



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9TH DECEMBER 2014

SUBJECT: 6-MONTH UPDATE - IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE NO.4

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires all Local Authorities in Wales to set and publish a set of priorities that improve the life of citizens. The Wales Audit Office (WAO) use Improvement Objectives (IO) to evaluate the Council's likelihood of improvement and following that, the level of actual improvement that is achieved for the citizens of Caerphilly.
- 1.2 The Council is required to review their improvement objectives to remain relevant and current. The purpose of this report is to update Members of the review of performance for Improvement Objective No. 4 (IO4) for the first 6 months of 2014:- IO4 relates to:-

"Improve awareness, access, variety and use of leisure, community and sporting facilities".

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The outcome for this objective is that people in Caerphilly lead active lifestyles. This Improvement Objective is concerned with improving the sporting and leisure facilities across our County Borough. It is also about increasing the usage of our facilities. We want our County Borough to have excellent sporting and leisure facilities that encourage all parts of the community to be more active, more often.
- 2.2 The Improvement Objective has been chosen because we recognise that being physically active is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. Improving our sport and leisure facilities and finding innovative ways to encourage our citizens to use the facilities on offer is one way we can help support our citizens lead healthier active lives. While there is clear medical evidence to prove that being physically active has health benefits, there is also evidence to prove that active lifestyles can improve educational attainment and tackle some of our social issues by transforming the lives of those living in our communities, particularly those in areas of deprivation.
- 2.3 This report summarises some of the excellent progress made during 2014 and highlights some of the areas that require further focus. The report clearly shows that significant progress has been made in improving facilities and increasing levels of participation. However, it also recognises that more is required, within current resources, to improve the quality of life of our residents.
- 2.4 This report also includes a "dashboard" of key performance indicators (PI's) that are used to monitor progress against targets. Some of these PI's are set nationally so we can benchmark and compare against other local Authorities, while some are local PI's to allow a monitoring of trend in performance. The attached dashboard is evidence that improvements have been

made against most measures and actions are in place to further improve areas where targets have not been achieved. It should be noted that some of the indicators are collected either annually or even every 2 years so progress against these indicators can be difficult to measure against after 6 months.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Local Government Measure 2009 requires each Local Authority to publish priorities for improvement called Improvement Objectives.
- 3.2 This Improvement Objective is aligned to Creating an Active Caerphilly, the Vision for Sport in Wales and the Single Integrated Plan.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 There has been positive progress against most of the actions in the Improvement Objective. The following highlights some of the actions and provides an update on performance and progress made against each action. The attached dashboard (Appendix 1) also provides performance indicators that detail the measures and targets that are also used to monitor progress. Some of these measures are National Indicators; some are collected through surveys (eg: school sport survey) while others are collected locally through Smart Card data. The timescales for collection of this data also varies from every 2 years to monthly.
- 4.2 It is important to collect data, however this is only one method of evaluating progress so this report also provides members with an update against each of the actions.
- 4.3 **We will ensure all activities are in a fun and safe environment:-** Customers will continue to be more active if the activities are enjoyable and they feel safe. All activities are risk assessed and reviewed regularly to ensure they meet the need and abilities of our customers.
- 4.4 **We will source additional investment:-** While service budgets are under pressure through the challenges of the Medium Term Financial Plan, significant grant aid has been secured to help support service and community initiatives. This grant funding has resulted in enhanced facilities and improved provision for disadvantaged groups.
- 4.5 **Develop a Leisure Facilities Strategy:-** Scrutiny Members approved the draft strategy at a meeting in October and wider consultation is currently underway.
- 4.6 **Engage with Schools and parents to ensure children are provided the opportunity to learn to swim by the age of 11 years:-** Significant changes have been introduced in an effort to improve current under performance, when only 51% of pupils are achieving the national standard. Pupils are now swimming at years 3 and 4 to ensure they start learning at an earlier age. All lessons are being delivered by qualified swim teachers and the lesson delivery plan is also consistent across all centres, within both schools lessons and the leisure centre programme. The introduction of this new approach will ensure that in the near future every child will be able to swim when they leave primary school.
- 4.7 **We will retain users by fully implementing a scheme that rewards loyalty and improves communication with customers:-** Customer retention is at its highest ever level with an increase from 3.2 to 9.2 months. This may appear a low figure but compares very favourably with the industry average for retention of customers. A package called "Communicate" has been introduced to improve interaction between staff and customers and early signs indicate that this is having a positive impact on levels of customer enjoyment, satisfaction and retention.
- 4.8 **We will grow a skilled and passionate workforce and increase the number of volunteers:-** A comprehensive programme of continual professional development is

improving the quality of our paid and voluntary workforce. The greatest impact is evident through the mentoring programme that supports coaches and volunteers beyond the traditional training courses in their community club setting. This support has improved the competence, confidence and delivery of these volunteers ultimately leading to increased community club membership and the participant experience.

- 4.9 **Introduce a programme to identify and support the more able and talented in Sport:-** The opening of the new Centre of Sporting Excellence has provided a unique opportunity to identify and support the next generation of elite sportsmen and women. Our mission is that through our programmes we want every player to have the opportunity and support to play for Wales. A range of programmes are being delivered to ensure we achieve this mission. These programmes are being supported by Cardiff City, the Dragons and National Governing Bodies of Sport.
- 4.10 **Promote the well-being benefits of being physically active:-** New social media techniques have been introduced to improve communication messages to residents. There are over 1,500 followers on twitter and 1,300 Facebook friends. Other innovative methods are being used to continually promote the benefits of an active lifestyle to our target audience.
- 4.11 **Improve pathways to reduce drop off, improve community clubs and a wider choice of activities:-** Programmes have been introduced to particularly encourage more levels of physical activity such as “Love our Lives” (LOL) and “Us Girls” which are very well attended and addressing the gender imbalance. The ‘Positive Futures’ scheme is also being launched where sport is used as a tool to engage disaffected youths in our most deprived communities. This is a multi agency partnership scheme involving the Police, Community Safety, Community First and many other partners working collaboratively to achieve a common goal.
- 4.12 **Support sustainable Community Clubs through the “Thriving Clubs” scheme:-** This scheme has probably been one of the most successful over the last 6-months. Community Clubs have received intensive support to help grow the infrastructure, increase capacity and increase participation and membership. Some clubs have seen their membership triple in numbers. One example is Rhymney Valley Athletic Club that was on the brink of folding with only 10 members 6 months ago to now having over 100 registered members training and competing on a weekly basis. The “Thriving Clubs” scheme will now need to be expanded to support more Community Sport Clubs. It is hoped this will contribute to improving the performance indicator for Sports Club participation.
- 4.13 **Invest in improving facilities for customers:-** Significant improvements to our facilities have enhanced the customer experience. Examples include a new spinning studio, updated changing rooms and external decoration at Heolddu Leisure Centre. Risca Leisure centre improvements include a new fitness and health suite with further improvements planned this year. Attendance at these sites has increased dramatically as a result of this investment.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equalities implications associated with this report although the objective seeks to address inequalities in levels of provision.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report, although it must be recognised that the Medium Term Financial Plan will continue to present challenges.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 The results of all consultations have been incorporated in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report and provide comments on progress achieved over the last 6 months of this Improvement Objective No. 4.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To provide Members with regular updates on progress with Improvement Objective No. 4 and ensure that the Council undertakes effective scrutiny for monitoring improvement of performance.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Local Government Measure 2009.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Performance Dashboard