

Vale of Glamorgan Council Annual Self-Assessment 2024-25

Summary

Strong
Communities
with a Bright
Future



What is the Annual Self-Assessment?



The Council's Annual Self-Assessment 2024/25 looks back at how we have performed over the past year in meeting our Annual Delivery Plan commitments for the period. In reviewing our past performance each year, the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires us to make three judgements on:

- How well is the Council performing?
- How well is the Council using its resources?
- How effective is the Council's governance?

We do this by reviewing a broad range of information to support our judgements. These are then subject to an internal challenge and moderation process, followed by a consultation with residents and partners to sense check judgements and areas of future focus. This will help ensure future plans of the Council continue to respond to the things that matter most to Vale of Glamorgan residents.

We would like to hear your views on the content of this report. Please click the [link](#) to send your comments.

Our progress against last year's Self-Assessment areas of focus.

- Continued supporting the growing needs around Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) through a whole-school approach
- We took over Cadoxton House and Y Daith, the former pupil referral unit and acquired 7 former right to buy properties and 10 units of single person temporary accommodation in Barry which will further increase affordable housing options.
- Reduced our reliance on temporary hotel accommodation for homeless people (180 compared to 767 last year) and no families with children were housed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation.
- Published the new Carbon Management Plan 2024–2030 to cut energy use and emissions.
- Relaunched the Project Zero Hub to promote greener travel, community action, and emissions reduction and launched a Project Zero staff portal.
- Embedded carbon reduction goals into all procurement activity, with extra weight given to low-carbon solutions for high-impact contracts.
- Exceeded our recycling rate target of 71% with a performance of 71.73% and piloted a single use plastic reduction trial in the Eastern Vale as part of efforts to better this performance.
- Increased the share of zero-emission vehicles in the Council fleet to 10.97%, up from 6.8% last year.
- Continued to deliver the People Strategy, which guided all people-related work across the Council, including workforce planning and the development of a Recruitment and Retention Strategy to address staffing challenges.
- Continued to roll out our Dementia-Friendly Communities Programme, ensuring tailored support is available for those living with dementia. Also, explored and facilitated community led solutions, strengthening social connections to reduce isolation and promote resilience.
- Worked with partners to promote community models of care, and to minimise any unnecessary time spent in hospital in line with the Welsh Government Frailty Standard.
- Expanded and widened access to public arts and cultural activities, which has enabled the Pier Pavilion and Art Central Gallery to generate additional income that will be invested in supporting future service developments.

How well is the Council performing?

Overall the Council judges its performance to be **GOOD.**

How did we come to this judgement?

The Council's End of Year Performance Review against its ADP Commitments is 'Good'

Regular performance reviews throughout the year show that at the end of 2024/25, the Council achieved 85.3% of its commitments and associated performance targets in the Annual Delivery Plan. We also compare well with other local authorities in a range of service indicators. However, in reviewing our performance overall, we recognise there are areas where we could do better and these remain areas of focus in 2025/26. An independent panel of assessors found that the Council is performing well and has no major areas of concern.

What we achieved during 2024-25:

Well-being Objective 1

- We created Vale 2030 our new corporate plan by talking to residents, using data, and working with partners. It sets clear goals and a new direction for the future.
- We've changed how we plan our budget to focus more on saving money by improving services, and we've started a major transformation programme to help us manage our money better and keep services running in the long term.
- Over 1 million enquiries were handled online, making services quicker and easier for residents.
- The Council was named one of the Top 100 Inclusive Employers in 2024 and achieved awards for race equality and disability confidence.
- Undertook a Panel Performance Assessment (an independent assessment of how the council is performing) which led to a set of useful recommendations and highly positive feedback about how the Council is run.

Well-being Objective 2

- Delivered over £14 million in Shared Prosperity Fund projects including improvements to local parks, community centres, libraries, and business spaces.
- 2,250+ people engaged through the Placemaking Project to shape town plans in Barry, Penarth, Cowbridge, and Llantwit Major.
- Attracted £55 million in government investment for regeneration and business support, including £20 million for Barry and £19.5 million for the Barry waterfront project.
- Built new local residential homes for children in care and reduced average time to arrange home care from 22 days to 3 days.
- Schools achieved top performance in Wales at both GCSE and A-Level and attendance improved.
- Reduced use of hotel accommodation for homelessness from 767 to 180 people. No families with children were housed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

How well is the Council performing?

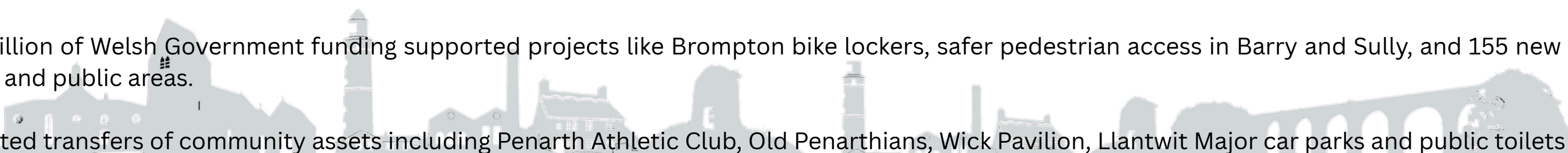
Overall the Council judges its performance to be **GOOD.**

What we achieved during 2024-25:

Well-being Objective 3

- Higher quality of care through staff training, digital tools and stronger partnerships with community organisations. Continued focus on helping people receive care in their communities.
- Launched the Section 16 Forum to support social enterprises and co-produced social care services. Helped deliver more sustainable, preventative services through cross-sector collaboration.
- Leisure centres supported over 35,000 participants, generating £5.28 million in social value — a 16.5% increase from last year.
- Achieved £1 million in healthcare savings through active lifestyles.
- Council Housing Tenants supported to save over £213,000 with 220 fuel vouchers worth nearly £9,000 issued to support housing tenants in need.
- 73 new Council homes built in Barry in 2024/25, including new accessible homes.
- Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) delivered another successful year in 2024/25 with food hygiene and safety standards returned to high pre-COVID levels.

Well-being Objective 4

- Recycled 71.73% of household waste, beating the national target of 70%. Increased income from recycling and commercial waste services to £1.26 million.
 - £3.8 million in Section 106 funds used to improve public transport, cycling, walking routes, school places, green spaces and public art.
 - £3.76 million of Welsh Government funding supported projects like Brompton bike lockers, safer pedestrian access in Barry and Sully, and 155 new bike/scooter parking spaces in schools and public areas.
 - Completed transfers of community assets including Penarth Athletic Club, Old Penarthians, Wick Pavilion, Llantwit Major car parks and public toilets to ensure their future.
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How well is the Council using its resources?

Overall the Council judges its use of resources to be **GOOD**.

How did we come to this judgement?

Panel Performance Assessment Concluded Council’s Use of Resources is Effective and Efficient

An independent panel of assessors found that the Vale of Glamorgan Council is using its resources effectively and efficiently within the context of high levels of service demand and financial pressures.

Combined Directorate Self Assessments Rate Council’s Use of Resources as ‘Good’

Council departments individually reviewed how well we have used our people, physical and digital assets, finance, and performance, risk management and engagement insights to deliver service. These self-assessments have been subject to challenge by internal peers and a panel of elected members and senior officers for fairness and accuracy.

Improved Staff Well-being and Supportive Workplaces

We’ve improved staff sickness levels, rates of people leaving the organisation, diversity, and the pay gap between genders. The Council was named one of Stonewall’s Top 100 Employers for the first time. We’re updating key policies including Recruitment, Hybrid Working, and Special Leave to support the workforce of the future. Most staff feel positive about working here with 75.4% recommending it as a workplace but some areas still need work. Staff views are helping to shape our new People Strategy.

Robust Financial Management and Smarter Procurement

Despite tight budgets, the Council stayed financially stable and well-managed. With the Procurement Act 2023, we’ve improved how we buy goods and services, working closely with Ardal and Council teams to secure value for money. However, schools are facing growing deficits and children’s social care demand has sharply increased which presents challenges for the future. There is more to do to reduce carbon in our how we buy and manage services.

Effective Asset Management

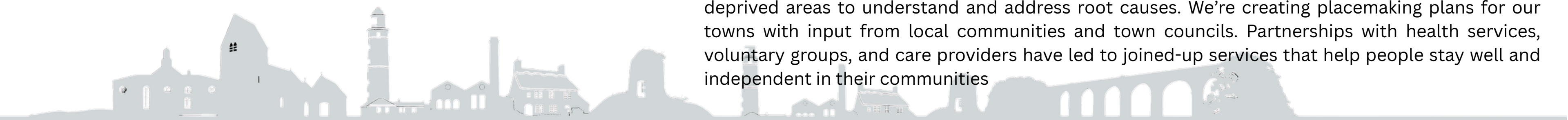
We continue to manage our physical and digital assets well, but it’s getting harder due to limited resources. Maintaining roads has received more funding and new homes are being built to high construction standards. Several digital projects were completed in-year to make services better and more efficient.

Better Engagement with Residents

Our biggest-ever survey, Let’s Talk About Life in the Vale, received over 4,000 responses and helped shape Vale 2030. We worked directly with schools and youth services to better understand the views of young people.

Stronger Partnerships

By working better with the third sector and others, we’ve delivered more for communities. We’ve worked with partners to tackle poverty through food support, money advice, and engagement in deprived areas to understand and address root causes. We’re creating placemaking plans for our towns with input from local communities and town councils. Partnerships with health services, voluntary groups, and care providers have led to joined-up services that help people stay well and independent in their communities



How effective is the Council’s governance?

Overall the Council judges governance to be **GOOD**.

How did we come to this judgement?

Panel Performance Assessment Rated Governance as Strong, But There is Still Room to Improve.

An independent panel of assessors found that the Vale of Glamorgan Council has good systems in place for decision-making and accountability, with some areas to develop further. We’re already making improvements based on their feedback

Governance Rated as Fit for Purpose

The 2024/25 Draft Annual Governance Statement rated our systems as “Reasonably Assured,” meaning they work well and meet expectations.

Internal Audit Gives Positive Feedback

Our internal auditors confirmed most controls and processes work effectively. 94% of audits were rated as having “substantial” or “reasonable” assurance. Only 3 were “limited,” and none were “no assurance.”

Financial Management is Robust

The Council meets nearly all CIPFA Financial Management Code standards. An action plan is in place to improve the one partial area.

Regulators’ Feedback Used to Drive Change

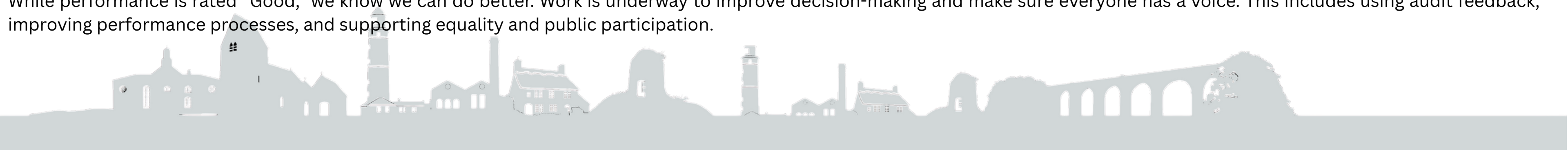
External auditors made recommendations based on local and national reviews. We track our progress and update key groups regularly. So far, 65% of actions are marked as completed and on track.

Risks Are Well Managed

Internal audits show that our approach to risk is sound. We’ve updated our Risk Management Strategy and have strong oversight in place to manage big issues.

Continued Commitment to Improve

While performance is rated “Good,” we know we can do better. Work is underway to improve decision-making and make sure everyone has a voice. This includes using audit feedback, improving performance processes, and supporting equality and public participation.



Our Areas of Future Focus:

Managing Finances

- We will continue to balance both day-to-day (revenue) and long-term (capital) budgets, while supporting vital services like social care and education.
- We will introduce a 3-year funding plan for Shared Regulatory Services to provide greater financial stability.
- We will work with partners to deliver major projects like the Levelling Up Fund and Shared Prosperity Fund.
- We will embed new ways of buying and managing services to meet new rules under the Procurement Act 2023 and reduce carbon in our supply chains.
- We will further develop our Reshaping Programme to help plan and save money over the medium to long term.
- We will move ahead with plans to cover the full cost of running services like libraries and adult learning without limiting access for residents.
- We will explore alternative ways of running services with local communities, Town and Community Councils, and the voluntary sector.

Supporting Schools and Learners

- We will work with schools to create a sustainable and resilient school improvement model.
- We will increase efforts to improve school attendance and reduce exclusions using proven strategies.
- We will help schools build the skills and confidence needed to support students with social, emotional and mental health needs.

Planning and Place-Based Work

- We will deliver a Replacement Local Development Plan and consult widely, with the aim of publishing a draft plan by the end of 2025.
- We will develop a 10-year Land Management Strategy to improve local green spaces, working with volunteers to build community pride.
- We will work with CADW (Welsh Government’s historic environment service) and other partners to restore listed buildings and bring empty properties back into use.
- We will embed placemaking principles into all our work to create neighbourhoods that meet residents’ needs now and in the future.

Supporting People

- We will lead efforts to deliver more homes to address housing and homelessness pressures.
- We will continue to improve care by focusing on prevention, better digital access, and stronger local partnerships.
- We will use digital tools to make services faster, easier to access, and more open, with real-time updates and opportunities for people to give feedback.

People and Workforce

- We will strengthen workforce planning and put in place sustainable staffing to support major changes across the Council.
- We will update our People Strategy to better support staff well-being and strengthen processes that help managers and teams work well together to achieve our Vale 2030 commitments.
- We will keep working to solve recruitment and retention challenges in key services like Social Services, Environment & Housing, and Place.

Communication and Insight

- We will improve how we communicate with communities about the challenges we face and work together to co-create solutions.
- We will make sure engagement activities includes all voices, especially underrepresented groups, and use this insight to guide our work.
- We will improve how we measure and report on performance, including how well we are delivering Vale 2030 with our partners.
- We will continue building our capacity to use data to inform decisions and improve services.

