearer communication and strengthened internal engagement.
- **Champion diversity and inclusion**, ensuring every voice within our council — and the communities we serve — is heard, valued, and influential in shaping our direction.
- **Align with Vale 2030 and our Well-being Objectives**, making sure our workforce is equipped to deliver outcomes that matter most: from creating great places to live, work, and visit, to being the best council we can be.

We are proud of what we've achieved together, but we also recognise the work ahead. This strategy is our roadmap . It is based on what we've learned, and is grounded in feedback from our staff, networks, trade unions, line managers and strategic partners. It's an invitation to every colleague and trusted partner to collaborate, grow, innovate, and create a working environment we can all be proud of.

Thank you to everyone who has shaped this journey so far and for your commitment to doing our very best for our communities.

Cllr. Lis Burnett, Leader of the Council

Rob Thomas, Chief Executive

The People Strategy

Our plan for the Vale, Vale 2030, shows what we want to deliver in the coming years by working in partnership to improve the wellbeing of residents in the Vale of Glamorgan. Our well-being objectives will guide the work that we need to do and are:

- Creating great places to live, work and visit
- Respecting and celebrating the environment
- Giving everyone a good start in life
- Supporting and protecting those who need us
- Being the best council we can be

To deliver on these commitments, we will need work together, think to the long-term, take preventative action, involve others and understand how our work impacts on other parts of our Council, and on our partners. The Council will also need to change how we work, and the Reshaping Programme shows how as a Council we will transform to meet the challenges we face and deliver the ambitions we have for the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Reshaping Programme has five elements which are:

- Target Operating Model – how we work as a Council, the decisions we take, how we support our people, our assets and our finances.
- Service transformation – how our services will need to change, innovate and adapt by working differently in the future to support those most vulnerable in our communities.
- Digital – how we will make the best use of digital tools, skills and technology to be efficient, effective and responsive. To work smarter whilst maintaining a person-centred approach to supporting our residents.
- Strengthening communities – how we will work with our communities on big issues, listening and involving them to empower them to shape the services we provide and the places they live, work and enjoy.
- Economic resilience – how we will invest in our area, regenerate and revitalise areas to support people's wellbeing.

To deliver the commitments we have made in Vale 2030 and the Reshaping Programme prospectus, we know that we need to support our colleagues, current and future, to continue to meet these challenges.

The Reshaping Programme has been around for over 10 years, and in that time we have achieved a great deal. We have ensured that the Council continues to be relevant in the work that it does for and with our communities and partners. We have remodelled services, developed greater community partnerships within our schools and entered into shared services which have built resilience and generated savings. We are working with partner organisations to deliver key services such as leisure centres and we are working with our communities and voluntary groups, for example with our libraries, parks, and food support. This has only been possible due to the innovation, creativity, commitment and flexibility of you, our colleagues, working to support our residents and communities in the best way possible.

The Council has a long history of investing in you. From the Big Conversation in 2015 when we met with all colleagues to set out the challenges ahead to smaller collaborative working groups with our schools, care homes, Youth Council, Trade Unions, waste crews and staff networks. We continue to invite you to be a part of the solution, to deliver on our commitments and to engage you in the way we work. This approach continues and is evidenced in strong employee engagement survey results, retention figures and reflective feedback from our trade union partners and staff networks, and we are committed to continuing this way of working.

The previous People Strategy moved us further on, building on the successes of the Staff Charter, management development programme and Learning Cafe, leading to more progressive policies, workforce planning approaches for the future and diversity networks to make sure everyone can feel comfortable coming to work here bringing the best version of themselves. By celebrating what makes each of us unique, we create a workplace where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered.

In late 2024 it was great to hear from an external panel of local government peers that they saw our council as being values led. We consistently hear from you that you are proud to work for the council.

This People Strategy is the next step on this journey. Working together, to deliver work in four areas shaped through conversations with you to support our existing colleagues and those who join us in the future.

- **Being Future Fit**

We are committed to supporting everyone to meet the changing needs of our communities. This means giving opportunities for career development, developing

the skills we will need in the future and giving opportunities to use your skills in different ways in the Council.

- **A great place to work**

At the heart of the Vale Way is making the Vale Council a great place to work now and in the future. This reflects our commitments to diversity, inclusivity and engagement, giving you the essentials needed to be your best at work.

- **Making a difference**

Vale 2030 shows the contribution you make to the lives of our residents, both current and future generations. We want to support you to make the impact that's needed through our work and deliver Vale 2030.

- **Leadership**

We want to support our leadership colleagues to focus on empowering colleagues at all levels to take action and decisions, create clear pathways for future leaders to develop and thrive, and develop emotionally intelligent leaders.

The work we will do

1. Being future fit

To ensure you are equipped to meet the evolving needs of our communities we will have a strong emphasis on career development, future-focused skills development, and talent mobility.

What we want to achieve – our outcomes:

- A capable and motivated workforce equipped to meet the evolving needs of our communities and services.
- Opportunities for career development, future-focused skills, and talent mobility and where you can grow through diverse experiences—whether through secondments, cross-departmental projects, or job shadowing opportunities.
- The development of digital, green, and relational skills, where we equip you to be prepared for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.
- Clear and flexible pathways for progression and lateral movement, enabling you to shape your career in ways that align with both your personal aspirations and our organisational priorities.
- Developing skills and ensuring you are resourced to deliver services in a changing environment in addition to working with our schools, colleges and careers service to promote opportunities within public service.
- A resilient organisation ready to respond to future challenges and opportunities, considering changes to the political landscape and changing population, where it may have an impact on you.

What we'll do:

- Align workforce development with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Social Care Wales frameworks.**
- Invest in digital, data literacy, change management and transformation skills.**
- Strengthen workforce planning** to anticipate future needs and succession, making use of a range of internal and external data and insight.
- Support frontline teams with training and resources** to deliver excellent resident experiences, including service delivery and resident engagement at an early stage.
- Provide accessible career pathways** for those most vulnerable within our communities and work with our partners to develop broader opportunities across the sector.
- Align HR support with infrastructure improvements** (e.g., accessibility, customer service).

The difference this will make:

- **Stronger community services:** By equipping you, our colleagues, with skills for the future, the Council can deliver **modern, responsive services** with residents at the heart of our decision making that meet community needs and reflect the Brilliant Basics.
- **Greater understanding of public service career opportunities:** Working in partnership with our schools, partners and wider educational establishments to consider careers within public service and create greater opportunities to ‘grow our own’ across the Vale.
- **Improved workforce resilience:** Career development and talent mobility reduce dependency on external recruitment, ensuring **continuity and stability** in critical roles and creativity, innovation and confidence across the Council for you to develop new ideas and question the status quo. This supports long-term planning and the ability for the Council to adapt to future challenges, whatever they may be.
- **Enhanced employee engagement & retention:** When you, our colleagues, see clear growth opportunities, engagement rises. This leads to **better performance, innovation, and reduced turnover**, saving costs and improving service quality and the delivery of better services to our residents. We will listen to feedback and create more accessible platforms for you to share ideas and shape our future.
- **Future-ready skills for emerging challenges:** Investing in digital, leadership, and sustainability skills ensures the workforce can **anticipate and respond to future demands**.
- **Inclusive growth & social value:** Talent mobility and development programmes create **fair access to opportunities**, supporting and increasing diversity and inclusion across all levels of the Council.

2. A great place to work

At the heart of our People Strategy is a commitment to cultivating a purpose-driven culture and creating a great place to work now and in the future. This reflects our Reshaping programme and our willingness and desire to be at the forefront of values-based leadership through engagement and commitment to initiatives such as the County of Sanctuary. Alongside and as part of this values-based approach, we will continue to involve, engage and act on feedback from our colleagues.

What we want to achieve – our outcomes:

- A workforce that reflects the diversity of our local communities at all levels and provides local employment and career development opportunities that are accessible to all and contribute to the economic success and vibrancy of the area.
- An organisation with dynamic and supportive working environments.
- A resident focused organisation where our residents are and feel listened to.
- You are empowered to actively make improvements, be open to change and new ideas where a learning culture is embedded across the organisation.
- A cohesive culture, underpinned by our Brilliant Basics and Customer Service Charter which embed our shared values and behaviours that reflect our dedication to public service.
- Strong internal connections to foster collaboration across our schools and directorates—creating a more connected, inspired, and informed workforce.
- Digital platforms are used to share stories, celebrate your achievements, and promote wellbeing.
- Talent is retained and you see us as an employer of choice, with morale boosted, and a culture of pride and purpose exists across teams.
- The further promotion of the Welsh Language in the workplace.
- As a County of Sanctuary, the Vale will be a welcoming place for everyone regardless of your background.
- Every individual across the Council feels seen, valued, and supported, echoing our commitment to our understanding of how individuals' characteristics affect their experience of both living in the Vale and working for us as a Council.
- Delivery of vibrant, diverse and inclusive working environments for you to deliver your best to our communities.
- Prioritising the development of an actively anti-racist Council, with a particular focus on training and supporting you in front-facing customer service roles, aligning to the ADSS Cymru Eliminating Racism in the Workplace Report and the Welsh Government All Wales Anti-Racism Action Plan.

- A culture of innovation and continuous improvement, empowering you as trusted colleagues and leaders to adapt to challenges and deliver high-quality services in a timely manner with our residents at the heart of our decision making.

What we'll do:

- i. **Embed the Council's values** of ambitious, open, together and proud and deliver a culture plan that translates these values into action.
- ii. **Deliver a consistent and high-quality employee journey** from onboarding to exit that embed EDI principles throughout.
- iii. **Foster safe and inclusive workplaces** that are accessible and welcoming to all.
- iv. Support continuous **professional development and career pathways**.
- v. **Promote agile working** and cross-functional collaboration.
- vi. **Recognise and celebrate your achievements** aligned with our values.
- vii. **Use feedback mechanisms to continuously improve your experience** of working with us and continue to actively involve, engage and communicate with you in a variety of ways which aim to meet your needs.
- viii. **Support you to be well in work** and proactively manage any absence with compassion.
- ix. **Ensure representation and voice for all protected groups**, including those most vulnerable within our communities, and support the Council's diversity networks.
- x. **Deliver training and awareness programmes** to challenge bias and promote equity as well as continuing to support our staff to further develop their conversational Welsh.

The difference this will make:

- **Inclusion and belonging:** You'll feel respected and valued for who you are, in a workplace where diversity is celebrated.
- **Employee voice and engagement:** We are committed to listening to your voice, your ideas and feedback will help shape decisions and drive positive change. You will be able to clearly track your feedback through platforms such as the Employee Engagement Survey and the difference they make.
- **Wellbeing and safety:** Your health, safety, and wellbeing will always be a priority. Our policies and procedures across the Council will be developed in partnership with our networks and trade unions. We will look to continually improve the working environment and develop a strong safety culture. Establishing a working environment you will be proud of.
- **Growth and development:** You'll have opportunities to learn, grow, and progress in your career.
- **Purpose-driven culture:** Your work will have meaning and contribute to making a real difference in our community.

- **Future-ready workforce:** You'll be supported to adapt and thrive as we embrace change and innovation.

3. Making a difference

Vale 2030 emphasises the contribution you make to the lives of our residents, both current and future generations. Our People Strategy will progress this work, enabling you to work across our schools and Directorates and with partners to make a difference through the work we do.

What we want to achieve – our outcomes:

- A purpose-driven culture where you understand how your role is clearly connected to the Council's Vale 2030 plan and the difference it makes.
- We individually and collectively value the contribution we make across all our professions and the contribution the wider Council can make across our communities.
- Opportunities for all of us to contribute to the Council's missions of tackling the climate and nature emergencies, inequalities and poverty.
- You will be working collaboratively with residents, businesses, and third-sector organisations to co-create vibrant and resilient communities.
- To measure our impact meaningfully, we will look beyond efficiency to assess the real difference we make in people's lives through the creation of more purposeful social impact metrics.

What we'll do:

- Support colleagues to use the Brilliant Basics in everything they do**, to contribute to improved service delivery, place residents at the heart of our decision making and being the best council we can be.
- Promote school and cross-service collaboration** to enhance community impact and effective use of resources.
- Support colleagues to listen, involve and engage residents and partners** in the Council's work.
- Promote green HR practices:** digital-first, low-carbon commuting, and sustainable workspaces.
- Support community volunteering and employee-led social impact initiatives.**
- Promote and communicate the impact of our work** to colleagues, residents and partners.

The difference this will make:

- **Making a difference for our communities:** Your work improves lives today and shapes a better future for generations to come.

- **Collaboration across the Council and beyond:** You'll work closely with colleagues in schools, directorates, and partner organisations, including our trade union colleagues to achieve shared goals.
- **Empowering people to deliver excellence:** You'll have the tools, support, and confidence to make a real impact through your role.
- **Driving innovation and reshaping services:** You'll be part of a forward-thinking organisation that embraces change and new ideas.

4. Leadership

We want to focus on cultivating emotionally intelligent leaders, empowering you at all levels, and creating clear pathways for future talent.

What we want to achieve – our outcomes:

- Value-driven, inclusive, and responsive leadership at all levels across the organisation.
- Leaders who role model value driven behaviours that align to our core values of being Ambitious, Open, Together and Proud.
- Emotionally intelligent leaders who empower colleagues at all levels to deliver the very best public services.
- Leadership that is compassionate, distributed, and future-ready—ensuring our workforce is equipped to lead change, inspire innovation, and serve our communities with integrity.

What we'll do:

- Embed the Council's core values (Ambitious, Open, Together, Proud)** into all leadership expectations, development pathways, and performance conversations, aligned to our competency framework and the compassionate leader model.
- Introduce a leadership framework, aligned to our competency framework** that sets out clear expectations for values-driven, compassionate, and distributed leadership at every level.
- Strengthen leadership accountability** by incorporating behavioural expectations and emotional intelligence competencies into appraisal and 1:1 process.
- Provide targeted leadership development for emerging, new, and experienced leaders**, ensuring everyone has the support they need to lead confidently and consistently. Utilising existing offers run through existing and future key partners.
- Create clear pathways for future talent**, including structured development programmes, talent pools, mentoring, coaching, and stretch opportunities.
- Promote a culture of empowerment**, enabling leaders to delegate effectively, trust their teams, and create space for innovation and ownership. Encourage open, transparent conversations. Being present, respectful of process but understanding individual needs.
- Offer regular reflective practice opportunities** (peer learning sets, leadership circles, and coaching) to build confidence, emotional maturity, and shared learning.

- viii. **Equip leaders with change leadership skills**, ensuring they can communicate clearly, support colleagues through uncertainty, and lead transformation with empathy.
- ix. **Celebrate leadership that aligns with our values**, reinforcing positive behaviours through recognition and storytelling across the organisation.

The difference this will make:

- **Emotionally intelligent leadership:** Leaders who understand and support colleagues to share emotions create trust, reduce conflict, and build stronger, more supportive teams.
- **Empowering staff at all levels:** Everyone feels confident to take initiative, contribute ideas, and make decisions—leading to greater innovation and engagement.
- **Clear pathways for future talent:** Colleagues see real opportunities for growth and progression, helping us attract and retain the best people.
- **Inclusive leadership culture:** Leaders model respect and inclusion, ensuring every voice is heard and valued. Supporting allyship and championing diversity
- **Accountability and transparency:** Clear expectations and open communication build trust and drive performance.

Delivering our priorities and monitoring progress

In this Strategy we have set out the outcomes and things we want to work to achieve. The Council's People Board will oversee the delivery of the actions contained in this strategy and its associated action plan. Chaired by the Head of HR and Organisational Development, the People Board is part of the Reshaping Programme's governance arrangements and brings together colleagues from across the organisation on a monthly basis to discuss, develop and monitor people-based activity that supports the transformation programme. It is a part of the Target Operating Model theme of Reshaping which focuses on how the organisation as a whole will need to change and operate in the future. We will publish information on our progress through our regular performance reports, as well as in dedicated reports to the Council's Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.

This information will form an important part of our annual self-assessment work and show the contribution our people make to delivering the Council's vision of strong communities with a bright future.

Glossary

Term	Plain English Meaning
ADSS Cymru Eliminating Racism Report	Guidance for tackling racism in the workplace.
Agile working	Flexible working arrangements in how, when or where people work.
All Wales Anti-Racism Action Plan	National plan from Welsh Government to tackle racism.
Appraisal / 1:1s	Regular performance and development discussions between staff and managers.
Brilliant Basics	The Council's core standards for high-quality everyday service delivery.
Cabinet	The Council's executive decision-making group of elected members.
Change leadership	Leading people through change in a clear, supportive and empathetic way.
Competency framework	A defined set of skills and behaviours expected across roles.
Conversational Welsh	Everyday Welsh language used in typical workplace interactions.
County of Sanctuary	A commitment to being welcoming and inclusive to all, including those seeking sanctuary.
Cross-functional collaboration	Teams from different areas working together on shared goals.
Customer Service Charter	Commitments on how the Council will treat customers and respond to them.
Digital-first	Using digital tools and processes as the default option where suitable.
Directorate	A large division of the Council responsible for a group of services.

Distributed leadership	Leadership shared across levels rather than concentrated at the top.
EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion)	Practices that ensure fairness, belonging and equal access for all.
Emotional intelligence (EI)	The ability to understand and manage your own and others' emotions.
Employee Engagement Survey	Council-wide survey gathering feedback from staff.
Frontline teams	Staff who work directly with residents or customers.
Green HR	Environmentally sustainable HR practices (digital-first, low-carbon commuting).
Job shadowing	Learning by observing someone else's role.
Lateral movement	Moving sideways into a different role at the same level to build experience.
Learning Café	An internal forum where staff share experiences and learn together.
Occupational Health	A specialist service that supports employees' health at work.
Onboarding	The structured process of supporting new starters to settle into their role.
Organisational Development (OD)	Activity that helps an organisation improve how it works—structures, culture, skills.
Peer learning sets / leadership circles	Small reflective groups where colleagues support each other's learning.
Protected groups	Groups legally protected from discrimination under the Equality Act.
Relational skills	Skills that help build trust, empathy, communication and strong relationships.

Reshaping Programme	A Council-wide change programme to transform how services are designed, managed and delivered.
Resident engagement	Listening to and involving residents in shaping services.
Scrutiny Committees	Councillor committees that review decisions and performance.
Secondment	A temporary move to another role for development or organisational need.
Self-assessment	The Council's formal process for reviewing its performance.
Shared services	Services delivered jointly with partner organisations to improve resilience or save costs.
Social Care Wales frameworks	National learning and professional standards for social care roles.
Solace	UK-wide network for senior public sector and local government leaders.
Staff Charter	A statement of mutual expectations between the Council and staff.
Succession planning	Preparing people to move into critical future roles.
Talent mobility	Helping people move between roles, teams or projects to develop skills.
Target Operating Model (TOM)	A blueprint for how the Council intends to work—its decision-making, people, assets and finances.
Third sector	Voluntary and not-for-profit organisations and charities.
Vale 2030	The Council's long-term plan showing what it aims to deliver for residents by 2030.

Welcome to the Vale (Induction)	The Council's structured programme for new starters.
Wellbeing champions	Staff volunteers who help promote wellbeing in the workplace.
Well-being of Future Generations Act	Welsh law requiring long-term and sustainable decision-making.
WIMD	Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation—official measure of deprivation in Wales.
Workforce planning	Activity to forecast future staffing needs and succession plans.

Appendix Two – Action Plan

Area 1: Being Future-Fit

- i. **Align workforce development with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, Education, and Social Care Wales frameworks and other professional requirements.**

Actions:

1. Embed the five ways of working (long-term, prevention, integration, collaboration, involvement) into all workforce development plans, ensuring training and policies reflect the Act.
 2. Conduct a skills mapping exercise for key roles across schools and the Council, and achieve 90% compliance over the 5 years.
 3. Map current learning programmes against Social Care Wales's capability frameworks to identify gaps and create targeted development pathways.
 4. Conduct regular skills audits and gap analysis.
-

- ii. **Invest in digital, data literacy, change management and transformation skills.**

Actions:

1. Introduce a digital and data literacy curriculum for all staff, scaled by role (baseline, intermediate, advanced), that is accessible for all.
 2. Develop a change leadership programme for managers to build capability in transformation, behavioural change, and agile ways of working.
 3. Promote the Reshaping agenda and prospectus to increase knowledge, involvement and impact.
-

- iii. **Strengthen workforce planning to anticipate future needs and succession, making use of a range of internal and external data and insight.**

Actions:

1. Enhance our current workforce planning using predictive analytics (retirement profiles, turnover trends, market insight, demand forecasting).

2. Create a formal succession planning framework for critical roles, including talent pipelines, mentoring, and targeted development plans.
-

iv. Support frontline teams with training and resources to deliver excellent experiences, including service delivery and resident engagement at an early stage.

Actions:

1. Deliver a frontline customer experience programme focusing on communication, trauma-informed practice, and early engagement with residents.
 2. Provide simple toolkits and digital resources to empower teams to gather resident insight early, resolve issues quickly, and improve accessibility.
-

v. Provide accessible career pathways for those most vulnerable within our communities and work with our partners to develop broader opportunities across the sector.

Actions:

1. Expand entry-level and supported employment programmes (for example, pre-employment support, mentoring, guaranteed interview schemes).
 2. Collaborate with regional partners, FE colleges, and the third social enterprise sector to create shared apprenticeship routes and community-based learning opportunities.
-

vi. Align HR support with infrastructure improvements (for example, accessibility, customer service).

Actions:

1. Build HR involvement into early planning for infrastructure initiatives so workforce implications (skills, culture, staffing, accessibility) are addressed at the design stage.
2. Provide targeted HR support — including training, change support, and workforce redesign — when services transition to new digital or physical spaces.

Area 2: A Great Place to Work

- i. **Embed the Council's values of ambitious, open, together and proud (and deliver a culture plan) that translate these values into action, in everything that we do.**

Actions:

1. Each Directorate to commit to the agreed Engagement Plan following the 2025 staff survey results and compile deliverable actions and outcomes to be championed within the directorate and evaluated quarterly by the People Board with a report on progress presented to SLT and Insight and communicated to Employees.
 2. Improve our engagement with all our employees who do not have access to Staffnet.
 3. Consider approaches to wider engagement with Schools to encourage participation in the survey, track successes and survey participation.
-

- ii. **Deliver a consistent and high-quality employee journey from onboarding to exit that embed EDI principles throughout.**

Actions:

1. Standardise the employee lifecycle (pre-boarding → onboarding → probation → development → internal mobility → exit) with inclusive templates, checklists and touchpoints for use by line managers.
 2. Implement inclusivity checkpoints (language, accessibility, reasonable adjustments, data capture) at each stage, with monitoring and feedback.
 3. Use data to inform decisions relating to recruitment to ensure our organisation is representative of the Vale communities we serve and that we champion those communities
-

- iii. **Foster safe and inclusive workplaces that are accessible and welcoming to all.**

Actions:

1. Introduce **psychological safety practices** and behaviours (team charters, inclusive meetings, speak-up protocols) and develop managers to model them.
2. Consider the completion of **annual accessibility audits** (physical, digital, and policy) and track improvements via a transparent action log. Ensuring all our staff benefit from safe and inclusive workspaces.

3. Use simple English/language in all our communication with employees and stakeholders
 4. Recognise (in a hybrid world) the value of in person contacts and interaction.
-

iv. Support continuous professional development and career pathways.

Actions:

1. Publish career maps and competency frameworks for key job families with learning pathways (foundation → intermediate → advanced).
 2. Expand development offers: mentoring, shadowing, secondments, and accredited programmes with clear access criteria.
 3. Communicate and promote the scale and scope of what you can achieve in public service.
-

v. Promote agile working and cross-functional collaboration.

Actions:

1. Support the teams to adopt team-based agile working charters (outcomes-first, availability norms, collaboration tools, service coverage) and review regularly.
 2. Create cross-functional project squads for priority programmes, with time-bounded goals and shared accountability. Broaden involvement to include a wider representation of staff and invite interest for self-development.
-

vi. Recognise and celebrate your achievements aligned with our values.

Actions:

1. Launch, maintain and promote a peer-to-peer recognition platform tagged to the four values, with monthly spotlights.
 2. Align future formal awards recognition to values-led behaviour and measurable impact on residents.
 3. Use regular messages to demonstrate the value of our services and colleagues.
-

vii. We will ensure your experience with us is positive and will seek to improve where possible

Actions:

1. Demonstrate the value and importance of listening through quarterly pulse surveys, sentiment analysis, focus groups, and “you said—we did” updates.
 2. Implement an internal communication channel to encourage interaction between directorates and the sharing of stories in a more informal way.
-

viii. Support you to be well in work,

Actions:

1. Roll out a **Wellbeing Support Model** (prevention, early help, occupational health access, adjustments) with manager guidance and signposting.
 2. Apply a **compassionate absence approach through a revised Attendance Management Policy**: early contact, supportive return-to-work plans, and data-led hotspot reviews. Exercise discretion, understand each case is different.
-

ix. Ensure representation and voice for all protected groups, including those most vulnerable within our communities, and support the Council’s diversity networks.

Actions:

1. Broaden the reach of our diversity networks supplemented with a small annual budget to encourage autonomy.
 2. Use data (recruitment, progression, retention) and publish progress transparently for use in DMTs and track trend analysis and progress via the People Board.
-

x. Deliver training and awareness programmes to challenge bias and promote equity as well as continuing to support our staff to further develop their conversational Welsh.

Actions:

1. Provide tiered EDI learning: foundational anti-bias for all, inclusive leadership for managers, and role-specific modules for HR/recruiters.
2. Expand Welsh language development: conversational Welsh sessions (Beginner–Intermediate), micro-learning in meetings, and incentives to practise.

Area 3: Making a Difference

- i. **Support colleagues to think ‘Brilliant Basics’ first, to contribute to improve service delivery, place residents at the heart of our decision making and being the best council we can be.**

Actions:

1. Embed the *Brilliant Basics* into service planning, 1:1 and performance management conversations, and team meetings with simple prompts and examples of what “good” looks like.
 2. Create short, practical learning modules and micro-toolkits showing how to apply the Brilliant Basics to real scenarios (calls, emails, letters, resident visits, case management).
 3. Roll out the Customer Service Charter, celebrate excellence and customer compliments.
-

- ii. **Promote school and cross-service collaboration to enhance community impact and effective use of resources.**

Actions:

1. Establish cross-service and school collaboration forums with shared priorities, clear deliverables and a remit for change (attendance, wellbeing, safeguarding, community support). Lead by members of the Strategic Leadership Team.
 2. Create joint development sessions that bring schools and council services together to share insight, good practice and pooled resources, that lead to demonstrable improvements.
 3. Share good practice and learning outcomes.
-

- iii. **Support colleagues to listen, involve and engage residents and partners in the Council’s work.**

Actions:

1. Provide training and tools on inclusive engagement methods, early involvement, accessible communication and co-production approaches.

2. Build a central repository of resident insight, engagement outcomes, and community intelligence that teams can draw on when shaping decisions.
 3. Create systems to maximise our work with other Councils and regional partners, for example learning outcomes and best practice
 4. Increase knowledge of our participation strategy, allowing channels for feedback.
-

iv. Empower colleagues to be planet friendly and sustainable. Promote green HR practices: digital-first, low-carbon commuting, and sustainable workspaces.

Actions:

1. Shift HR processes (recruitment, onboarding, learning, case management) fully to digital-first formats, with reduced printing and paper use. Increasing data and efficiency.
 2. Support green commuting options through incentives, pool bikes, charging points, and guidance for managers on enabling low-carbon working patterns.
-

v. Support community volunteering and employee-led social impact initiatives.

Actions:

1. Promote the structured volunteering policy offering paid volunteering time and support for team-based community projects.
 2. Highlight and share employee-led initiatives through internal communications to encourage participation and build a culture of social impact.
-

vi. Promote and communicate the impact of our work to colleagues, residents and partners.

Actions:

1. Develop a consistent storytelling approach that showcases outcomes, improvements and lived experience through case studies, data and resident voices.
2. Provide managers and teams with communication toolkits to help them highlight progress and successes across services in accessible and engaging ways.

Area 4: Leadership

- i. Embed the Council's core values into leadership expectations, development pathways, and performance conversations**

Actions:

1. Develop value-based reflection prompts and conversation guides for managers to use in 1:1s and performance appraisals to ensure values are explicitly discussed and evidenced.
 2. Integrate values-driven scenarios into leadership recruitment, assessment centres, and onboarding to reinforce expectations from the outset. Provide a framework for all line managers to adopt during the recruitment process to create a person-centred approach to recruitment.
-

ii. Introduce a leadership framework aligned to the competency framework

Actions:

1. Create role-specific leadership "profiles" that translate the high-level framework into clear and practical behaviours for frontline, operational, and strategic leaders.
 2. Embed the competency framework within 1:1's so leaders can identify strengths and development priorities against the framework. Modelled on the compassionate leader framework, reflecting on the Staff survey 2025 creating an environment where staff feel safe, valued, respected and willing to speak up.
-

iii. Strengthen leadership accountability

Actions:

1. Build behavioural and emotional intelligence indicators into performance framework documentation and require leaders to provide real examples demonstrating these behaviours.
 2. Introduce a light-touch quarterly "leadership behaviour check-in" to help managers track progress and address issues early.
-

iv. Provide targeted leadership development for emerging, new, and experienced leaders

Actions:

1. Establish modular learning pathways where leaders can select relevant sessions based on their experience and needs (for example, “new to managing” toolkit, advanced coaching skills).
 2. Create an annual leadership development calendar, clearly publicising offers from SOLACE, New Local, Infuse and other partners, aligned to organisational priorities which allows broad access for employees to register their interest.
-

v. Create clear pathways for future talent

Actions:

1. Launch a transparent nomination and assessment process for talent pools to ensure fairness and diversity in future leadership development.
 2. Develop a digital “talent passport” for individuals to record learning, placements, and achievements across their development journey, aligned to the new Thinki system
-

vi. Promote a culture of empowerment

Actions:

1. Provide managers with practical tools and templates for delegation, decision-making permissions, and boundary-setting to build trust and autonomy.
 2. Revise policies and processes to provide greater line manager flexibility.
 3. Introduce regular “voice and ideas” sessions within teams to encourage staff-led improvements, experimentation and shared ownership. Consider engagement actions, aligned to the staff survey to support upward feedback.
-

vii. Offer regular reflective practice opportunities

Actions:

1. Train internal facilitators to lead reflective practice groups to ensure consistency, quality, and sustainability of approaches.
2. Embed reflective questions and wellbeing prompts into team meetings or project debriefs to normalise continuous learning.

viii. Equip leaders with change leadership skills**Actions:**

1. Develop a change-leadership toolkit including templates for communication plans, impact assessments, and colleague support strategies.
2. Run scenario-based workshops where leaders practice responding to uncertainty, staff concerns and complex change situations.

ix. Celebrate leadership that aligns with our values**Actions:**

1. Introduce a quarterly “Leading the Vale” spotlight, showcasing leaders who embody our values through stories, case studies, or interviews.
2. Build value-based leadership recognition into existing awards programmes, ensuring behavioural impact is visible and celebrated.

Appendix Three - Consultation Feedback

	How/Who	Dates	Feedback
SLT	In Person	9 th September	Themes agreed in broad principle, no significant changes. Leadership Development – challenging, need to engage with our middle managers further and providing feedback loops for involvement in strategic based decisions. Leadership accountability is a challenge in engaging staff. Challenging/stretching but relevant, aligns to Vale 2030 and relatable for our staff. Next step in progression from previous strategy.
DMTs	Learning and Skills Finance, Audit, Property Legal and Democratic Digital HR and OD Social Services Planning Housing and Environment	16th September & 14th October 21st October 25th November TBC 9th September & 7th October 9th October 16th October 15th September *	Challenge over capacity to deliver, however aims and themes are relevant and feels the right way forward. Length is considered, not too long and therefore more likely to read. Could we include accessible formats, easy read etc. Workforce data – this section only currently talks about cost of staff and no other elements on the data held about staff. Might it be useful to understand the Council's minimum/living wage status, gender pay gap (if any), workforce aging, corporate memory being lost (succession is mentioned on page 8). A great place to work – is this where a low carbon future could be referenced? Facilities that we provide? There's lots of references to digital, but not much at all on property – there's a slight reference in Making a difference though. Making a difference – be good to have Project Zero referenced here too. There's no reference to WFH/office time so not sure if there is another overarching policy that this would be

Appendix Three - Consultation Feedback

placed within? Something around staff wellbeing by “in person” presence at offices as an example (is that being developed in a more detailed policy to support managers)?

Final feedback relates to what the strategy hopes to achieve; it’s very high level (assume that it was intended as such) and does not set out any detail as to how any of the proposed actions will be actually implemented and measured so assume that will be developed outside of the strategy via Board reporting that is mentioned?

Can consideration be given to how we engage with our front-line waste teams, to make the strategy real for them, we have never managed to do this in the past

I really like the framing of this at the start, and it feels like a really easy sell to my teams in terms of the “why”, although the bit I think I would struggle with in getting teams to be aware of and consider is the vision, as it’s quite long; I wonder if the strong communities bit needs to be there as “delivering public value and being the best council we can be” would be a good hook for staff in terms of where we want to be from a people perspective.

Leadership

- I wonder if it is worth moving this to lower in the section, or even last, as whilst this is absolutely critical, there’s a chance people in the wider organisation who maybe aren’t leaders reading this may see this as the first detailed section and then thinking “this isn’t for me”.
- On the empowering at all levels bit, is there something around taking well managed risks too? I think we can sometimes get so wrapped up in

Appendix Three - Consultation Feedback

decision making processes, it blunts peoples risk appetite where it is within their influence to change, so would welcome emphasising that as that has been one of the biggest battles and changes with Dem Services for example.

- Is it worth maybe also explicitly linking to the 21st century public servant language in this one if we are seeking to embed this within the Council (following the Chief Officer and Management Development Session).

Workforce for the Future

- Really welcome the flexible pathways inclusion and around job shadowing, as my biggest gripe since joining public sector from private is the lack of opportunity to shadow others in positions and skills aligned with your PDPs, as without that over a decade ago, my pathway would've been v different. I'd be interested to know how this would work here in practice.
- Probably more of a general point on this one, but I imagine there may be challenge back re training, as I've inherited a budget that has very little space for training based on year on year savings, and whilst I'm encouraging people to do it and spending where needed, I think there probably needs to be a culture shift during the budget process and also amongst teams, as when I started it was very much "we don't ask for training as we know no budget".

A great place to work

- Really welcome the internal connections bit, particularly as someone relatively new as building

Appendix Three - Consultation Feedback

a network can be a challenge, but is there something in this one in terms of building of communities of practice/networks to share knowledge and skills? I'm very conscious there are some good ones already such as Learning Café, Participation Network etc but we work in a world where if it isn't visible, you may not know about it, and another area may be trying to address a challenge you may have already tackled, and there is an opportunity to share learning etc rather than duplicating effort. For example, we've done a lot of modernising work in the last 12 months in terms of processes, and have a lot of learning to share with others who may be facing similar challenges, and vice versa, there may be some I have on the horizon where a completely random part of the Council may have tackled or experienced, and it would be great to have the environment corporately for this to exist.

- All for Cross function collaboration - I'm not sure if there is an appetite to go further with this the Vale but is there also something around a more flexible workforce on a cross skilled basis (a step beyond cross functional) to be responsive of resident needs and organisational challenges to encourage cross departmental working, which does happen in good faith but is probably not widely embedded. I'm very conscious that we aren't able to "loan" staff to best use their skills and meet resident needs because of the legacy of internal recharging to support where they may be a more prominent need in the

Appendix Three - Consultation Feedback

			organisation, but this really has helped. For example, we have borrowed administrative support from election registration when down in numbers and also supported C1V with bits and pieces on an hoc basis when they're struggling. <u>Making a Difference</u> Support colleagues to listen, involve and engage residents and partners in the Council's work – I know you could encompass under the broad term partners but is there also something around Elected Members in here? More of a general point, but is there also something around how we support staff in working within a political environment? I'm not sure where this would best fit, but conscious that whilst we have the office-member protocol which is more of the how in terms of engaging with the political environment and codes of conduct etc, there is something around how officers, particular ones looking to progress, are supported to engage with the Council's political dimensions;.
People Board	In Person	17 th September (Already discuss in July and August to formulate)	Very caring, liked links to compassionate leader – trusted working relationships are key to fostering a strong culture, openness and innovation. How do we do this with our schools? No school-based rep on the board, do they feature in other boards Consider an easy read version – other accessible formats Clear objectives to support which group can measure Challenging but the themes feel right and supportive of the Vale 2030

Appendix Three - Consultation Feedback

			Challenge of budgets, reframing of discussions, are we focusing on the right things as opposed to reviewing budgets at a granular level. Collective broader discussions around TOM and AI could lead to greater efficiencies that cutting training budgets and hospitality (teas and coffee's for training) Equalities – what do our statistics tell us, how can we focus and improve, what could make the difference (agreed a recruitment deep dive at a follow up session) Opportunity to share stories – cross collaboratively, currently only done on staffnet and via Rob's EOW message. Doesn't engage with broader groups and schools.
Heads of Service	Via E-mail (With offers of 1:1's and group sessions)	22 nd September	Challenges of capacity and resource. Focus on leadership and staff development, internal moves and appropriate resource to undertake tasks required. Recruitment and retention – consider options to improve scope of recruitment and inclusive working practices. Improve absence management and support for line managers.
Corporate Strategy for Children Looked After	In Person	10 th September	Strength in language used, challenge and stretching. Really consider via actions how the strategy can improve accessibility and options for children looked after. Consider an easy read version/Strategy on a page.
Joint Consultative Forum	Teams/Trade Unions	22 nd September	Ambitious but well placed. Length is accessible, could go further and create a strategy on a page. Strengthen trade union focus on partnership working.
Change Forum	Teams	29 th October	Supported through our committed to social partnership.

Appendix Three - Consultation Feedback

			Very people centered, encouraged by the adoption of the compassionate leadership model, listening approach and support for staff wellbeing.
PSB	Teams	October 2025	Feedback from NRW. Supportive of strategy as a whole and the need for emotionally intelligent leaders and potential for secondment opportunities. There is potential for some of the wording to be strengthened in order for the strategy as a means to attract good leaders and employees rather than the current focus on retention. Further, there could be a stronger emphasis on the strength of having a diverse workforce, with different perspectives from different generations/diverse workforce to reflect the population that we serve.
Insight Board	Hybrid	6 th October	No separate feedback received.
Headteachers	Hybrid	16 th October	Include more schools-based achievements in the front section of the strategy, don't relate to those stated. I feel the document highlights the vast difference between working in a School and working corporately. I don't think it will be well received at all. Not sure how we develop a school specific approach because to relies on schools doing it all themselves whereas this seems to imply that the 'council' will be doing this for everyone else. Schools mentioned in brackets (including schools) whilst understand the sentiment if feels as if schools are an after thought.

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			Unsure what the wellbeing objectives are and how they relate to schools – these are not mentioned at all in schools-based plans. Reshaping/Transformation agenda – How does this relate to schools and where is it happening in schools. Include schools' information in workplace data. Customer Service Charter – Does this reference schools? Are we part of the discussion on this? Brilliant Basics – again where are schools featured in this. Workforce – How will this be supported and funded in schools? County of sanctuary – Is this important enough to gets its own dedicated mention? Welsh Language in the workplace – How do we support this in schools. Welsh medium education, the stats showed in 2024 more left than were recruited – include actions that support plans to improve this. Staffnet-schools cannot access. Volunteering – Cannot operate in schools. People Board – Are schools represented on this and other boards within the transformation/reshaping agenda.
Staff Networks	Mix of Group and Teams	Across Sept and Oct	Aligns to the visions for each group. Supportive of the themes. Consider measures that support long terms goals of the networks and actively measure success.
WLGA	Via Email In Person	23 rd September 1 st October	Aligns to the project work underway in WLGA around recruitment challenges and wider wellbeing objectives.

Appendix Three - Consultation Feedback

Youth Council	In person	October 2025	Strengthen focus for young people on attraction and opportunities for them – not clear on opportunities available for young people. Develop greater collaborative relationships with schools.
Schools	Initial liaison with CB, feedback to be provided 27 th September	15 th September and then onward to a selection of Heads through October	Included in Headteacher feedback – Not cascaded further given extensive feedback, before document is reviewed for wider consideration.
Staff	Share findings, next steps	To align with Staff Survey and EoW message	Staff survey qualitative feedback to be used to shape strategy.