



Well-being Objective 1

Enable people to get involved, participate in their local communities and shape local services

Involvement is highlighted within the Well-being of Future Generations Act as one of 5 ways of working in order for public services across Wales to improve well-being and achieve the national well-being goals. From the findings of our Well-being Assessment, the Vale PSB has recognised the importance of ensuring all our residents are engaged with and feel part of our communities to bring about a range of well-being benefits.

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Residents are a valuable resource, offering a first-hand perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of their community. They can contribute a cross-section of diverse ideas and challenges that might otherwise be overlooked. Residents can help analyse the specific needs of their community and ensure sustainability projects are properly designed to meet those needs...Sustainability takes time;...commitment - both to sustainability and the community engagement process - will be ongoing

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Sustainable Cities Institute

Our Vale

Where are we now?

Our Well-being Assessment found that having a say in decisions was extremely important to Vale residents although the number of people who thought that they were able to influence decisions was low. This was also identified as being important to children and young people with the 2016 Schools Super Survey showing that 71% of primary school pupils and 85% of secondary school pupils stating that it is fairly or very important 'to have a say in decisions that affect me'. The assessment also found that those in less affluent communities are more likely to be disengaged and in order to respond to the needs of these communities, particularly in order to achieve our second well-being objective to 'reduce poverty and tackle inequalities linked to deprivation'; we need to understand and empower them.

Enabling people to become involved in their local communities can help to increase their sense of belonging to the local area, increase satisfaction with life in general and help ensure all of our communities are confident that their voices are heard. Significant engagement was undertaken as part of the well-being assessment and Population Needs Assessment through the 'Let's Talk' campaign and this has highlighted to partners the need to be more innovative and joined up when engaging with our local communities. This will build our knowledge and understanding and is an area where collective action can make a real impact. Understanding and engaging with our communities will also ensure we continue to adapt and change how we work so that all sectors of the community find it easy and convenient to engage.

Through ensuring we all have a better understanding of the assets within our communities partners can work together to make a range of positive impacts. Ensuring our residents are engaged in community life can not only help benefit partners but will have a range of well-being benefits for individuals, families and communities themselves. Volunteering was identified in the assessment as a major asset in the Vale and the effects on a person's well-being cannot be underestimated in terms of improving mental well-being and tackling social exclusion.

The Well-being Assessment highlighted social isolation and loneliness, particularly in rural areas, as a potential future threat with a predicted increase in the number of people living alone; by 2035 it is predicted that double the number of females aged 65+ will be living alone compared to males. Volunteering can be seen as an asset to build upon to help overcome this. In addition to helping reduce social isolation and loneliness, volunteering can also help provide people with a huge variety of new skills, enhance career prospects and improve physical and mental well-being. In 2015/16 it was estimated that the monetary value of volunteering in the Vale was £36,903,499 demonstrating the significant contribution that volunteers make to their local communities.

Our PSB self-assessment found that policy and leadership around engaging with our communities is often good although resource and other factors can often be a restraint to activities. It was recognised that there are lots of activities taking place across partners to engage with our communities but this is an area where improvements can be made to ensure we pool our resources to undertake activities jointly and share the evidence gained. This will ensure that we all have a better, more holistic understanding of our communities whilst ensuring our residents find it easy to talk with us and avoid consultation fatigue. The assessment also found that there is often a lack of feedback to those who have been engaged with once the initial activity has taken place.

It is clear from our evidence that by enabling people to get involved, participate in their local communities and shape local services the PSB can bring about a range of well-being benefits and is an area where collective action from partners can make a positive difference.

Our Future

As we look towards creating the Vale of Glamorgan we want for the future, we need to ensure everyone can participate in their local community and have trust and confidence in the services they receive and play a part in shaping them.

Enabling people to become involved in their local communities can help to increase their sense of belonging to the local area, increase satisfaction with life in general and help ensure all of our communities are confident that their voices are heard. We know that low numbers of people in the Vale believe they can actually influence decisions and must work to change this statistic in the future. We know that having a say in decisions is important to our future generations with 85% of secondary school pupils in the Vale agreeing with this statement. We need to harness this and ensure that the future Vale is a place where everyone can have their say.

We are currently in a period of austerity with public service providers having to make difficult decisions and the future of the Vale's economy is set to remain uncertain with the effects of global and national issues such as Brexit and technological advances unknown. Ensuring people from a wide cross sector of our society are actively involved in community life now and into the future can help us in the redesign and delivery of services at a time of financial austerity.

Every community has its own strengths and weaknesses and services must be able to respond to these differing needs, only by involving all of our communities in designing services can we do this for the future. We need to build upon and harness the assets that already exist in the Vale and build upon the high levels of volunteering that exist here.

We will need to embrace changing technologies to ensure that it is easy for all sectors of our community to get involved. Communities no longer exist only geographically but digitally and we need to consider new ways of reaching people to ensure we engage with all sectors of our society.

Current predictions show that by 2035 over 17,000 people aged 65 and over will be living alone in the Vale of Glamorgan and as highlighted by the Older People's Commissioner 'loneliness and isolation are cross cutting issues that seriously impact on the health and well-being of people in Wales. It is imperative that loneliness is measured and the social capital of relationships and connectivity are understood and addressed in terms of building a resilient Wales'. We need to ensure we enable all residents to get involved in community life in order to avoid the range of negative effects social isolation and loneliness can have on a person's well-being in the future.

Through delivering our actions and achieving this objective our long term vision for the future Vale is

Well-being Objective 1: Our Vision

“Everyone across the Vale has their voice heard, has the opportunity to get involved in shaping local services and is confident that they are listened to and can see the difference that their involvement has made. Public engagement is joined up between public and third sector services, and partners have adapted engagement methods to respond to the changing needs of our communities. People find it easy and convenient to communicate with us as we make the most of advances in digital technology but still recognise the value of face to face contact. We all have a better understanding of the assets within our communities and the unique characteristics of each community whether that is based around a place or having a shared characteristic like age or having a common interest. People from all backgrounds and of all ages have the opportunity to participate in community life, take part in designing and delivering solutions to local issues and are empowered to work together to identify and prevent issues that affect them - locally, nationally and globally. Levels of volunteering in the Vale have continued to rise and greater capacity and confidence has led to increased levels of participation in less affluent areas. The wide-ranging benefits of being involved in community life are realised with increased involvement helping to improve health and well-being, make communities more cohesive and reduce loneliness and social isolation.”

Our Steps

Outlined below are the actions we will deliver towards achieving this objective and shows the first set of steps we will be taking from 2018 to 2023 towards realising our longer term vision for the future Vale of Glamorgan.

What will we start doing today?

Adopt the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales.

Research best practice in engagement and community participation within Wales, the UK and internationally to develop new approaches with a particular emphasis on:

- digital methods
- accessibility/plain language
- children and young people
- deprived communities
- hard to reach groups
- opportunities through sport, culture and the environment

Support and promote volunteering opportunities for staff and residents of all ages recognising the range of personal and community benefits.

What will take us a little longer to deliver?

Produce an engagement toolkit for partners across the PSB to support a more integrated approach to our engagement activities which places the community at the centre.

Work with one of our most deprived communities to identify and develop a co-produced project which involves the community right at the start to determine what is needed and the best solution.

Develop our understanding and knowledge about our local communities and how we can encourage more people to get involved in their community.

Work with staff and those working in the community e.g. sports coaches and volunteers to identify needs, raise awareness and signpost to services which support well-being e.g. dementia, domestic abuse, isolation/loneliness, making healthy lifestyle changes.

Build on the experience of local time banking schemes and those in neighbouring areas to explore the potential of a Vale wide/regional time banking scheme.

What will success look like in 2023?

Shared standards for engagement are developed.

Skills, resources and expertise regarding engagement are shared across organisations leading to a more innovative, and consistent approach across partners.

People across the Vale have a voice.

Opportunities for engagement activities linked to the local environment and culture are developed.

Loneliness and social isolation across all age groups is tackled.

The relationships that staff and volunteers have within the community are built upon to provide information about services and recognise vulnerability.

Contributions of all age groups to the local community are recognised.

Opportunities for staff to develop new skills and develop more insight into the communities they serve are created.

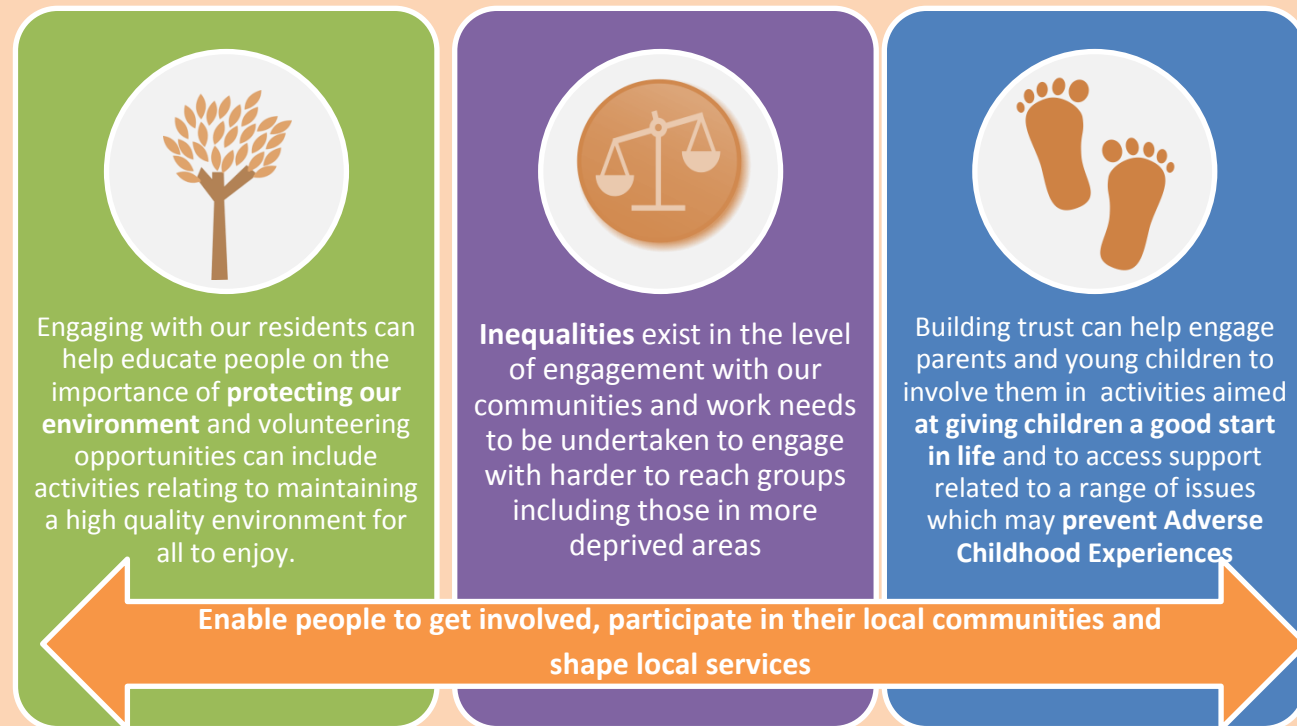
Communities are empowered with greater capacity to help deliver local solutions to local issues.

Volunteers are encouraged and feel valued.

Our Contribution

The following illustrates just some of the ways we will be contributing to the national well-being goals, how we will be putting the five ways of working into practice and how by achieving this objective we will also contribute towards achieving our other well-being objectives

By enabling people to get involved, participate in their local communities and shape local services we will also contribute towards achieving our other objectives



By working sustainably to deliver this objective...



Ensuring services are fit for the **long term** by working with communities to reflect changing needs



Preventing loneliness and social isolation through increased community participation and community spirit helping to improve the well-being of our residents



Integrating engagement activities across partners to ensure people find it easy to participate in community life and have their voice heard



Collaborating to pool the intelligence gained through engagement activities across partners helping us to better understand the strengths, assets and challenges within our communities, developing a holistic understanding of people's needs.



Involving people in shaping the services we provide and talk to them about what matters most to them.

...we will maximise our contribution to the national well-being goals...

