VALE of GLAMORGAN
BRO MORGANNWG

Agenda Item: 4

Meeting of:	**Performance Joint Scrutiny Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**Tuesday, 16 December 2025**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Performance Joint Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Vale 2030 Performance Monitoring Report: Quarter 2 2025/26.
Purpose of Report:	To present quarter 2 performance results for the period 1st April 2025 to 30th September 2025 in delivering our 2025/26 commitments as aligned to Vale 2030.
Report Owner:	Councillor Lis Burnett, Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance & Resources
Responsible Officer:	Rob Thomas, Chief Executive
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	The performance report applies to the whole authority. Quarterly performance reports covering our Year 1 commitments in Vale 2030 are considered by Directorate Management Teams and the Strategic Leadership Team. Quarter 2 and end of year performance will be considered by the Joint Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in line with our corporate performance monitoring arrangements
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.

Executive Summary:

- The performance report presents our progress at quarter 2 (1st April 2025 to 30th September 2025) towards achieving our Year 1 commitments as aligned to Vale 2030.

- **Appendix A** provides a position statement on the Council's performance mid-way through the year in delivering its annual commitments for 2025/26 as aligned to the five well-being objectives in Vale 2030. It details where we are doing well, where we are not doing so well, the challenges we are facing in delivering on our commitments and identifies areas of further focus.

- This is the first mid-year performance report established as part of the revised performance arrangements aligned to Vale 2030.

- A new performance report format has been developed which will enable Members to holistically review performance in meeting our Vale 2030 commitments through the lens of the three annual self-assessment questions, which are:
- How well is the Council performing?
- How well is the Council using its resources and
- How effective is the Councils' governance?

- As part of developing our approach to support performance reporting, a new Power BI performance dashboard has also been produced, this is also provided as a link in **Appendix A** to enable Members to view and explore more detailed contextual information including performance commentary for measures and actions should they wish to examine this level of detail. The dashboard will be subject to ongoing refinement informed by the views of officer colleagues and elected Members throughout the year.

- The Committee is requested to review Q2 performance and refer their comments and recommendations to Cabinet for their consideration

Recommendations

1. That the Committee consider the Q2 performance report and progress towards achieving the Year 1 commitments as aligned to our well-being objectives in Vale 2030.
2. That the Committee refer their comments and recommendations to Cabinet for their consideration.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To enable members of the Committee to consider the progress being made towards achieving its Year 1 commitments in Vale 2030 aimed at making a positive difference to the lives of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.
2. To ensure the Council is effectively assessing its performance in line with the performance requirements outlined in the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and reflecting the requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that it maximises its contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.

1. Background

1.1 The Council's Performance Management Framework is the mechanism through which our key priorities and targets are monitored and realised in order to secure continuous improvement and meet our performance requirements.

1.2 As part of the review of its Performance Management Framework, the Council has adopted Vale 2030 its Corporate Plan for 2025-30 which, reflects the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and identifies five Well-being Objectives for the Council. We have also refined performance reporting and the approach to monitoring and scrutinising this to enable the Council to continue to meet its duties under the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act.

1.3 The Council’s performance framework is aligned to Vale 2030 to enable progress to be tracked on all five Well-being Objectives (keep performance under review) and demonstrate how the steps the Council intends to take will contribute to achieving multiple well-being objectives and in turn the national goals.

1.4 In line with these performance arrangements, Members will consider a new format report which provides a high-level overview of performance aligned to the five well-being objectives in Vale 2030, through the lens of the three annual self-assessment questions. This revised format has been informed by feedback from a range of colleagues, including elected Members.

1.5 This will enable Members to look holistically at the progress achieved mid-way through the year on our Year 1 commitments. The report also highlights areas of focus that may require greater scrutiny by Members and will enable Scrutiny Committees to flex their work programme to reflect any emerging performance issues that may require more intensive consideration. This approach will enable Members to focus on upcoming priority areas and areas where further probing should be considered, alongside progress against Vale 2030 commitments.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

2.1 The performance report (**Appendix A**) presents progress at quarter 2 (1st April 2025 to 30th September 2025) towards achieving the Year 1 commitments as aligned to Vale 2030.

2.2 This is the first mid-year performance report considered by the Joint Performance Scrutiny Committee, established as part of the revised performance arrangements aligned to Vale 2030.

2.3 **Appendix A** provides a position statement on the Council's performance mid-way through the year in delivering on its annual commitments for 2025/26 as aligned to the five well-being objectives in Vale 2030. It details where the Council is doing well, where it is not doing so well, and the challenges in delivering Vale 2030 Year 1 commitments.

2.4 The new performance report format has been developed to enable Members to holistically review performance in meeting Vale 2030 commitments through the lens of the three annual self-assessment questions, which are:

- How well is the Council performing against its Vale 2030 priorities and Wellbeing Objectives?
- How well is the Council using its resources and
- How effective is the Council's governance?

2.5 The report is structured as described below.

2.6 **Vale 2030 Mid-Year Performance Statements**

- A mid-year performance statement from the Chief Executive on the Council's progress six months into Year 1 of Vale 2030, the Corporate Plan. This outlines the progress achieved so far despite significant challenges within the local government environment.
- Mid-year performance statements from each Director on progress to date in delivering on their in-year priorities detailed within Directorate Plans that will contribute towards achievement of our Vale 2030 commitments.

2.7 How **well is the Council performing against Vale 2030 priorities and Well-being Objectives?**

- A performance snapshot of all actions and measures aligned to Vale 2030 and the five Well-being Objectives.
- Performance exceptions (actions and measures attributed a Red performance status) with detailed commentary to explain underperformance.
- An overview of what's going well, and the challenges to achieving in-year priorities.
- Data setting out broader contextual trends in the Vale that help explain the conditions influencing performance and local challenges.
- An overview of how the Council is responding to the critical challenges of poverty, climate and nature emergencies and inequalities identified in Vale 2030.

2.8 How well is the Council using its Resources?

- An overview of how the key enablers of People, Finance (including the Reshaping Programme), Assets, Engagement Insight and Partnership Working are supporting achievement of our Vale 2030 commitments, including key challenges. Where available performance data is provided to demonstrate the progress being made in key areas at Q2.

2.9 How **effective is the Council's governance?**

- An overview of progress with the Internal Audit Plan and assurance work.
- Progress with the external regulatory recommendations in the Council's Strategic Insight Board tracker.
- A corporate risks overview at Q2 including emerging issues.
- Progress with the new Scrutiny arrangements, the lessons learned and upcoming areas of focus.

As part of developing the approach to support performance reporting, a new Power BI performance dashboard has been produced, this is also provided as a link in **Appendix A** to enable Members to interrogate more detailed contextual information including performance commentary for measures and actions should they wish to examine this level of detail. The dashboard will be subject to ongoing refinement informed by the views of officer colleagues and elected members throughout the year.

2.10 The Committee is requested to review Q2 performance and refer their comments and recommendations to Cabinet for their consideration.

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

3.1 Performance Management is an intrinsic part of corporate governance and integrated business planning which underpins the delivery of Vale 2030, our five Well-being Objectives and associated annual commitments identified in Directorate Plans for 2025/26. Vale 2030 has been structured around the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, through the development of five Well-being Objectives. By aligning our Well-being Objectives in Vale 2030 with the Well-being Goals of the Act, this will enable us to better evidence our contribution to the Goals.

3.2 Performance reporting is an important vehicle for showing our progress, not only in terms of impacts across the national well-being goals through achievement of our Well-being Objectives, but also in terms of the changes and improvements made in our approach to integrated planning.

3.3 The five ways of working are a key consideration in our corporate Performance Management Framework ensuring that we continue to focus on working differently and in an inclusive way to challenge why, what and how we respond to our key performance challenges.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

4.1 There are no direct climate change and nature related implications associated with this report. Vale 2030 incorporates our key commitments which aim to have a positive impact on climate change and nature overall. However, failure to deliver on these commitments could impact negatively on achievement of our Well-being Objectives and in turn our contribution to the national goals and on any external regulatory assessments of the Council.

4.2 The climate change and nature implications related to the Council's activities are outlined in Project Zero (our Climate Change/carbon reduction and nature programme) and identifies the mitigating actions we intend to take to minimise the adverse consequences of our activities. It also includes key measures and targets that are monitored and regularly reported to all stakeholders to enable us to demonstrate and track progress towards achieving our key climate change and nature related commitments enroute to achieving net zero carbon status by 2030.

4.3 Progress with delivering our work in response to the climate and nature emergencies is detailed in the report attached as Appendix A.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

5.1 There are no additional budgetary implications arising from this report, although underperformance in some areas may have a negative impact on external assessments of the Council and could potentially put certain funding opportunities at risk.

Employment

5.2 There are no direct workforce related implications associated with this report. However, there are a number of issues contained within the performance report that if not effectively managed have the potential to impact on our staff establishment and performance overall. This may in turn impact adversely on achievement of key commitments associated with Vale 2030.

Legal (Including Equalities)

5.3 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires that the Council keep its performance under review and consult and report on its performance in order to secure continuous improvement and meet its performance requirements.

5.4 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to set and publish annual Well-being Objectives that maximise its contribution to achieving the Well-being goals for Wales and report its progress in meeting these.

6. Background Papers

Vale 2030

Annual Statement 2025/26

Vale 2030 Performance Monitoring Report

Quarter 2

2025/26

1.4.25 - 30.9.25

Vale of Glamorgan Council

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Vale 2030 Performance Monitoring Report

Quarter 2 **1.04.25 - 30.09.25**

Contents

1.	**Vale 2030 Mid-Year Performance Statements**	**3**
1.1	The Chief Executive's Mid-Year Performance Statement	3
1.2	Directorate Mid-year Performance Statements	5
1.2.1	Corporate Resources	5
1.2.2	Learning & Skills	8
1.2.3	Environment & Housing	9
1.2.4	Social Services	11
1.2.5	Place	12
2.	**How well are we performing against our Vale 2030 priorities and Well-being Objectives?**	**15**
2.1	Introduction	15
2.2	Performance Snapshot	16
	Vale 2030 Performance by Well-being Objectives	17
2.3	Exceptions	19
2.4	What's going well	20
2.5	Our key Challenges	21
3.	**Context: What's happening in the Vale**	**22**
4.	**Responding to our Critical Challenges**	**26**
4.1	Poverty	26
4.2	Climate Change and Nature Emergencies	27
4.3	Inequalities	28
5.	**How well are we using our resources?**	**31**
5.1	People	31
5.2	Finance	32
5.3	Reshaping Programme	34
5.4	Assets	35
5.5	Engagement	36
5.6	Partnership Working	38
6.	**How effective is our Governance?**	**40**
6.1	Annual Internal Audit Plan	40
6.2	Strategic Insight Board –	40
	External Regulatory Recommendations Tracker	40
6.3	Corporate Risk	41
6.4	Scrutiny	43

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Vale of Glamorgan Council

1. Vale 2030 Mid-Year Performance Statements

1.1 The Chief Executive's Mid-Year Performance Statement

This report provides an overview of work being undertaken from April to September 2025 and demonstrates the significant work being undertaken across the Council to deliver commitments in Vale 2030, the 2025/26 Directorate Plans and Annual Statement. We continue to work in challenging times both for us as an organisation but more importantly for residents and also for our partners. This report shows how our values of ambitious, proud, together and open are embedded in our work and our continued focus on delivering our vision of Strong Communities with a Bright Future.

This report demonstrates good progress across all five of our objectives but also a recognition of the challenges we face. The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) understands that as well as responding to immediate needs and challenges we must also think about the long term and how we shift to a more preventative approach. This report includes a statement from each Directorate, but SLT is a team and works together to achieve successful outcomes and to work through the challenges across the organisation.

In April of this year the Future Generations Commissioner published his Future Generations report which detailed findings and recommendations for public bodies and Welsh Government with regards the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The report recognised progress being made across Wales but also the need for more momentum and pace for example around climate and nature, health and well-being, food and prevention. The Auditor General also produced a report on the implementation of the Act and both reports highlighted the importance of Welsh Government and public bodies understanding and demonstrating the impact of our work. This report which brings together work across all Directorates and all of our objectives, is part of our work to improve how we report not just on what we have done, but the impact and difference it has made. This is work in progress but this report and the detailed information in the Power BI report about our performance halfway through the year is another example of how we are changing how we work.

Many of the recommendations in the Commissioner's report resonate with the work we are doing and the commitments in Vale 2030. I am proud that we are already delivering against many of the Future Generations Commissioner's commitments. We have restricted the advertising of high fat and high salt foods on our assets, we have been recognised as a Real Living Wage Employer, we have developed placemaking plans with our four towns, we have launched a food strategy and we are looking at prevention as part of our budget setting for 2026/27.

In November of last year, we were the third Council in Wales to have a Panel Performance Assessment. The Panel made four recommendations around planning for place, signalling change, partnership working and governance and resources. Progress is being made against all of these recommendations which have also been embedded in Vale 2030. In particular we have introduced new scrutiny arrangements, and I am pleased that all four committees have embarked on Task and Finish work which I am confident will lead to constructive challenge and recommendations. We strengthened Vale 2030 with an increased focus on place and partnership working. Much of the progress detailed in this report is testament to the robust relationships we have with our partners across many aspects of our work including social care, emergency planning and our approach to transformation. This is also evident in our community asset transfers for example in Llantwit Major and our Placemaking work across our four towns.

Another area of work that I particularly want to highlight is the launch of our Brilliant Basics Charter which recognises the need to get the basics right. It responds to feedback we have had and shows we have listened and made changes. The Charter details capabilities, behaviours and impact that will lead to better services and is another example of our commitment to be the best Council we can be. It is being actively used across the Council and we have shared details with all staff and supported managers to use it as part of the management development sessions.

We are already six months into our five-year plan, Vale 2030. Although, we are making progress and colleagues across the organisation are working hard to deliver the services our residents need, we are facing a number of challenges. Across the public sector there are significant financial challenges as costs rise as does the demand for many services e.g. in social care and children with additional learning needs. We are committed to meeting the needs of our most vulnerable residents, but this is against a backdrop of limited resources and the need to maintain a number of universal services. Discussion around our Annual Self-Assessment for 2024/25 raised questions about our engagement and although we have made improvements, for example with placemaking, work of the youth service, our Age Friendly activities and we are now undertaking our second Let's Talk residents survey in partnership with Data Cymru, we know that we need to continue to build trust and show how we are listening. Within this report we have detailed some of the key engagement activity undertaken in the last six months.

We have a number of corporate risks that we regularly monitor and review. These include workforce, finance, physical assets and climate change. We have plans in place to help control risks in these areas, but these do remain risks for us as an organisation. These risks are also relevant to many of our other risks including our highest scoring risk at quarter 2 which is still the risk around failure to effectively respond to and manage the increase in numbers of learners with Additional Learning Needs within our education system. During this quarter we have also identified another risk around school budget deficits. Whilst funding for schools is a national issue, there is also an issue of variability within Vale schools in terms of budgets which is not solely a result of the national picture. Significant work is underway with schools to tackle the situation, and this is being proposed as a new risk to add to the corporate risk register and will be considered by Cabinet and

Governance and Audit Committee together with a report from Audit Wales and our response to their recommendations. Many of these risks reflect the national picture and also levels of funding e.g. we continue to be one of the lowest funded authorities per pupil.

In Vale 2030 we identified challenges around poverty, inequalities and the climate and nature emergencies. It is disappointing that despite considerable work across the Council and investment in our buildings to make them more energy efficient that our carbon emissions increased in 2024/25. This will not stop us from continuing to be ambitious in this area, particularly through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme. It is also disappointing that the recent publication of the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation has shown an increasing number of areas in the Vale in the 10% most deprived areas in the country. Again, we will continue with our work through the Public Services Board and with organisations like Citizens Advice to make a difference. This does however reinforce why these issues were identified as the key challenges within 2030.

In conclusion I would like to highlight that although it is important to recognise that we live in challenging times, we still have opportunities to leave a positive legacy for future generations. I would particularly like to highlight the new Family Compass Service, the successful pilot for soft plastics in Penarth, the work on placemaking across Barry, Penarth, Llantwit Major and Cowbridge and our recent purchase of the Wilko store on Holton Road. These are all excellent examples of our role in improving economic, cultural, social and environmental well-being.

In conclusion I would like to take the opportunity to thank staff for all their work and to recognise the dedication and innovation of colleagues across the Council.

1.2 Directorate Mid-year Performance Statements

1.2.1 Corporate Resources

The Directorate is performing well against across the actions and measures detailed in the Directorate Plan 2025/26 and recognises the challenges ahead. All 22 actions in the Directorate Plan are on track but there are three measures that are red. Work is below our targets in a small number of areas, but we are continuing to improve times for processing Council Tax Reduction Scheme claims and to promote apprenticeships across the Council. The other area where performance is below target is with regard to carbon emissions and work is continuing through the Project Zero Board to progress work to tackle climate change and reduce our emissions. A progress report on the Carbon Management Plan will be reported to Cabinet in January.

Work is progressing to draft a budget for 2026/27 recognising the need to work with schools on their budget deficits, increasing demand in social services and the challenges of maintaining our assets as well as progressing work on climate change and carbon management. We are working to produce a new People Strategy, to support momentum within the Reshaping programme, to make changes to how we procure goods and services and to make changes through our digital

transformation programme. Aligned to these activities is the work being undertaken to develop a new customer charter, the launch of the Brilliant Basics Charter, Let's Talk, the 2025 residents survey and changes to scrutiny and our performance management arrangements. Across the Directorate we are reviewing and transforming and supporting colleagues across the Council. More information is provided later in this report about engagement, reshaping, people, assets, finance and governance.

The Corporate Resources budget is projecting a £544k deficit at Q2, largely due to the delay in delivery of the Docks Office savings, and the Directorate will seek to mitigate this sum as it progresses throughout the year. The Directorate has met or mitigated £825k (94%) of its savings target for the year with service transformation opportunities being explored to deliver the remainder.

No major regulatory concerns have been identified, and internal audits gave substantial and reasonable opinions for Financial Management Code, Safer Recruitment and Communications & Social Networking reviews, with 15 recommendations (1 high, 6 medium, and 8 low) being addressed. 10 local and 5 national regulatory actions attributed to the Directorate remain on track with a green performance status. We have continued to support audit work across the Council and audits undertaken by Audit Wales which are particularly relevant to this Directorate include audits on commissioning services, complaints and the People Strategy. Reports on the last two audits and the management response will be reported to Governance and Audit Committee in due course.

Handling of complaints remains an area of focus for the Directorate. Of 46 complaints considered to date at Stage 1 of the corporate process, 13 were upheld, 13 not upheld, 7 partially upheld, and 13 are still ongoing.

Half of the 12 corporate risks are managed by this Directorate. These include physical assets, workforce and organisational development, financial resources, climate change, information and cyber security and digital transformation. All risks have remained static at Q2. Of the 6 risks attributed to the Directorate, 1 is forecast to stay static (Financial Resources, scoring high), 4 risks are predicted to increase, and one risk (Workforce and Organisational Change, scoring high) is forecast to diminish. Directorate level risks continue to form part of conversations aligned with the Directorate's service transformation programme.

Key Achievements

- Launched the 2025 residents survey Let's Talk in partnership with Data Cymru. The survey builds on the previous survey which has now been taken forward as a template across Wales.
- Undertaken a staff survey and run a series of Management Development sessions focusing on the 21st Century Public Servant.
- Drafted and consulted on a new People Strategy.
- Developed new performance management arrangements to support Vale 2030 and the Directorate Plans utilising Power BI to make the reports more engaging.

- Progressed work aligned to the new scrutiny committee arrangements including Task and Finish Groups
- Launched the Brilliant Basics Charter, setting the standards for how we work as individuals and as an organisation, our capabilities, behaviours and impact.
- Worked with Citizens Advice to launch debt clinics in the Civic Offices
- Progressed the Reshaping Programme with 67% (£3.777M) of savings achieved/mitigated at Q2.
- Work on the AI and automation for the Contact Centre has progressed at pace.
- Progressed work to establish a new Corporate Landlord Service.
- Have been recognised as a Real Living Wage Employer by the Living Wage Council.
- Commenced migrating the currently on-premise servers to the cloud.

Ongoing Challenges

- The scale of the challenges around reducing our carbon emissions and delivering Project Zero are ongoing. Changes are being made and work undertaken across the Council and with partners but disappointingly our carbon emissions have increased.
- Maintaining and improving our assets continues to be a real challenge with limited resources and increasing costs. The new Corporate Landlord Service and work through reshaping and community asset transfer will support improvements in this area but this remains a corporate risk.
- Processing of Council Tax Reduction Scheme claims and changes in circumstances continues to be a challenge and an area for improvement.
- Consultation has been undertaken on a new People Strategy and work continues to support staff well-being but, as with all corporate areas, there continue to be challenges around capacity including supporting work linked to reshaping and restructuring.
- Balancing the budget and ensuring that the Council continues to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents and delivers on its statutory duties and commitments in Vale 2030.
- Transforming services at pace including digital transformation whilst equipping our staff with the necessary skills and tools to deliver.

The Let's Talk 2025 residents survey closed in November, and the results are being analysed and will be reported in the New Year. The survey will inform the budget for 2026/27 and the Directorate Plans and Annual Statement for 2026/27. This work will continue to be a priority as we improve communication and engagement with our residents and other stakeholders.

1.2.2 Learning & Skills

During the Quarter 2/half-year period, the Learning & Skills (L&S) Directorate has continued to perform strongly against a backdrop of increasing operational and strategic challenges. As of Quarter 2, 100% (15) of Directorate Plan actions are on track for completion. Only one performance measure has missed target this quarter. The Directorate remains firmly on track to deliver its Directorate Plan, aligned with the Vale 2030 Corporate Plan, and is making significant progress toward achieving its year-end priorities.

Key Achievements

- School Improvement Partnership Programme: Launched in September, this new school-to-school working model promotes both vertical and horizontal collaboration among school leaders. The programme places a strong emphasis on improving teaching and learning, with reading as a priority focus. The Directorate has commissioned the Education Endowment Fund (EEF), part of Staffordshire Research School, to support the local authority's work in enhancing high-quality teaching, adaptive provision, and timely learner support.
- ALN Dispute Resolution: A strategic approach is being developed to address ALN disputes at the earliest opportunity. Enhancements to the panel system have improved communication with parents, learners, and schools, enabling earlier identification of barriers to engagement. A new tracking system for disputes and outcomes is under development to support continuous improvement.
- Specialist Provision: The ALN panel process has been reviewed and successfully trialled. This work will inform the remodelling of specialist provision to ensure a more sustainable response to increasing demand and evolving learner needs. This work complements the work already underway as part of the Scrutiny Task and Finish group looking at specialist provision.
- Transformation Programme: Strong progress has been made, including the onboarding of six schools to Vale Waste Services, resulting in £21K in savings. An additional 11 schools are scheduled to join, with projected further savings of £45K.

At Q2, a deficit of £11.536M is projected for the Directorate, largely attributed to the challenging Schools balances position, and service transformation opportunities are being explored to reduce the deficit over the short to medium term. The Directorate has met £512K (100%) savings target for the year.

The one corporate risk attributed to the Directorate has retained its Very High score (16) at Q2 and is forecast to remain static. Despite positive work ongoing to reduce the risk, complex statutory duties and resource constraints persist in relation to Additional Learning Needs. Directorate level risks continue to form part of conversations aligned with the Directorate's service transformation programme.

Overall, no major regulatory concerns have been identified at Q2. Three risk-based internal audits

are planned within the Directorate this year, with a review of Out of County Placements currently underway. All 3 external regulatory actions applicable to Directorate (review of the Cardiff & Vale Adult Learning in the Community Partnership), are reporting a green performance status at Q2.

Service improvements continue to be shaped by our learning from complaints and other engagement insights. Consequently, complaint handling remains an area of focus for the Directorate. At Q2, 13 complaints have been considered at Stage 1 of the corporate complaints process, with 8 not upheld, 3 partially upheld, 1 upheld and 1 cancelled.

Ongoing Challenges

The Directorate remains acutely aware of the challenges facing its services, resources, and risk environment. Key issues include:

- Attendance and Exclusions: Persistent absence and rising exclusion rates across primary and secondary sectors remain a significant concern.
- Complex ALN Growth: The increasing number of learners presenting with complex ALN continues to place pressure on staff capacity and specialist provision, with demand for specialist provision exceeding capacity.
- Financial Pressures: Budgetary pressures persist, and the financial resilience of schools is an ongoing risk. There is growing variability in school budget positions, with an increase in schools reporting non-recoverable deficits—now identified as a significant risk.

Despite these challenges, the Directorate has a proven track record of adapting to a continuously evolving landscape. Through its Transformation agenda, it has identified a clear and purposeful set of priorities to drive improvement and ensure the continued delivery of high-quality services.

1.2.3 Environment & Housing

At Q2, the Directorate is performing well overall with 100% (22) of priority actions on track for delivery by year-end. Of the 37 performance measures, 75% of applicable quarterly indicators met targets, with one falling short (Red RAG status). Where available, trend data for remaining measures suggest positive progress.

Achievements of note include progress made in meeting annual targets in the Council's building programmes with 61 affordable units completed, and a further 36 units underway. Residents continue to engage positively with waste and recycling initiatives with anticipated performance on track to meet the statutory 70% target, avoiding financial penalties. Innovations have included a successful soft plastics pilot in Penarth and planned kerbside textiles rollout in Barry. Over 2,000 participations were recorded under the Vale Sport & Physical Activity Plan, targeting support for those facing barriers. Performance standards across the Shared Regulatory Services have returned to pre-Covid levels with the significant progress made in respect of food hygiene interventions

being recognised by the Food Standards Agency earlier this year. Having led on the creation of the Level 4 Regulatory Compliance Apprenticeship for Wales, SRS has appointed two apprentices under the scheme, which supports workforce sustainability.

Challenges persist around budget pressures, with a projected £1.386M deficit at Q2, due to unmet savings and in-year revenue pressures, notably in car parking, pothole repairs, and street lighting. The Directorate has met or mitigated £1.534m (66%) of its savings target for the year with service transformation opportunities being explored to deliver the remainder.

Despite the highways improvement capital budget for 2025/26 (£4.725M) benefiting from the Local Government Borrowing Initiative to the tune of £2.75M, which has enabled considerable highway improvement works to date, long-term asset maintenance remains underfunded.

Demand for housing and homelessness services remains high, exacerbated by rising homelessness and land acquisition challenges which are straining resources. No families have been placed in hotels since 2024/25; the Rapid Homelessness Service continues to reduce use of temporary accommodation and leasing schemes are expanding to meet demand. Whilst prevention remains a priority, private rental affordability remains a barrier to prevention.

In response to our challenges, the Directorate is taking a more focused and integrated approach to managing its risks in order to maximise opportunities to mitigate them. At Q2, the homelessness corporate risk remains high (score of 12), expected to rise due to legislative changes and demand. Directorate level risks, including resource constraints, recruitment challenges and rising residents' expectations, continue to form part of conversations aligned with service transformation.

Strategic service reshaping efforts such as community asset transfers (including single use sports facilities, car parks, public conveniences and community centres) are progressing to ensure long-term sustainability of these assets. Alongside the expansion of commercial waste services to schools, new working models for Parks and Cleansing services have also been identified.

Engagement insights including our learning from complaints continue to shape service improvements. The recent 74% tenant satisfaction rate (STAR survey) compares favourably with the national benchmark. Complaint handling remains an area of focus. At Q2, of 315 complaints considered to date at Stage 1 of the process, 91 were upheld, 90 not upheld, 59 partially upheld and 75 remain open.

No major regulatory concerns have been identified. Internal audits gave reasonable and limited opinions for SRS Joint Service Governance & Financial Controls and Vehicle Fuel Management reviews, with 25 recommendations being addressed. One amber-rated external regulatory action remains due to housing software delays, with phase two now expected in Q3.

1.2.4 Social Services

During Quarter 2, the Directorate made steady progress across key strategic priorities, with several initiatives moving into implementation phases and others showing early signs of impact.

Adults Services saw notable developments in the rollout of micro-enterprises, with the Community Catalyst Diagnostic Report completed and Phase 2 implementation underway, supported by Welsh Government funding. The Reablement 1st approach advanced through workshops and data collection, with recruitment plans in place to support delivery. Adult Services continues to manage high demand, with improvements in care planning and reductions in assessment waiting lists. However, performance on timely assessments remains below target, and OT waiting lists have increased. Regulatory actions related to hospital discharge have been successfully completed, supporting system-wide coordination and flow

Children and Young People Services (CYPS) progressed the expansion of the Flying Start childcare offer, with new areas identified and capital projects approved. The Integrated Front Door model (Vale Family Compass) is on track for launch, with systems and branding in place. The Interventions Hub is operational, with multi-agency coordination and referral pathways established. Residential provision expanded with two homes now accommodating six children, and a third awaiting CIW registration.

CYPS continues to respond effectively to high demand, with strong performance in decision-making and care planning. While assessment timeliness and statutory visits remain areas for improvement, most indicators are on track or improving.

Resource Management and Safeguarding (RMS) continued to support sector development through Section 16 forums and strengthened support for unpaid carers. The Mosaic system implementation progressed with data migration and testing, though delays remain a risk, Internal care home review began with workshops and governance structures established.

RMS continues to deliver timely core safeguarding functions. However, statutory compliance for Section 47 and Core Group meetings needs improvement, with data recording and submission delays impacting results. The number of children on the register remains stable, with a slight reduction in long-term registrations.

Workforce initiatives focused on recruitment and retention, with the peripatetic social work role successfully trialled and further apprenticeships supporting capacity. Cultural awareness and anti-racism training has been initiated, with the Cultural Ambassador Network established.

Significant budget pressures remain for the Directorate, with a projected £2.550M deficit at Q2, due to increased high-cost placements for children with complex needs, an overspend in Domiciliary Care and residential and Nursing Home payments. The Directorate has met or mitigated £2.554M (70%) of its savings target for the year with service transformation opportunities being explored to deliver the remainder.

At Q2, all 3 corporate risks attributed to the Directorate have retained their risk scores. However, the Social Care Demand and Capacity risk (High, score of 12) is forecast to escalate given significant funding shortfalls, workforce challenges, provider fragility and rising demand for services. The WICCS (Medium/ High, score of 9) and Safeguarding (Medium, score of 4) risks are forecast to remain static with strong current controls in place to manage these risks. Directorate level risks continue to form part of conversations aligned with the Directorate's service transformation programme.

Service improvements continue to be shaped by our learning from complaints and other engagement insights. Consequently, complaint handling remains an area of focus for the Directorate. At Q2,30 complaints have been considered under the social services complaints process, with 11 not upheld, 3 partially upheld, 10 upheld and 6 ongoing.

Welsh Language (Mwy na Geiriau) actions gained momentum, including increased uptake of awareness training, development of care pathways, and improved data collection on staff language skills. Visual markers and translation tools were promoted to normalise Welsh in service delivery.

Your Space (Eich Lle) progressed with Cabinet approval for property acquisition to support adult services infrastructure. Planning continues for an integrated health and wellbeing campus model.

Overall, no major regulatory concerns have been identified at Q2. Internal audits gave substantial and reasonable opinions for the Regional Adoption Service and Foster Care Payments reviews, with 5 low level recommendations being addressed. There are currently no external regulatory actions applicable to Social Services.

Overall, the Directorate remains on track, with most actions rated green and showing tangible progress toward strategic goals.

1.2.5 Place

Overall, at the 6-month mark, Place is delivering well against our Year 1 commitments in Vale 2030 and the Directorate Plan, with key areas of success including the Development Management team's performance against key indicators such as time taken to determine planning applications. Other areas of success include the delivery of Shared Prosperity Funding and Transforming towns programmes and the launching of Placemaking Plans and supporting Boards for the towns of Cowbridge, Llantwit Major and Penarth.

Important work is underway in Barry town centre with Welsh Government Transforming Towns Loans funding key property acquisitions. Excellent work continues in our Country Parks with Welsh Government; Brilliant Basics grant funding supporting refurbishments of facilities and the team are working with NRW to expand the already important "Restore the Thaw" with a new grant bid. Key Regeneration schemes such as "Barry Making Waves" and the western gateway project continue to be developed jointly with Housing colleagues and the Council's Housing delivery

partners, Lovells. One key success has been the agreement of UK Government to extend the funding for Barry Making Waves until end of March 2028 and to agree the recent changes to the scheme thereby ensuring the project remains on track. To conclude, the extensive consultation undertaken as part of the Placemaking work is now being used to inform where both UK and Welsh Government grant funding is targeted within our towns with aim of making sure that the funding that is awarded is spent in the most effective way.

The Place budget is projecting a breakeven position at Q2, which reflects that whilst some savings have not been achieved in year they are mitigated by other savings or income within the budget. The Directorate has met or mitigated £238K (100%) of its savings target for the year.

Proactive complaints handling remains an area of focus in line with our commitment to maximise use of engagement insights to inform service improvements. During the quarter, of the 15 complaints considered at Stage 1 of the process, 8 were not upheld, 3 were upheld, with 4 cases still remaining open.

Key challenges

- RLDP: Ensuring we meet the amended delivery agreement with Welsh Government – Changes have been reported to Cabinet on 6th November, and will be reported onto Place Scrutiny on 18th November and Full Council on 1st December
- Barry Making Waves: UK Government Levelling up scheme - a report regarding amendments to the scheme and program was reported to Cabinet on 2nd October **https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2025/25-10-02/Barry-Making-Waves.pdf.**
  Key tasks to be completed include amending the previously submitted planning application, agreeing formal agreeing formal heads of terms with ABP and completing the acquisition of the Mole and undertaking the required surveys and assessments to allow for the building and infrastructure works to be fully costed.
- Barry Placemaking Plan: Completing the Barry Placemaking Plan and supporting the ongoing delivery of all the four towns placemaking plans recommendations.
- Budgetary Pressures: The challenging budgetary situation which has an impact on general project delivery.
- Replacement Grant System for Shared Prosperity Fund: The resolution of a replacement grant system to the Shared Prosperity Fund from UK Government has not been announced and this could have a huge impact on what we can deliver in 2026/7 as well as on implications for teams delivering programmes funded by SPF which may have to close.
- Plans for Neighbourhoods Fund: Preparing for the implementation for the first year of spending against the Plan for Neighbourhoods fund from UK Government.
- New Pride in Place Funding announced by UK Government in October (£1.5m) of which £750k should be allocated in 2025/6.
- Reshaping and development of new income opportunities in Country Parks.

Key Risks for the Directorate in the first 6 months

Delivery of Major Regeneration Projects is one of our corporate risks (CR9). The decision taken by Association of British Ports (ABP) to withdraw from the delivery of a marina as part of the Vale's Levelling up programme was regrettable. However, the Council has been working with ABP to overcome this by seeking to acquire the Mole and is in the process of amending the other parts of the scheme including the park and Ocean Water Sports training facilities to compensate for the loss. Furthermore, UK Government has now confirmed that the changes are acceptable and that the monitoring of delivery will now be significantly more "light touch" than originally envisioned and that the Council will remain in control of what is delivered in consultation with the Council's Section 151 officer. Consultants working for the Council have also shown that the value for money indicators used to assess the original award of the grant by UK Government remain within the required parameters and UK Government has confirmed that the grant will not be changed. An update report was presented to Cabinet on 2nd October regarding these changes and outline how the project is moving forward.

Overall, no major regulatory concerns have been identified at Q2. Three risk-based internal audits are planned within the Directorate this year, with a review of Building Control currently underway. There are currently no external regulatory actions applicable to Directorate at Q2.

2. How well are we performing against our Vale 2030 priorities and Well-being Objectives?

2.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the Council's performance at quarter 2 against our year 1 priorities aligned to Vale 2030. The Council reports quarterly updates on its progress against planned actions and measures set out in each Directorate Plan that contribute to delivery of our Vale 2030 commitments.

Power BI dashboard

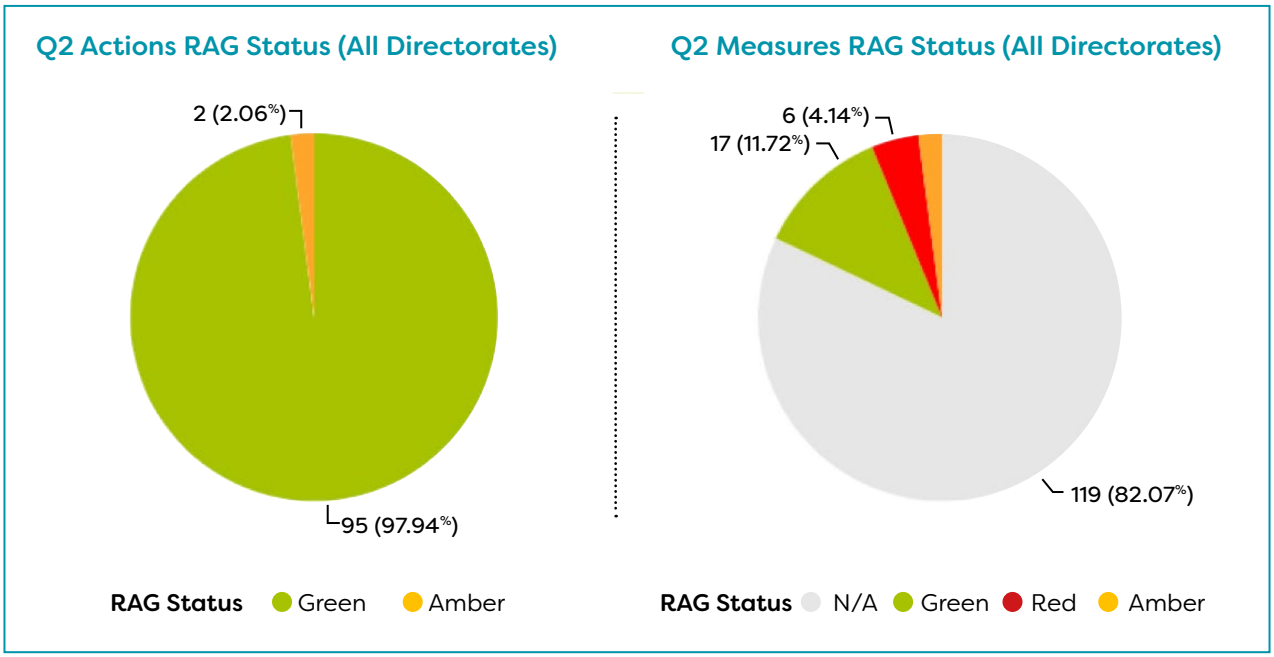
A detailed insight into the 2025/26 Quarter 2 performance can be viewed via the **linked Power BI dashboard.** This Power BI dashboard provides a comprehensive overview of organisational progress toward the Year 1 commitments in Vale 2030 by drawing together performance information from all five Directorate Plans. It summarises progress against the 95 actions and 145 measures within these plans, presents Quarter 2 performance snapshots for each of the five Wellbeing Objectives, and offers directorate-level overviews highlighting each Directorate's specific contributions to Year 1 delivery. The dashboard also provides trend analysis where available, enabling comparison of current measure performance against previous year performance. It includes detailed commentary and performance status for all actions and quarterly reported measures with available Q2 data, as well as information for measures where a performance status is not applicable. In addition, the dashboard presents an overview of each Directorate's key challenges and key achievements at Q2. It also features performance snapshots for the Council's Corporate Health Measures (covering measures related to people, assets, finance, reshaping, and engagement) alongside a summary statement that provides a mid-year view of how effectively resources are being used. The Chief Executive's Mid-Year Performance Statement, along with each Directorate's mid-year statement, can also be viewed directly within the dashboard.

Overall Q2 RAG Performance Status:
Actions - Green (95%)* | Measures - Amber (65%)*

**Overall status for actions and measures excludes N/A RAGs, these are the actions and measures for which a RAG status was not applicable at Q2.*

2.2 Performance Snapshot

Overall Total Green RAGs		Overall Total Amber RAGs		Overall Total Red RAGs		Overall Total N/As	
Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures
95 (97.94%)	17 (11.72%)	2 (2.06%)	3 (2.07%)	0 (0%)	6 (4.14%)	0 (0%)	119 (82.07%)*



Overall N/A Measures*									
Existing Annual			New Quarterly		Existing Annual			New Quarterly	
Reported in Q4	Not appropriate to set target	No target set	Establishing baseline	Not appropriate to set target	Data not available	Not appropriate to set target	No target set	Establishing baseline	Not appropriate to set target
32 (26.89%)	28 (23.53%)	3** (2.52%)	30 (25.21%)	15 (12.61%)	3 (2.52%)	2 (1.68%)	1** (0.84%)	3 (2.52%)	2 (1.68%)

**Of the 145 measures in the corporate performance management framework for 2025/26, a RAG status was not applicable for 119. Of the 119 measures, 4 (existing annual 3 and 1 quarterly) did not have a target set for 2025/26. It was not appropriate to set targets for 47 existing and new measures, nearly a third of all measures currently in the framework, which potentially could result in missed opportunities for improvement during the year. This will be reviewed as part of the target setting process for 2026/27 which commences as part of the Directorate Planning process in December 2025.*

***Of the 4 existing annual and quarterly measures where a target was not set, trend data was available for 1 measure. This demonstrated that at Q2, performance has improved on previous years for that measure.*

Vale 2030 Performance by Well-being Objectives

Well-being Objective 1: Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit

Overall Total Green RAGs		Overall Total Amber RAGs		Overall Total Red RAGs		Overall Total N/As	
Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures
21 (100%)	3 (10.34%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (89.66%)

Well-being Objective 2: Respecting and Celebrating the Environment

Overall Total Green RAGs		Overall Total Amber RAGs		Overall Total Red RAGs		Overall Total N/As	
Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures
13 (100%)	5 (16.67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)	23 (76.67%)

Well-being Objective 3: Giving Everyone a Good start in Life

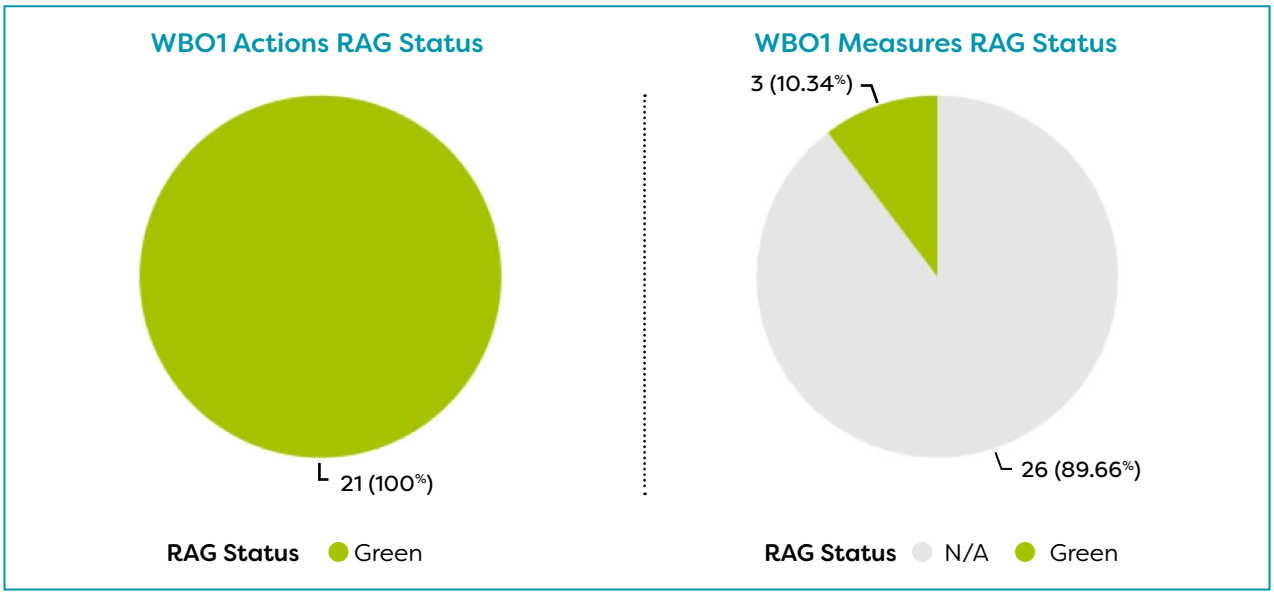
Overall Total Green RAGs		Overall Total Amber RAGs		Overall Total Red RAGs		Overall Total N/As	
Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures
17 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (11.76%)	0 (0%)	3 (17.65%)	0 (0%)	12 (70.59%)

Well-being Objective 4: Supporting and Protecting Those who Need Us

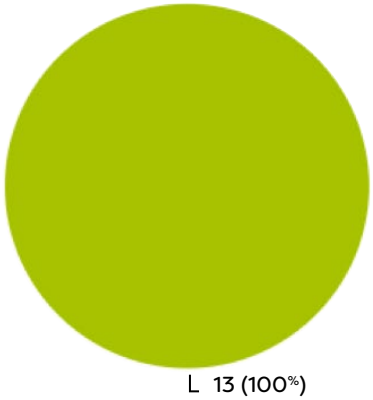
Overall Total Green RAGs		Overall Total Amber RAGs		Overall Total Red RAGs		Overall Total N/As	
Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures
17 (100%)	2 (5.71%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	33 (94.29%)

Well-being Objective 5: WO5: Being the Best Council We Can Be

Overall Total Green RAGs		Overall Total Amber RAGs		Overall Total Red RAGs		Overall Total N/As	
Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures	Actions	Measures
27 (93.10%)	7 (20.59%)	2 (6.90%)	1 (2.94%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.94%)	0 (0%)	25 (53%)

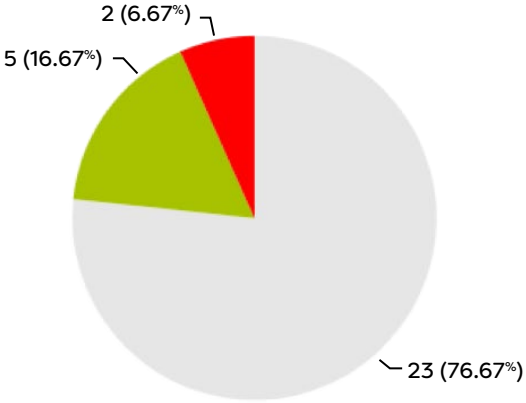


WBO2 Actions RAG Status



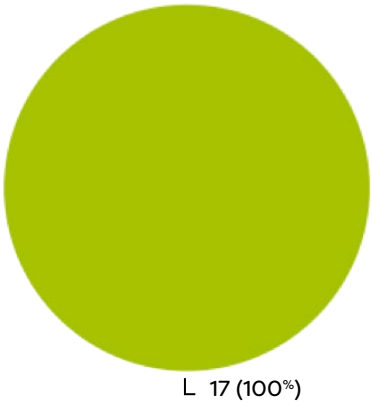
RAG Status Green

WBO2 Measures RAG Status



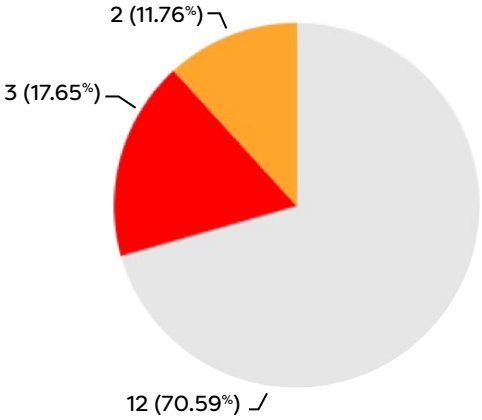
RAG Status N/A Green Red

WBO3 Actions RAG Status



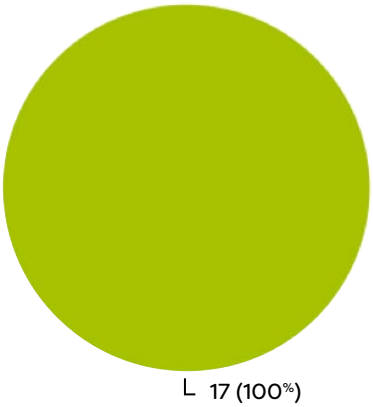
RAG Status Green

WBO3 Measures RAG Status



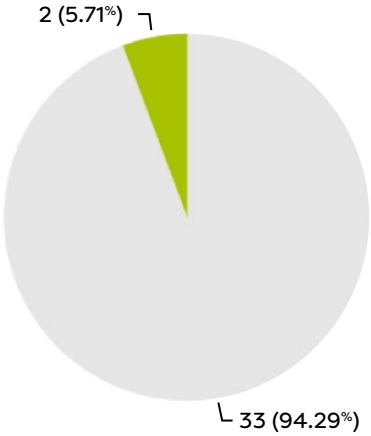
RAG Status N/A Green Amber

WBO4 Actions RAG Status

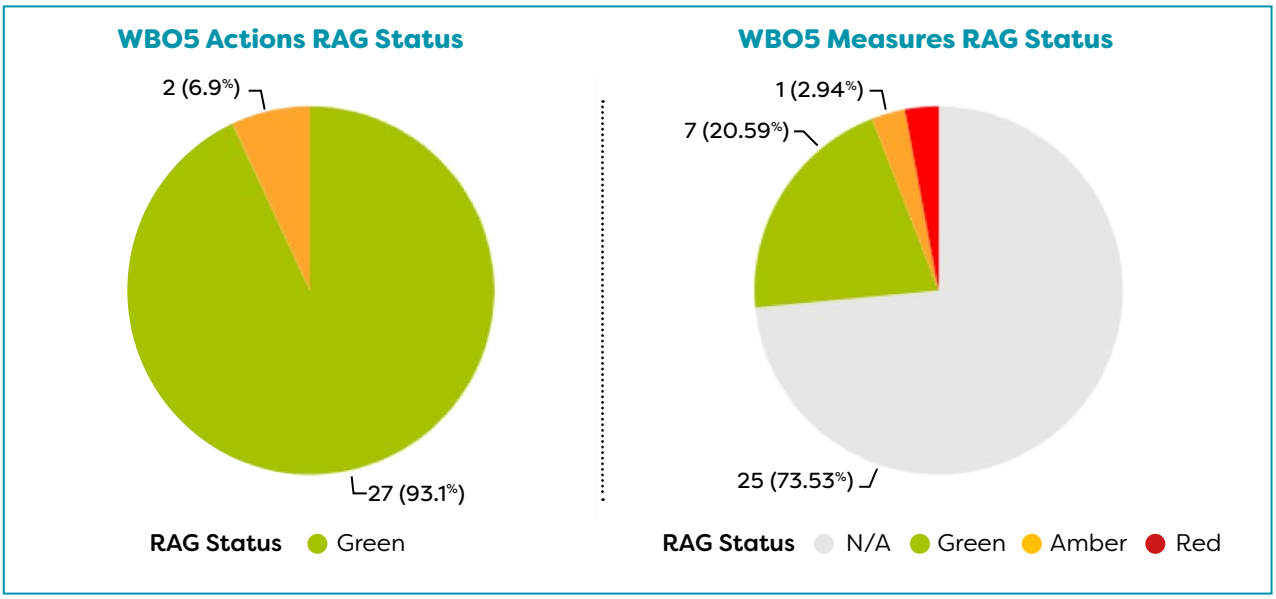


RAG Status Green

WBO4 Measures RAG Status



RAG Status N/A Green



2.3 Exceptions

Actions: No actions were attributed a Red performance RAG status for the Q2 period.

Measures:

Fixed-term exclusions increased in both primary (0.03% - CPM/174) and secondary schools (0.27% - CPM/175), missing the 0.02% target. This performance aligns with national trends. Multi-service interventions and Risk of Permanent Exclusions Consultations (ROP) are in place to address this.

Persistent absence (where attendance is below 90%) across both primary and secondary schools' remains challenging across all schools (24.5% - CPM/255), missing its target of 20%. This continues to be an area of focus where schools are causing attendance concerns, with targeted approaches adopted with Llantwit High School and Pencoedtre High School.

The Council's non-domestic building carbon emissions rose by 131.3 tonnes in 2024/25 (CPM/339), instead of achieving the 1,3000-tonne reduction targeted. Across our estate, there was a 4% increase in grid electricity consumption due to new emergency housing, a rollout of ICT resources across schools and the conversion of a gas to air source heat pump in one primary school, though fossil fuel heating decreased.

No additional affordable housing units were granted planning permission during Q2 (CPM/089), missing its target of 35%. This is because all houses approved during this period had no requirement of affordable housing due to the small size of development. Future allocations expected in 2025/6 will bring the allocation within target by year end.

It took 36.04 days on average to process new benefit claims for council tax reduction (CPM/330b), below our target of 30 days. A high volume (10,500+) of changes in circumstances in this category within the 13 weeks' timescale impacted on resources, and this remains an area of focus for the next quarter.

2.4 What's going well

Wellbeing Objective	Key Achievement
WO1: Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit	• Completed housing units in Barry including 31 units at Clos Holm View Phase 2, 20 units at Coldbrook East and 10 units at Olive Lodge, increasing affordable housing options for residents. • Successfully implemented Shared Prosperity Funding and Transforming towns programmes, launching Placemaking Plans and supporting Boards for Cowbridge, Llantwit Major and Penarth. • Secured UK Government funding extension for Barry Making Waves until March 2028, including agreement on recent changes to the scheme thereby ensuring the project remains on track.
WO2: Respecting and Celebrating the Environment	• Launched a soft plastics kerbside collection across Penarth, involving 15,982 properties, with 70+ tonnes of soft plastic materials processed and reused due to minimal contamination. High resident participation and positive feedback. • Improved the use of resources through strong partnership working with Keep Wales Tidy, supporting community litter-picking and education to keep our environment clean. • Performance for determining planning applications for householders and across the board exceeded targets at 96.11% and 96.4% respectively.
WO3: Giving Everyone a Good start in Life	• Enhancements to the panel system have delivered improvements in ALN dispute resolution, enabling earlier identification of barriers to engagement. Reviewed and trialled ALN panel process to inform remodelling of specialist provision. • Launched a School Improvement Partnership Programme to enhance teaching and learning, with reading as a priority. A partnership with the Education Endowment Fund is supporting this work.
WO4: Supporting and Protecting Those who Need Us	• Enhanced our telecare service with a new website and subscription model with increased uptake. The reablement 'intake' model pilot is showing early success in reducing care hours and improving carer handling. • Two not-for-profit homes for children looked after are now operational with a third on the way, enabling children to live locally and access services. • The Pre-birth Pathway is now fully operational with a focus on prevention. • Successfully launched an Integrated Front Door for Children and Young People Services with a focus on improving timely access to services. • The operational Well-being Matters Service is offering integrated support on a range of health, social care and council matters through a single phone number.
WO5: Being the Best Council We Can Be	• Six schools were onboarded to Vale Waste Services, saving £21K; 11 more are scheduled with projected savings of £45K. • Actively communicating the relaunched updated Procurement Strategy, which lowers the threshold for social value in tenders and supports our commitment. • The Council's Highways maintenance budget has benefitted to the tune of £4.515M over two years via the Local Government Borrowing initiative (LGBI), funding an investment doubling what we normally invest. • Further enhanced digital capabilities to improve customer outcomes and reduce contact centre demand. • Re-launched a dedicated scrutiny hub on MemberNet with improved resources and tools to support members in their scrutiny role, including public website updates.

2.5 Our key Challenges

WO1: Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit	• Insufficient land for new housing developments and acute homelessness challenges. • Delivery of major regeneration projects. • Meeting the delivery Agreement with Welsh Government in relation to the Replacement Local Delivery Plan (RLDP).
WO2: Respecting and Celebrating the Environment	• Meeting our climate and nature emergencies commitments detailed in Project Zero and reducing our carbon emissions to achieve net zero by the 2030.
WO3: Giving Everyone a Good start in Life	• Growth in learners presenting with Complex Additional Learning Needs and rising numbers of exclusions. • Raising attendance levels in schools. • Financial resilience of schools.
WO4: Supporting and Protecting Those who Need Us	• Meeting the increasingly complex needs of an aging population.
WO5: Being the Best Council We Can Be	• Budgetary pressures and increasing demand for council services. • Service sustainability risks, due to increased reliance on grant funding. • Limited funding is impacting on the maintenance of key Council assets and infrastructure. • Embedding Vale 2030 and ensuring effective scrutiny and performance management arrangements • Delivering effective communications and engagement externally and internally to support Vale 2030. • Delivering a new People Strategy and addressing ongoing workforce pressures including recruitment and retention challenges. • Delivering digital transformation.

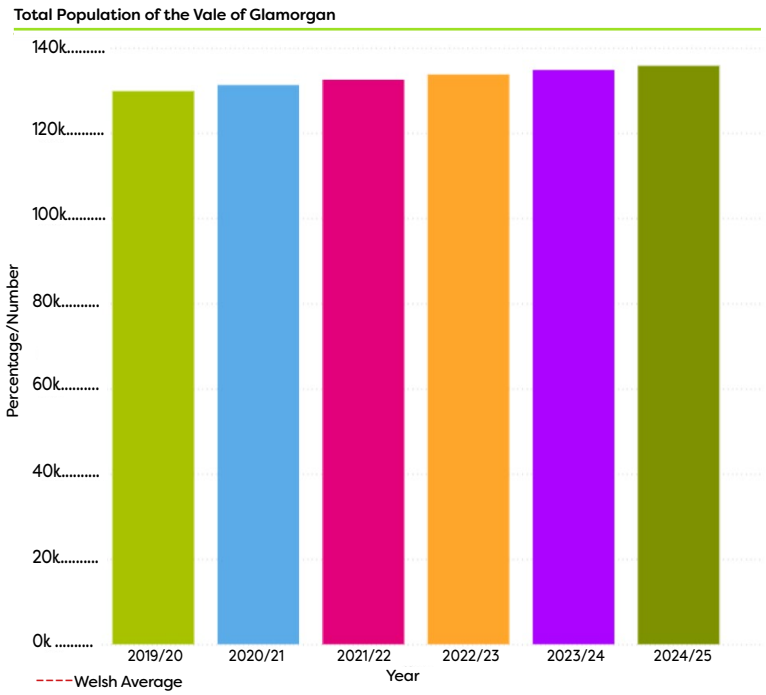
Appendix 1

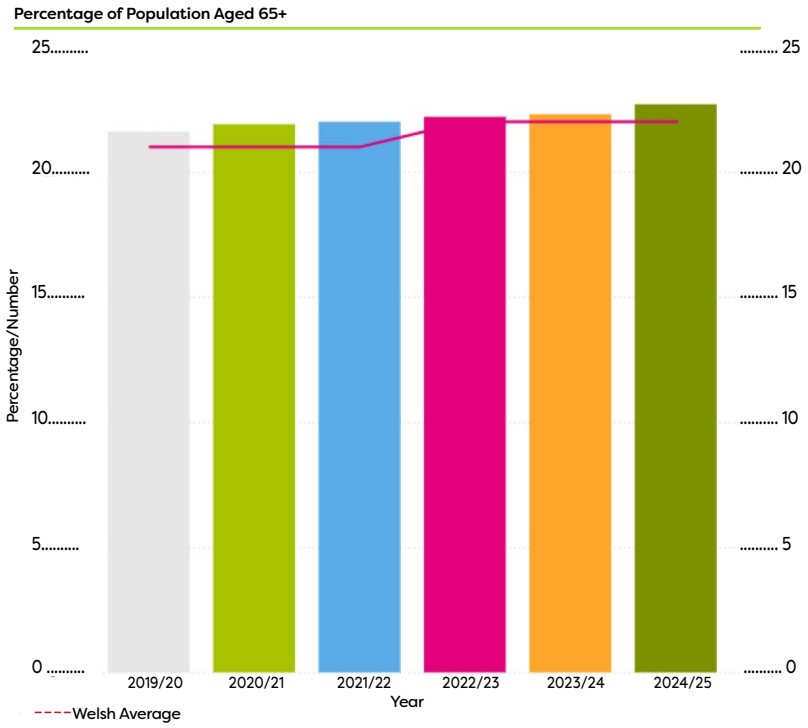
Provides examples of achievements at Q2 as aligned to our Vale 2030 Well-being Objectives and the Council's Annual Statement 2025/26. Each well-being objective features relevant Annual Statement commitments, a brief description of what has been achieved to date and how we have communicated this to Vale residents. *Click on the link below to view these examples*

Appendix 1

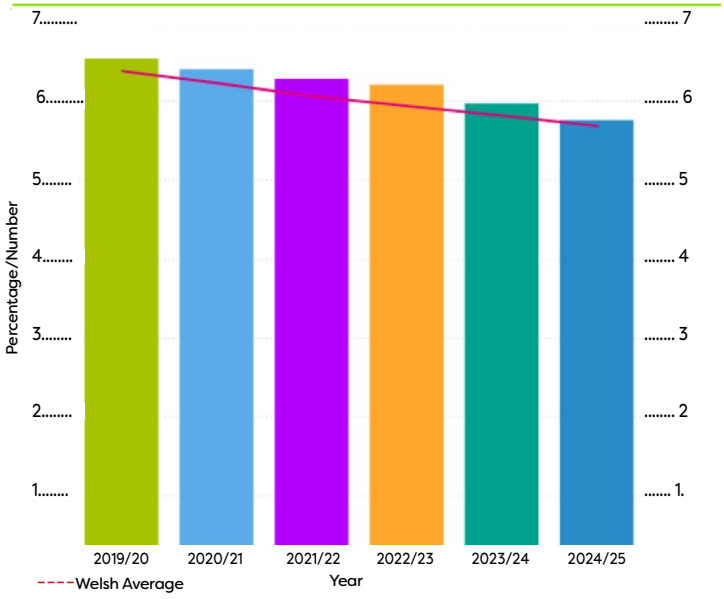
3. Context: What's happening in the Vale

This section sets out broader contextual trends in the Vale that help explain the conditions influencing performance and local challenges. Comparative Welsh average data is included where available.

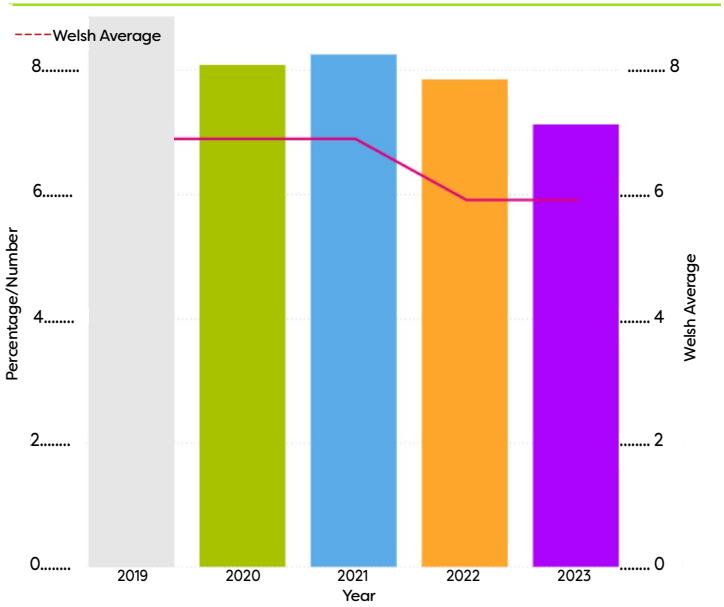




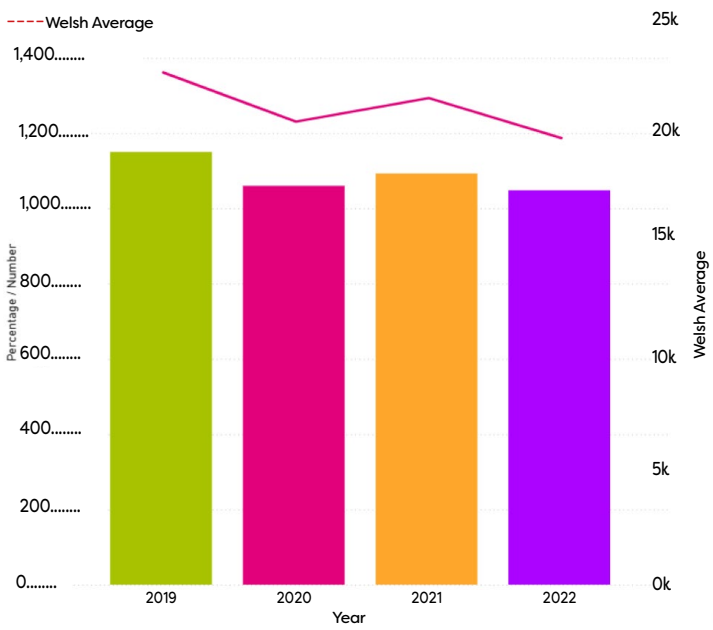
Total Population Aged 5 and under



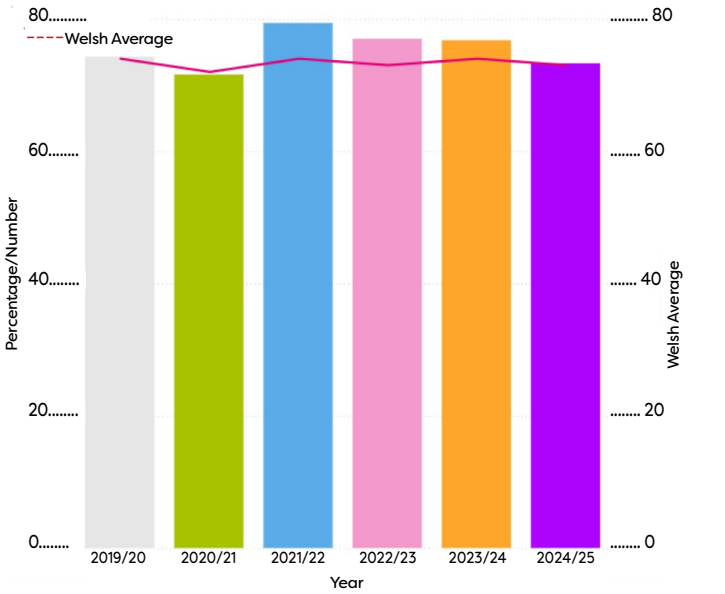
Per Capita Carbon Dioxide (CO2) Emission Estimates



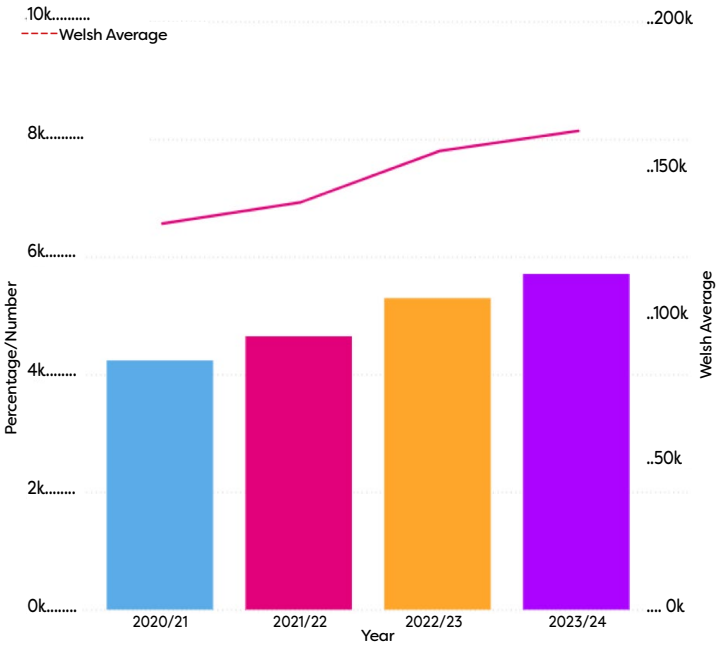
Total Annual Vale of Glamorgan carbon dioxide (CO2) emission estimates



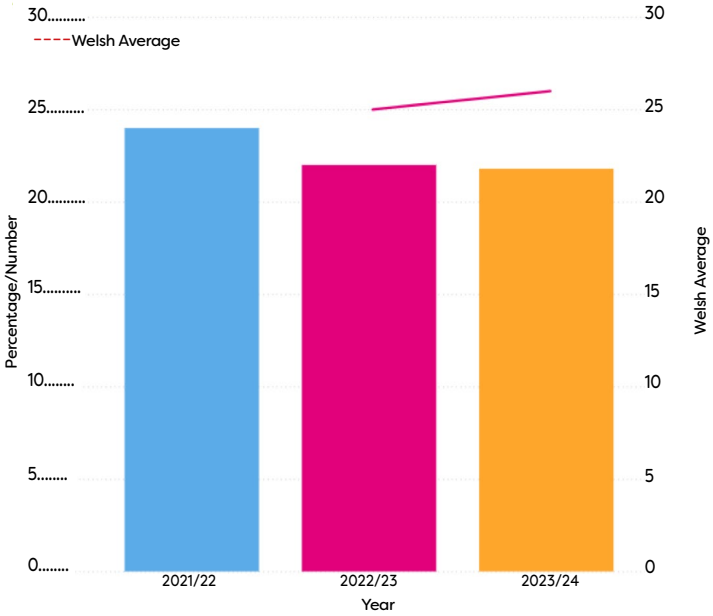
Employment Rate in the Vale of Glamorgan. (year ending March)



Number of children in the Vale of Glamorgan living in relative low-income households

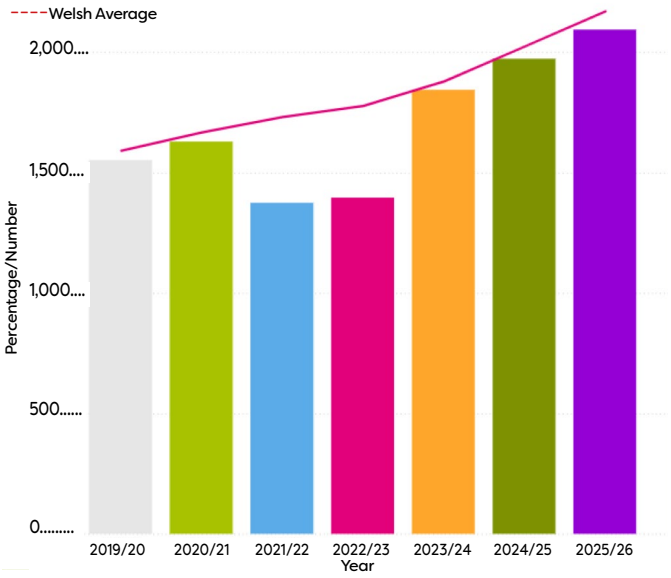


Percentage of children aged 4 to 5 years with overweight or obesity as measured by the Child Measurement Programme

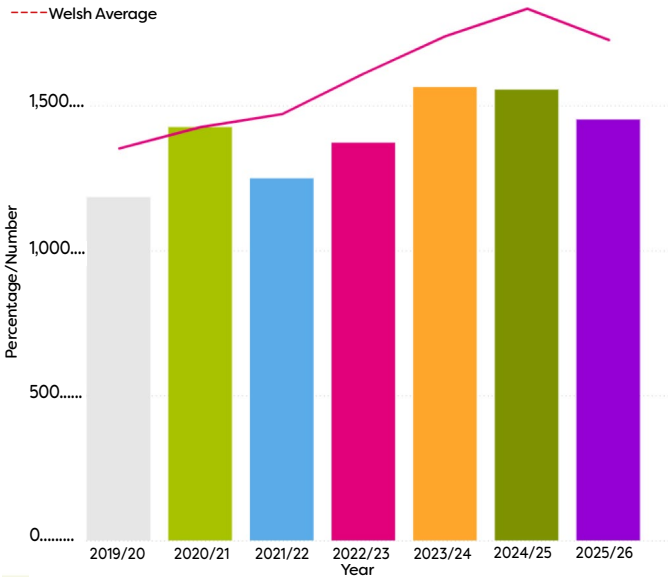


Percentage of people aged three years or over able to speak Welsh in the Vale of Glamorgan. (year ending March) APS

Level of Council Tax in the Vale in relation to other Local Authorities in Wales (Average Band D)



Amount of overall funding per resident in the Vale in comparison to other Local Authorities



4. Responding to our Critical Challenges

Vale 2030 sets out three specific challenges that cut across the work of all Directorates and all five objectives. They are poverty, the climate and nature emergencies and inequalities.

4.1 Poverty

The Council has progressed work to address poverty through its Vale 2030 Corporate Plan. The Council's approach is holistic, integrating actions across housing, employment, access to services, food security, family support, and social inclusion.

Key achievements

Housing initiatives have seen the completion of 61 affordable units in Barry, with 36 more underway. Despite rising demand and affordability challenges homelessness prevention continues through tailored support alongside preparatory work for increased responsibilities under the forthcoming Homelessness and Housing Allocations Bill.

Employment support has been strengthened through partnerships with educational institutions and businesses. A skills analysis is underway to identify workforce needs, funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund. The Communities for Work Plus programme has delivered successful training sessions, including a new teaching assistant course with strong employment outcomes. Apprenticeship and placement opportunities have expanded, particularly for looked-after children.

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme remains a vital support, with nearly 9,000 live claims totalling over £12.8 million in aid to date (2025/26).

Access to services and advice has improved through digital innovations, including AI-driven contact centre enhancements. Outreach efforts include well-being calls in partnership with GPs and joint advice sessions with Citizens Advice. The Council has also updated its cost-of-living support webpages and promoted financial entitlements like pension credits.

Food insecurity is being tackled through the newly launched Vale Food Strategy, which coordinates efforts across climate, health, and local food access. Community grants have supported food-related initiatives, and the Council has worked with Food Vale and GVS to distribute Welsh Government funding for emergency food aid and warm spaces. To date for 205/26 there has been £72,838 warm spaces funding and £87,369 emergency food aid funding from Welsh Government,

Support for children and families includes the expansion of Flying Start childcare in deprived areas, development of the Vale Family Compass for streamlined service access, and the Interventions Hub for children with complex needs. The School Essentials Grant and Free School Meals continue to assist low-income families.

Social activities have been made more accessible, with free sports and play programmes targeting young people in economically challenged areas. Projects like 'Hooked' boxing and Nutrition for Your Little One (NYLO) nutrition sessions promote health and engagement. The Golden Pass scheme for residents aged 60+ has supported active aging, and the Council is piloting Golden Volunteers to encourage peer-led participation.

Challenges have arisen from ensuring a balanced budget to sustain current and future services, with schools' deficits being of great concern and the Council facing significant challenges in social care due to insufficient funding and pressure from rising demand and complex needs. Many free-to-access activities and schemes are also reliant on short term or one-off funding.

The Council has identified several measures relating to poverty to track its progress. At Q2, there has been improvement in the average time taken to process new claims for housing benefit and council tax reduction. However, the average time taken to process changes of circumstances for these claims has increased due to a high volume of requests (10,500+) in this category which impacted resources, and this remains an area of focus.

A progress report on work regarding poverty will be reported to Cabinet in January 2026.

4.2 Climate Change and Nature Emergencies

Project Zero has seen a range of positive developments and some challenges over the period. Notably, the appointment of consultants to undertake a Climate Change Risk Assessment for the Vale Public Services Board (PSB), funded through the Shared Prosperity Fund, which marks a significant step forward in understanding and addressing climate risks collaboratively.

The Council's Project Zero Board has met regularly and approved a proposal for WLGA funding for training and engagement around an In-Cab Digital Routing System for Waste Services. The project promises operational and carbon savings, and on the ground impacts for residents. Progress has also been made in decarbonising the Council's estate, with new photovoltaic arrays installed at Rhws Primary performing well, and work continuing at Llanfair Primary school for a new roof including PV and batteries. In housing, "The Olives" redevelopment is completed, with 10 EPC A-rated apartments. The building is fitted with several PV panels along with Air Source Heat Pumps and internal insulation panels that give the 1950's building an EPC A rating. The development has been fitted with 2 EV chargers that will provide electricity to Council vehicles.

Community engagement has been strong, with the launch of Food Vale's growing spaces map and the Vale Food Trail attracting over 1,000 participants. The Local Nature Partnership has delivered 29 events, including the popular Vale Nature Festival, and launched new initiatives like the Swift Guardians and meadow monitoring programmes. A further 140 water voles were released on the River Thaw in June, and Himalayan Balsam has been removed on the River Kenson in Fonmon. Waste services continue to perform well, particularly with soft plastic collections processing over 50 tonnes. Renewable energy generation has increased, and feasibility studies for further PV and LED schemes are underway.

However, there are areas where progress has been slower. The Council's net zero carbon return showed a 6% rise compared to the previous year, largely due to increased supply chain emissions. While scope 1 emissions have slightly decreased, the continued reliance on cars for commuting, as revealed by the staff travel survey, highlights behavioural challenges. Additionally, the Project Zero biannual report showed that while most steps are on track, 20 had slower than expected progress and 3 reported no progress. These areas will require further attention and support to ensure momentum is maintained across all aspects of the programme.

Progress in delivering the Council's Carbon Management Plan will be reported to Resources Scrutiny in due course and the next Project Zero Progress report will be presented to Place Scrutiny in January.

4.3 Inequalities

Tackling inequality is a key priority in Vale 2030, supported by our Strategic Equality Plan and wider equality work. In the first half of the year, we have focused on:

Key Achievements

- Equality Impact Assessment Process: We've simplified and digitalised the assessment form to better consider the impact of our work on people with protected characteristics, those experiencing poverty, and Welsh speakers. Feedback has been positive, and we are exploring IT solutions to centralise records and monitor cumulative impacts across the Council.
- Community Engagement: Rather than inviting groups to formal meetings, we are visiting communities to hear directly about their experiences and priorities. These conversations will help strengthen our equality impact assessments and improve our understanding of diverse needs.
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED): We continue to meet our legal duties to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations. The Equality and Human Rights Commission recently met with us to discuss our Strategic Equality Plan. Following a constructive meeting, we have been invited to review our impact assessment process and expressed interest in their PSED Scrutiny Framework project—an opportunity to improve practice and share learning.

- People Board: The People Board, a cross-departmental group with staff network representatives, has met four times since April 2025. In September, it conducted an in-depth review of inclusive recruitment practices. The Board has also examined and analysed the draft People Strategy which is currently under consultation.
- The Recruitment and Retention Strategy, launched in 2025, emphasises inclusive working practices. Progress will be tracked through quarterly reports to the People Board, using employment data and equality dashboards, supported by statistical analysis to identify trends.
- Staff Survey: The 2025 staff survey results are being analysed by protected characteristics to guide planning and prioritisation of our work. Notably, 73% of respondents believe the Council actively promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.
- Housing: Our Planned Delivery Programme (PDP) prioritises new build housing for older persons. This includes 70 extra care units at Myrtle Close, Penarth, and other housing for older people in Penarth and Cowbridge.
- Equality Newsletter: The Council launched an equality newsletter called Ripple in August to raise awareness about projects, national awareness days, staff network activities, and Welsh language initiatives. Each issue includes an inspirational equality-related quote and aims to help staff understand the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and its relevance to their daily work.
- Staff Networks: The Council actively supports three staff networks - GLAM, Diverse, and Abl - through events and initiatives. Recent activities include Pride and Disability Pride flag-raising events, a walking meeting by Abl at Barry Island with plans for Disability History Month, a Diverse network discussion on allyship and anti-racism featuring a presentation from the Head of Digital, and GLAM's planning of member events alongside collaboration with the Equalities Team on the Stonewall Proud Employers submission.
- Promoting Welsh Language and Welsh Education: The Council is actively promoting the Welsh language and Welsh-medium education. Through its Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, the Council is collaborating with partners like Menter Bro Morgannwg to run campaigns such as Diwrnod Shwmae Sumae and Defynyddio Dy Gymraeg, including initiatives like business surveys and stickers for Welsh-speaking staff. In relation to education, the Croeso2Cymraeg campaign was launched to market Welsh education, supported by a regional network of Welsh Education Officers working on the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and Cymraeg 2050. The Welsh Education Forum has also produced promotional videos and a dedicated website to raise the profile of Welsh education in the Vale

Challenges

Our new monitoring approach will take time to embed. The Council's Equalities team are actively supporting Services where needed and this new process will strengthen our ability to report progress to the Scrutiny Committee and, crucially, to increase the likelihood of achieving our equality objectives. This will lead to more positive and equitable outcomes for those who use our services.

To raise awareness of the PSED, a requirement under equality duties, we are having to think about how we can do this without a training budget. We have introduced a new equality and Welsh language newsletter called Ripple, where we will include a section on the PSED every quarter. We will explore other ways of doing this.

The success of our community engagement relies on meaningful conversations with a wide and diverse range of groups. While we already work with organisations represented on our Equalities Consultative Forum, we are keen to broaden this network. Our aim is to ensure strong representation from groups across different communities, especially those who can share insights into the experiences of people with protected characteristics and those affected by poverty or social disadvantage. To help us with this, we are letting people know that we welcome suggestions about groups that they may know about.

Measures and Targets

Our equality measures and targets are set out in our Strategic Equality Plan as objectives and supporting actions. We have adopted a more systematic approach to monitoring the progress of Services in delivering against the strategic equality objectives and associated actions. This includes using a structured spreadsheet to gather updates from Services. As this system beds in, we will be able to report on progress in more detail.

The work driven by the Strategic Equality Plan directly supports the aims of Vale 2030. Equality is a core principle of Vale 2030 and our strategic equality objectives reflect and reinforce this, with a specific focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion. By implementing both plans in tandem, we can ensure we deliver our services in a more inclusive and impactful way.

The Strategic Equality Plan is reported annually to Cabinet, with Scrutiny having considered the 2024/25 report in September.

5. How well are we using our resources?

5.1 People

Description	Performance						Direction of Travel (DoT)
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25		2025/26	
				Q2	Q4	Q2	
CPM/030: Employee turnover (voluntary).	8.04	9.20	10.93	5.06	8.12	4.52	↑
CPM/166: Total number of staff on formal recognised qualifications (apprenticeships, personal learning accounts, etc) within the authority during the year.	N/A (New Measure 2023/24)		41	N/A (Annual)	72.00	38.00	N/A
CPM/212: Percentage of Council employees from minority ethnic backgrounds (representative of the local population profile.)	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A (Annual)	3.30	5.13	N/A
CPM/294: Number of apprentices, excluding teachers, on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes within the authority during the year per 1,000 employees.	4.4	10	4.31	15.00	13.00	14.00	↓
CPM/334: Percentage of respondents who plan to stay with their employer over the next 12 months.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A Survey undertaken in 2025		82%	N/A
CPM/335: Percentage of respondents who feel they are able to make improvements happen in their area of work.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A Survey undertaken in 2025		72%	N/A
CPM/336: Total spend on agency staff as a percentage of the total pay bill.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A (Annual)	7.50	7.50	<->
CPM/337: Percentage of working days / shifts lost due to sickness absence during the year, by reason: • minor illnesses • musculoskeletal • mental health conditions • Other	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A (Annual)	2.08% 1.56% 4.62% 0.81%	0.95% 0.69% 2.10% 0.12%	N/A
CPM/338: Percentage of staff exiting the organisation who are permanent and leave within their first 12 months of employment.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25			N/A (Annual)	3.8%	5.88%	N/A
CPM/373: Percentage of respondents who would be happy to recommend their employer to a friend / family member as a place to work.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A Survey undertaken in 2025		77%	N/A

The consultation period for the draft People Strategy continues until 31st October and has included consultation with our internal staff groups, networks and schools in addition to our partners, for example Natural Resources Wales, Cardiff and Vale Health Board and PHW. The plan remains on track to see the launch of a new People Strategy, aligned to Vale 2030 by the end of the year. This will set the tone for all people related activity moving forward and the successful delivery of our Reshaping programme, transforming the way we work, through improved digital means, Brilliant Basics and the way in which we interact with our residents.

Quarter 2 also saw the assimilation of our Staff survey, which ran during the summer 2025, alongside the scoping of our management development sessions, run in October, supporting our senior leaders to lead with compassion and purpose in a challenging public sector landscape. The sessions have been set to consider the 21st Century Public Servant model, developed by Birmingham University to allow time for reflection on how we as public servants can navigate continued challenges around austerity and public civility.

In addition, we have continued to develop and refresh our policies and procedures, including our Health & Safety and Well-being policies, Hybrid Working and Special Leave. Recruitment activity continues at pace, with continued focus on values-based recruitment and changed working practices to streamline recruitment, improving the experience for our newly recruited staff members.

Our challenges remain one of capacity, financial pressures and workload pressures, but we are on track with our people related activity to support staff development and ensure we have the right people in the right place at the right time to provide the best service to our residents and those most vulnerable in the community.

5.2 Finance

Measures

Description	Performance						Direction of Travel (DoT)
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25		2025/26	
				Q2	Q4	Q2	
CPM/009: Performance against savings targets.	N/A (No data reported)	79%	88%	74.08%	77%	78%	N/A
CPM/291: Reduction in overall level of outstanding sundry debt.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A (Annual)	13.4%	N/A (Annual)	N/A
CPM/332: Percentage of council contracts with social value targets to improve equality/ environmental outcomes.	N/A (New Measure 2025/26))					N/A (Annual)	N/A

Revenue Position at Q2: The Council continues to face significant demand pressures across Children and Adult Services, homelessness, Additional Learning Needs (ALN), and frontline Neighbourhood Services.

An unplanned use of reserves of £3.096m is projected, with £2m from the Budget Risk Reserve, £320k from Housing and Homelessness Reserve, and the remainder from the General Fund. A moratorium on reserve use and a review of planned drawdowns is in place.

Schools: A further £11.387m drawdown brings cumulative school deficits to £15.524m, following a £4.2m deficit in 2024/25. Recovery plans are being developed with schools, mindful of ongoing pressures in pay, ALN, falling pupil numbers and wellbeing matters. The Director of Learning and Skills continues to work with schools and governing bodies to develop plans to address deficits and meets regularly with the Chief Executive, Head of Finance and Leader to discuss measures to address school budget deficit balances including on a case-by-case basis focussing on schools with smaller deficits and those with high irrecoverable deficits.

Savings Delivery: Significant delays in achieving savings for 2025/26 particularly in Neighbourhood and Social Services are impacting outturns, this reflects the complexity of the savings being introduced. Revised timelines will need to be factored into the 2026/27 budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan. 78% (£8771.15M) of savings have been achieved or mitigated at Q2.

Capital Programme position at Q2: The approved Capital Programme stands at £128.739M with £27.279M slippage requested to be moved into the 2026/27 Capital programme. Whilst the revised programme of £98.903M for 2025/6 remains largely on track, a number of schemes have been attributed a high-risk status at Q2. This relates to schemes where there has been little or no spend to date, or the scheme requires additional funding or other delay. Cost pressures remain with many schemes experiencing increased delivery costs, with tenders coming in above allocated budgets. Officers are renegotiating tenders to manage these pressures and ensure value for money. Additionally, there is continued focus on identifying and securing additional funding opportunities to offset cost increases and maintain programme delivery.

Programme adjustments requested for both 2025/26 and future years reflect updated priorities and cost pressures. Slippage reflects delays in some projects due to capacity, procurement, or external factors.

5.3 Reshaping Programme

The Reshaping programme continues to drive forward our work to transform services, improve efficiency, and ensure financial sustainability in line with Vale 2030. Over the first half of 2025/26, significant progress has been made across the programme's Target Operating Model and Service Transformation workstreams, supported by work to strengthen overall programme governance and performance oversight. 67% (£3.777M) of the programme's targeted in-year savings have been achieved or mitigated at Q2.

Delivery has accelerated in key areas. The Strategic Asset Management project group has advanced community asset transfers and rationalisation projects, helping to align the Council's estate with service and community needs. Income generation initiatives are diversifying revenue streams—particularly through new concessions, commercial waste services, and digital payment systems. Workforce engagement has strengthened through the emerging People Strategy and improved internal communications, while the Brilliant Basics charter and tone-of-voice guidance are embedding a culture of customer-focused service. Digital transformation is driving productivity gains through automation, cloud migration, and AI-enabled tools. Insights from community engagement and staff feedback are informing a more collaborative, "place-based" approach to redesigning services.

Some projects have been delayed by capacity constraints, funding pressures, and legal or technical complexities—particularly within community asset transfers, ALN transformation, and major digital development work. The pace of cultural and process change required across the organisation remains challenging, and some dependencies between workstreams have slowed delivery.

Financial pressures, workforce resilience, and dependency on short-term funding streams (e.g., grants) all remain as key risks. There is an ongoing need to balance transformation with day-to-day service delivery while meeting citizen expectations.

Over the coming months, the focus will be on completing critical projects (such as the Financial and Procurement Strategies, People Strategy, and new Neighbourhood Services model), embedding prevention and sustainability principles, and ensuring that transformation continues to deliver tangible outcomes for residents and the organisation.

5.4 Assets

Measures

Description	Performance						Direction of Travel (DoT)
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25		2025/26	
				Q2	Q4	Q2	
Physical							
CPM/339: Reduction in the carbon footprint of the Council's non-domestic buildings.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A (Annual)	131.3 tons increase (target of 1,300 tons reduction)	131.3 tons increase (target of 1,300 tons reduction)	<->
Digital							
CPM/340: Percentage of council services based with partial digital journeys.	N/A (New Measure 2025/26)					N/A (Annual)	N/A
CPM/334: Percentage of respondents who pCPM/341: Indicative efficiencies identified through digitalisation.	N/A (New Measure 2025/26)					N/A (Annual)	N/A
CPM/342: Percentage of council services based with full digital journeys.	N/A (New Measure 2025/26)					N/A (Annual)	N/A

Work continues to align the Council's asset base with service delivery needs, financial sustainability, and community outcomes through the Corporate Asset Management Plan, focusing on data collation, rationalisation, and income generation opportunities. The work of the Reshaping Assets Group has also seen a number of key assets considered for alternative and sustainable uses including a number of community asset transfers and other priority assets.

Key progress at Q2 includes the relocation of Place and Social Services as part of the Eich Lle project, completing Llantwit Major community asset transfer works, and progressing transfers such as Wick Pavilion. The Jenner Park application has been put on hold.

Priority projects include revising plans for Old Hall, and appointing an administrator for Arts Central. Bid evaluations for the Docks Office are nearly complete, Hen Goleg relocation remains on track for October 2027, and funding applications for new social services premises are pending. A dedicated post has been created which now supports asset transfers and community engagement

In relation to highway assets, Welsh LGBI funding secured for two years is enabling priority works and improved maintenance, which is helping to address long-term challenges from aging infrastructure and limited resources. Based on a calculation provided by the County Surveyors Society Wales, it is anticipated that the LGBI monies will assist the Council in correcting approximately 40 defects per 1km of adopted highway network, with the Council currently responsible for maintaining 1,042.3km.

The continuing degradation of highway surfaces over the past few years has seen the pothole repair budget significantly challenged with repairs having to be undertaken to avoid increased third party liability claims. There are similar concerns with the remaining highway infrastructure, with many street lighting columns and structures already reaching, or shortly to reach the end of their safe working life. Maintaining the long-term integrity of the highway infrastructure and key assets to an acceptable standard for safety of citizens remains a long-term challenge due to limited long-term investment. A Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) is in development despite capacity constraints. The HAMP will set out the position of an aging asset and lack of investment in previous years; however, target setting will present significant challenges without identified long-term funding commitments as condition is directly linked to the investment in the network.

Work is currently underway to fully document services and associated individual processes delivered by the Council to enable accurate baseline measurement of digital journeys for the period 2025/26. Progress against these will be reported quarterly once baseline data has been established. In the meantime, we continue to deliver incremental services and have released a number of digital services for residents in Q2.

5.5 Engagement

Measures

Description	Performance						Direction of Travel (DoT)
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25		2025/26	
				Q2	Q4	Q2	
CPM/205: Percentage of residents that strongly or slightly agree that the Vale of Glamorgan council acts in the interest of local residents.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A Annual	16.00	16.00	N/A
CPM/211: Percentage residents' satisfaction with how their complaint has been dealt with overall.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A (Annual)	N/A Data unavailable	N/A Annual	N/A
CPM/216: Percentage of residents who agree that the council is doing enough to address the climate emergency.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A (Annual)	16.00	16.00	N/A
CPM/229: Percentage of residents agreeing that the Council is doing enough to provide services and support for children and young people.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A Annual	15.70	15.70	N/A
CPM/234: Percentage of residents agreeing that the Council is doing enough to provide services and support for older people.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			N/A Annual	13.10	13.10	N/A

CPM/264: Percentage of residents who agree that the council is doing enough to address the nature emergency.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)	N/A Annual	12.60	12.60	N/A
CPM/269: Percentage of residents who strongly or slightly agree that they feel part of their local area.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)	N/A Annual	56.60	56.60	N/A
CPM/270: Percentage of residents who strongly or slightly agree that the people in their local area get on well and help each other	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)	N/A Annual	64.10	64.10	N/A
CPM/271: Percentage of residents very or fairly satisfied overall with the Vale of Glamorgan as a place to live.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)	N/A Annual	60.00	60.00	N/A
CPM/323: Percentage of residents strongly or slightly agreeing that the services provided by the Council represent good value for money.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)	N/A Annual	16.40	16.40	N/A
CPM/324: Percentage of residents who have attempted to influence a council decision(s).	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)	N/A Annual	39.50	39.50	N/A
CPM/325: Percentage of residents aware of all or some of the responsibilities of their local councillors.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)	N/A Annual	81.50	81.50	N/A
CPM326: Percentage of residents who agree that they are easily able to access local facilities and services.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)	N/A Annual	36.80	36.80	
CPM/327: Percentage of residents who strongly or slightly agree that the Vale of Glamorgan Council takes residents' views into account when making a decision.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25	N/A Annual	16.10	16.10	N/A
CPM/328: Percentage of customers who are satisfied with their interaction with the Contact Centre.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25			N/A Data unavailable	N/A
CPM/329: Average rating for digital customer experience.	N/A (New Measure 2024/25)			4.40	N/A

Q2 saw the launch of the second Let's Talk about Life in the Vale survey. Again, we have worked with independent researchers Data Cymru to gather data to help us understand citizens' experiences of living in the Vale of Glamorgan and how our services impact on this. The data collection phase of the project is due to end in November. We anticipate results will be available for publication early in the new year.

The final report will be used as the key source of insight in informing the final budget proposals submitted to cabinet in January. The data will then be used to monitor performance against a number of Vale 2030 performance indicators and inform future Reshaping priorities. Promotion of the survey has been successful so far. 2700 responses have been received at the time of writing. We understand this to be more than any other local authority in Wales has achieved via the new National Residents Survey of which Let's Talk is now a part.

There were a number of other significant engagement exercises undertaken by the Council in Q2. These include consulting on proposals for potential housing sites in Barry as part of the Replacement Local Development Plan; consultation on the Council's Annual Self-Assessment for 2024/25; and seeking views on a new Empty Property Strategy that aims to bring vacant properties back into use as part of our commitment to improving housing availability and supporting local communities.

An area previously identified for improvement is how we feedback on the outcome of our engagement work and make consultation on the development of services more of an ongoing participative process. In line with this engagement continued on investment into an area of open space in Sully. Previous engagement in 2024/25 had established the need for new play facilities and in Q2 of this year the Council went back out to the local community with a series of proposed upgrades to the play area and surrounding open space near Conybeare Road, funded by the new Gwel Yr Ynys housing development (Section 106 funding).

We also helped support one of our key strategic partners, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, in shaping their services in the Vale by promoting their Shaping our Services for the Future, Together exercise via our channels.

5.6 Partnership Working

The Council continues to work in partnership through a range of mechanisms including the Public Services Board, Regional Partnership Board, Safer Vale, Placemaking and School Improvement. Some partnerships are statutory, some may be for the whole of the Vale, others cut across a number of local authority areas, and some may be specific to one part of the Vale. Each partnership will have its own scope or terms of reference, and some will be more formal than others, but it is critical that every partnership arrangement is meaningful and delivering.

In response to recommendations in the Panel Performance Assessment the Council's Strategic Partnership Group has been undertaking a mapping exercise with regards to the potential of different partnerships to contribute to Vale 2030, whether the right people are involved in partnerships at the right level and how well are partnership activities aligned to our priorities. This can be a particular challenge when partnerships cover multiple local authority areas.

Vale 2030 sets out how partnership working is critical to delivering our objectives and the

commitments for the next five years. As part of the communications around Vale 2030, meetings have been held with partners to explore how priorities align and to provide more information about the Partnership Statement within Vale 2030 which is framed around the Council's values of ambitious, open, together and proud.

As part of the Reshaping programme opportunities for partnership working are being explored including work around Community Asset Transfers.

Some particular examples of partnership working include:

- The Climate Change Risk Assessment being undertaken through the PSB.
- The Cardiff Vale Housing Partnership which will increase the number of affordable homes in the area.
- Debt clinics provided by Citizens Advice in the Civic Offices
- Work with Town Councils to take forward placemaking and develop Placemaking Plans
- Work with social care providers through the Section 16 Forum
- Awareness raising around anti-social behaviour including a community information event at Y Rhodfa, Barry Waterfront and leaflets being distributed to residents in identified areas in partnership between Safer Vale and housing associations.
- Work with the Local Nature Partnership who develop projects and events in the Vale
- The launch of a new Vale Food Strategy through Food Vale
- Delivery of the free summer programme of play

Partnership working will also be included in the Directorate Self-Assessments for 2025/26 and the Directorate Plans for 2026/27 to more effectively capture the range and impact of our partnership working.

6. How effective is our Governance?

6.1 Annual Internal Audit Plan

The Annual Internal Audit Plan was agreed by Governance and Audit Committee at its June 2025 meeting and work has progressed steadily throughout the year. 15 audit reports have been issued as final and 4 issued as draft resulting in 37% of the agreed plan being achieved by the end of September 2025. This is ahead of the team's target of 30% for the period. 94% of the reports issued with an opinion were either Substantial Assurance or Reasonable Assurance opinions (6 Substantial Assurance and 11 Reasonable Assurance). 1 report was issued with a Limited Assurance opinion (6%); Vehicle Fuel Management and operational managers have agreed to implement all of the report recommendations to demonstrate an improvement in the overall control environment.

There have been no significant changes to the Audit Plan to date. The Head of the Regional Internal Audit Service is keen to get feedback from auditees following the issue of the final report so he can continually improve the delivery of the audit service. There has been a noticeable improvement in the engagement of auditees providing such feedback compared to the previous year; there is more positive communication between the auditees and the Internal Audit team.

The key challenge will be in ensuring the team has sufficient resources to continue to deliver the agreed audit plan and provide the appropriate level of assurance on the internal control environment, governance and risk management within the Council.

6.2 Strategic Insight Board – External Regulatory Recommendations Tracker

Strong overall progress at Q2 in relation to the 19 local and national regulatory actions on the Strategic Insight Board (SIB) tracker with 95% (18) of actions on track (Green). Only one Amber-rated action remains, linked to the Welsh Quality Housing Standards review. No Red-rated actions.

At Directorate level, there are 15 actions attributed to Corporate Resources which are all rated Green, 3 actions applicable to the Learning & Skills directorate are rated Green and 1 Amber rated action remains, attributed to Environment & Housing. There are currently no regulatory actions applicable to the Social Services and Place directorates.

In relation to 14 local regulatory recommendations, 8 High priority rated actions have been attributed a Green performance status; 5 medium priority actions have been rated Green and

the remaining one Low priority action has been rated Amber. In relation to 5 national regulatory recommendations, 2 high priority actions are rated Green with the remaining 3, medium actions rated Green.

Progress in response to external regulatory recommendations will continue to be updated via the SIB tracker throughout the year, reflecting the annual audit work programme agreed with our external regulators. During the quarter, the audit findings from three reviews (Complaint Handling, School Balances/Deficits and Temporary Accommodation) are in the process of being finalised and these will be reflected in the SIB tracker for monitoring at Q3. The Strategic Leadership Team, Governance & Audit Committee and Cabinet will continue to have oversight to ensure actions are completed, reported and closed down in a timely manner.

6.3 Corporate Risk

At Q2, the overall position for risks on the corporate risk register remain unchanged from the previous quarter. One risk remains Very High (CR5) Additional Learning Needs. Five risks score High (CR1) Financial Resources, (CR2) Workforce & Organisational Change, (CR4) Climate Change & Nature Emergency, (CR6) Social Care Demand & Capacity and (CR8) Housing & Homelessness. A further four risks are Medium/High (CR10) Physical Assets, (CR3) Information & Cyber Security, (CR7) Transition from the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS), and (CR9) Delivery of Major Regeneration Project. A final two risks are Medium (CR11) Digital and (CR12) Safeguarding.

Following review by risk owners, one risk (Workforce & Organisational Development) is forecast to diminish. Work undertaken across the Council is leading to improvement in recruitment, vacancy and absence rates. Strengthening of workforce planning across council services, bespoke support to areas facing significant recruitment and retention challenges, a management development programme, all aim to strengthen resilience and support service transformation.

Six risks are forecast to escalate. The Information & Cyber Security risk is forecast to escalate reflecting the turbulent cyberthreat landscape and recent attacks on councils and UK businesses. Despite positive progress with Project Zero initiatives, the Climate Change and Nature Emergency risk is forecast to escalate due to associated resource constraints and statutory compliance risks. Funding shortfalls, workforce challenges, provider fragility and rising demand remain critical in relation to the Social Care Demand & Capacity risk, reflecting its forecasted escalation. Legislative changes and resource constraints are driving escalation of the Housing & Homelessness risk. A physical asset maintenance backlog, Net Zero commitments, and funding pressures pose significant challenges for the Council and are driving escalation of the Physical Assets risk. Despite positive progress, capacity limitations risk under delivery of the Council's digital transformation commitments.

Five risks are forecast to stay static. Budget pressures and school deficits remain significant; and proposals are being considered to escalate school deficits to a corporate risk, reflecting its significance on the Council's financial sustainability. Despite positive work ongoing to reduce the risk, complex statutory duties and resource constraints persist in relation to Additional Learning Needs, which has the highest risk score of 16. The transition from WICCIS risk is forecast to stay static reflecting the positive progress in relation to implementation of the new system, but risks remain. Whilst funding and partner viability challenges remain in relation to the Delivery of Major projects, good progress has been made in revising the Council's Levelling Up scheme following the withdrawal of a key partner. Furthermore, the UK Government has confirmed that changes to the Council's scheme are acceptable. The safeguarding risk is forecast to stay static reflecting ongoing governance and training improvements.

A summary of the Council's key risks at Q2 are detailed below.

Risk Ref	Risk	Inherent Risk Score	Effectiveness of Controls score	Residual Risk Score			Direction of Travel	Forecast Direction of Travel
				Likelihood	Impact	Total		
5	Additional Learning Needs	16 (VH)	1 (L)	4	4	**16 (VH)**	↔	↔
1	Financial Resources	16 (VH)	1 (L)	3	4	**12 (H)**	↔	↔
2	Workforce and Organisational Change	12 (H)	1 (L)	4	3	**12 (H)**	↔	↓
4	Climate Change and Nature Emergency	12 (H)	1 (L)	4	3	**12 (H)**	↔	↑
6	Social Care Demand and Capacity	16 (H)	2 (M/L)	3	4	**12 (H)**	↔	↑
8	Housing and Homelessness	16 (VH)	2 (M/L)	4	3	**12 (H)**	↔	↑
10	Physical Assets	12 (H)	2 (M/L)	3	3	**9 (M/H)**	↔	↑
3	Information and Cyber Security	12 (H)	4 (M)	3	3	**9 (M/H)**	↔	↑
7	Transition from the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)	16 (V H)	4 (M)	3	3	**9 (M/H)**	↔	↔
9	Delivery of Major Regeneration Projects	9 (M/H)	2 (M/L)	2	3	**6 (M/H)**	↔	↔
11	Digital	9 (M/H)	4 (M)	2	2	**4 (M)**	↔	↑
12	Safeguarding	12 (H)	4 (M)	2	2	**4 (M)**	↔	↔

6.4 Scrutiny

It is only six months into the new arrangements so too soon to make a robust statement surrounding longer term impact and outcomes. Infrastructure has been developed to support new arrangements including revisions to the Council's calendar, Council's Constitution and changes to membership. A dedicated Scrutiny hub has been re-launched on MemberNet including details of each Scrutiny committee, links to papers and training, tools and resources to support Members in undertaking Scrutiny, alongside the public website being updated to reflect the relevant changes.

Achievements

- The first Committee meetings of the new Scrutiny remits took place and agreed a forward work programme based upon changes to ways in working
- All four Scrutiny Committees are undertaking Task and Finish work, with varying degrees of pace dependent upon the topic and group. A wide range of Members across Scrutiny Committees have committed their involvement within these strands of work and there has been a range of public participation within shaping this work.
- The Task and Finish group surrounding Procurement was completed, making 14 recommendations to Cabinet which were all partially upheld.
- There has been positive engagement from Members, Officers and wider partners surrounding Task and Finish.
- The first joint Scrutiny session looking at the Annual Self-Assessment Report was undertaken, leading to five recommendations from Scrutiny Committee Members, with 80% of these recommendations being accepted by Cabinet.
- A series of Member Briefings which previously would have happened in the Scrutiny space have been undertaken, and a calendar has been devised for the remainder of the municipal year.
- A range of information only items which previously would have been noted have been shared with Members of Committees via different mediums. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of noting recommendations at Committee meetings.
- A revised recommendation tracker, now available on the Council's public website, has been developed to more robustly and openly monitor the impact of recommendations.
- There has been positive engagement from Youth Council and Tenants Group is understanding how they can get involved in Scrutiny beyond Start Well and Live Well Scrutiny Committees.
- There are social media campaigns to promote the Council's Scrutiny meetings, including details as to how to participate.

Key challenges and lessons learned

- Task and Finish is anticipated to take longer than identified during the Scrutiny design phase, as meetings are being held fortnightly due to Members availability. It is anticipated that each Committee will undertake two pieces of Task and Finish work within the municipal year, instead of the proposed three pieces of work.
- As with all significant change activity, there is still a culture between officers and Members

of trying to equate new ways of working with the previous status quo, requiring Democratic Services to use additional time in supporting officers to understand the variety of channels to Scrutiny, and really considering where they would like Scrutiny to add value, rather than noting items as previous arrangements.

- Attendance at thematic Member Briefings has been mixed. In order to encourage a broader range of Members to attend, a forward work programme for the year has been created, a communication to all Members has been distributed surrounding their importance and value, MemberNet has a dedicated Member Briefing section to include section recordings and associated materials, and the start time has been pushed back to 5pm to encourage more Members to attend.

Upcoming improvement activity

- Increasing the participation of Youth Council representatives across all Scrutiny Committees in the next year, through co-option, written representations and involved within Task and Finish.
- Improving how we communicate with the public surrounding Scrutiny and how to get involved including the development of a Scrutiny hub on the Council's Engagement platform, revising the public webpages to be more user friendly, refreshing the branding on the Council's media channels to be more engaging and undertaking a revised approach to social media to promote content and encourage participation.
- Developing a robust framework to support co-option to ensure a consistency of approach.
- Developing a framework to encourage all Scrutiny Committee members to participate in reflective practice and inform future improvements.
- Undertaking a lessons learned approach following the first iteration of systematic Task and Finish to inform future improvements.
- Commence an external review of Scrutiny arrangements with external audit.

Vale 2030 Performance Monitoring Report

Quarter 2

2025/26

(1st April – 30th September)

Vale of Glamorgan Council