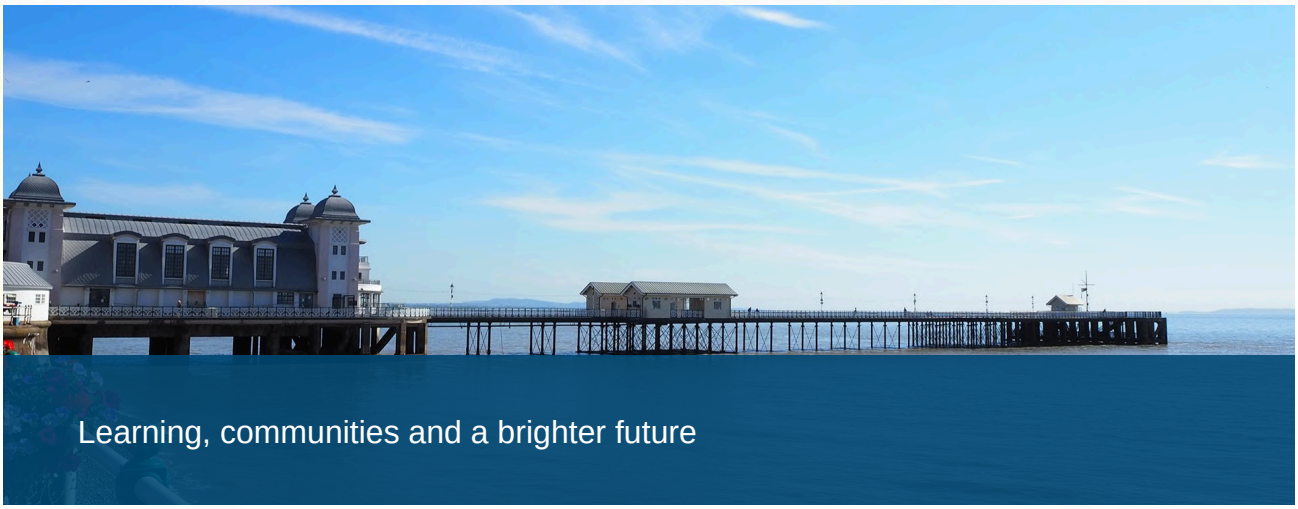


VALE2030 / LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources

Make a difference. Shape what's next. Come join us.

Make your next chapter matter.



Lead school financial sustainability and transformation across the Vale

Thank you for considering joining us as Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources. This permanent senior leadership role has a clear and pressing priority: helping schools address financial pressures, strengthen long-term sustainability and make the changes needed to protect high-quality education for children and young people.

School deficits are a significant corporate risk. Responding well will take more than short-term savings. It calls for credible financial leadership, constructive challenge, thoughtful transformation and sustained partnership with headteachers and governing bodies. You will help turn financial insight into realistic plans, strengthen confidence in decision-making and support schools to achieve lasting improvement.

Alongside this central responsibility, you will lead a wider portfolio covering strategy, adult community learning, libraries, arts and culture. These services are important in their own right and offer opportunities to connect learning and community outcomes across the Vale.

We're looking for a leader who can balance urgency with empathy. Someone who understands financial risk, can help others navigate difficult choices and brings people with them through change. You will work through relationships, evidence and influence, recognising the distinct responsibilities of schools and governing bodies.

Your opportunity. Our Vale.

A welcome from

Elizabeth Jones

Director of Learning and Skills



Learning, schools and communities

Learning and Skills is about opportunity at every age. Our schools help children and young people build their futures, while our libraries and community learning services open doors throughout life. This role will make a real difference to both.

Our immediate and most significant challenge is the financial sustainability of schools. Ongoing deficits present a corporate risk, and we need a leader who can work alongside schools to develop credible recovery and transformation approaches, build financial capability and support sustainable choices without losing sight of educational priorities. The role also provides leadership for community learning, libraries, arts and culture, where quality, access and long-term sustainability matter.

The Directorate Plan 2026/27 gives a picture of work already under way and the opportunities ahead. We are developing a joined-up approach to reading, connecting schools, community-focused schools and libraries, with targeted programmes for families and learners who may face additional barriers. We are exploring how community learning, libraries and culture can reach more people and remain sustainable, including better use of our spaces and assets. And we are working with schools to tackle budget deficits and strengthen financial resilience while keeping outcomes for learners at the centre. These are priorities to build on, not a complete description of the role.

Our work in practice

The Directorate's 2026/27 priorities show how the different parts of this role connect: improving literacy through schools and libraries; widening participation in community learning and cultural activity; and making sure resources support services that communities value. The role offers the chance to help shape these priorities over the longer term.

If you bring curiosity, sound judgement and a belief in what people can achieve when we work together, I hope you'll consider joining us.

Elizabeth Jones

Director of Learning and Skills

DISCOVER THE VALE

A place worth being part of

The Vale is a place of coastal towns, countryside and close-knit communities. From Barry and Penarth to Cowbridge and Llantwit Major, each place has its own character, strengths and ambitions. We're proud to serve them all.

Our Corporate Plan, Vale 2030: Strong Communities with a Bright Future, sets out five goals:

Strong communities. Bright futures.



Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit



Respecting And Celebrating Our Environment



Giving Everyone a Good Start in Life



Supporting And Protecting Those Who Need Us



Being The Best Council We Can Be

We know that delivering on these ambitions means changing how we work. Our Reshaping programme helps us improve services, use our resources wisely and work more closely with the people and communities we serve.

A Council that works with people to make things better.

The opportunity within Learning and Skills



The primary focus of this role is supporting schools to achieve financial stability and ongoing transformation. Working with the Director of Learning and Skills, fellow Heads of Service, headteachers, governing bodies and partners, you will also connect this priority with the wider portfolio:

- Schools financial sustainability and transformation - supporting credible financial improvement plans, stronger financial capability, timely challenge and sustainable changes in how resources are used, while keeping outcomes for learners at the centre.
- Strategy and integration - connecting directorate priorities, financial and performance insight, risk management and practical delivery across services.
- Community learning, libraries, arts and culture - leading accessible, effective services that support lifelong learning, reading, skills, creativity and participation.

Supporting sound, evidence-led choices across the portfolio, with particular attention to the corporate risk associated with school deficits and the balance between immediate recovery and longer-term resilience.

The opportunities and challenges ahead

Helping schools build a sustainable future

School deficits represent a significant corporate risk. You will play a leading role in helping schools and governing bodies respond to financial pressures, make informed choices and develop sustainable approaches that continue to put learners first.

This will call for financial insight, practical transformation and the confidence to have constructive conversations about difficult decisions. You will work alongside school leaders, respecting their responsibilities while providing clear advice, challenge and support.



Connecting learning, libraries and communities

Connecting learning and communities - Alongside this priority, you will lead work across community learning, libraries, arts and culture. The Directorate's plans include connecting reading and literacy support across schools and libraries, widening participation and developing services that remain accessible and sustainable.

You will use community insight and partnerships to help more people develop skills, enjoy reading, take part in cultural life and connect with others across the Vale.

Lead lasting change through people

Leading change through people - Lasting improvement depends on relationships as much as plans. You will bring colleagues and partners together around shared priorities, support teams through change and create a culture where people feel able to contribute ideas and take responsibility.

You will also give elected members and senior leaders clear, balanced advice about progress, risks and the decisions ahead.

Your most important contribution will be helping schools move towards greater financial stability: supporting credible plans, stronger financial understanding and well-managed transformation that protects educational priorities. You will help the Council and schools develop a clearer shared picture of progress, risks and the choices ahead.

Help schools build strong foundations for the future.

You could help schools establish stronger financial foundations and make lasting changes to how resources are planned and used, while keeping educational priorities at the heart of decisions.

Across the wider portfolio, you could improve access to learning, libraries and cultural opportunities, strengthen partnerships and support colleagues to deliver services that respond to community needs.

The difference will be evident in more resilient schools, better-informed decisions and services that make a meaningful difference to people's lives.



THE WAY WE WORK

Our values in action

Our values are part of everyday working life. Here's what they could look like in this role.

Open

- Create space for honest conversations about financial pressures, progress and risk.
- Listen to schools, colleagues and communities, and use evidence and feedback to improve decisions.
- Be clear about difficult choices and accountable for the decisions you make.

Together

- Build trusted relationships with schools and governing bodies, recognising their responsibilities and professional expertise.
- Bring teams and partners together around shared priorities rather than relying on positional authority.
- Develop colleagues, recognise their contribution and create an inclusive environment where people can do their best work.

Ambitious

- Look beyond immediate financial pressures to develop sustainable, longer-term solutions.
- Challenge established ways of working with curiosity and constructive judgement.
- Use insight, innovation and continuous learning to improve outcomes for learners and communities.

Proud

- Act as a visible and credible ambassador for public service in the Vale.
- Use public resources carefully and demonstrate fairness, integrity and sound judgement.
- Recognise achievements and help colleagues and partners see the difference their work makes.

Our future plans and your contribution

Vale 2030 gives us a shared direction. A key priority for this role is responding to the corporate risk posed by school deficits through sustained financial improvement and transformation, alongside the Directorate Plan's ambitions for literacy, community learning, libraries and inclusive participation.

As a permanent Head of Service, you will have the opportunity to move beyond short-term interventions: building enduring financial capability and stronger partnerships with schools, supporting long-term changes in practice, and providing consistent leadership across the wider portfolio.



What we are looking for

We're looking for a senior leader with strong financial and transformation capability who can support schools through complex decisions and sustained improvement. You will be able to influence headteachers and governing bodies without relying on direct authority, and lead a wider portfolio of community-facing services with care and credibility.

- Significant experience of strategic leadership in a complex organisation.
- Strong financial leadership and judgement, including evidence of addressing significant financial pressures, improving sustainability and using financial insight to support transformation.
- The ability to build trust and influence schools, governing bodies or similarly autonomous partners, combining support with constructive challenge and clear accountability.
- Experience leading change, improvement and collaboration across organisational boundaries.
- Political awareness, sound judgement and the ability to communicate complex matters clearly.
- Inclusive, compassionate leadership that develops people and sustains performance.

Your work. Your impact. Your Vale.



Why join us?

This is an opportunity to tackle one of the Directorate's most significant challenges: helping schools become financially sustainable while continuing to deliver for learners. Alongside that priority, you will lead work that widens access to learning, supports libraries and culture, and strengthens the use of public resources.

We support flexible ways of working where service needs allow, as well as learning and development, staff networks and access to the Local Government Pension Scheme. Please check the confirmed terms of the appointment when published.

Interested?

If this role resonates with you and you would like to contribute your leadership to this important work, we would welcome your application.

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact:

Liz Jones, Director of Learning and Skills elizjones@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Closing date	6th December 2026
First-stage interviews	14th December 2026
Final-stage interviews	22nd December 2026

The role profile



Job Title	Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources
Post Number	PH-AA-001
Directorate	Learning and Skills
Location	Civic Offices, Barry & Remote Working
Grade	Head of Service
Responsible to	Director of Learning and Skills
Responsible for	Strategic and enabling leadership across strategy, community learning and resource functions. Working collaboratively with schools, partners and colleagues across the Council to support improvement, sustainability and long-term impact.

Role purpose

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to inclusive, high-quality and sustainable learning opportunities. Ongoing school deficits represent a significant corporate risk. The Learning and Skills Directorate must support schools to address financial pressures and transform sustainably, while maintaining educational priorities and continuing to provide effective community learning, library, arts and cultural services.

The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources is a permanent senior leadership role whose primary purpose is to lead and enable the Directorate's response to school financial sustainability and transformation. Working in partnership with schools and governing bodies, the postholder will support credible financial improvement, stronger planning and capability, effective risk management and lasting changes in how resources are used. The role also provides strategic leadership across community learning, libraries, arts and culture, and the stewardship of resources.

Working with the Director of Learning and Skills, fellow Heads of Service, headteachers, governing bodies, elected members and partners, the postholder will provide clear advice and assurance on financial risk and improvement, build trust and capability, and achieve progress through direct leadership and influence. Responsibilities will be exercised within agreed delegations and governance arrangements, recognising the responsibilities of schools and governing bodies.

Your key accountabilities

Strategic leadership and integration

- Lead the strategic response to school financial sustainability and transformation, connecting financial risk, educational priorities, service improvement and long-term resource planning across the Directorate.
- Work closely with the Director of Learning and Skills to shape and deliver directorate priorities aligned to the Corporate Plan and Vale 2030.
- Anticipate, monitor and escalate significant financial and delivery risks, ensuring timely, proportionate responses and clear advice to the Director and relevant governance bodies.
- Contribute to the Council's wider strategic leadership as a member of the Directorate Management Team.

Working with schools to enable improvement and sustainability

- Build trusted partnerships with headteachers and governing bodies to support the development and delivery of credible school financial improvement and transformation plans, respecting school autonomy and governance responsibilities.
- Strengthen financial planning, forecasting, monitoring and decision-making capability across schools, helping leaders and governing bodies understand underlying pressures, options and longer-term implications.
- Provide constructive challenge and support where plans or progress are insufficient, ensuring risks, dependencies and the need for decisions are clearly communicated and escalated through agreed arrangements.
- Support sustainable transformation and changes in resource use that address structural financial pressures while considering educational outcomes, workforce implications and the needs of learners.

Your key accountabilities

Community learning, libraries and place-based leadership

- Provide strategic leadership across community learning, libraries, arts and culture, supporting reading, lifelong learning, skills, creativity, wellbeing and inclusive participation across the Vale.
- Shape accessible, responsive and financially sustainable provision, drawing on community voice, learner and service-user experience, performance evidence and local need.
- Lead continuous improvement across community learning, libraries, arts and cultural services, using performance information, feedback and community insight to strengthen quality, accessibility, participation and outcomes.
- Work with schools, communities and partners to connect learning, reading and cultural opportunities, widen participation and make effective use of libraries, learning spaces, services and assets.

Resources, value and stewardship

- Provide strategic oversight of resources and budgets across the service area and exercise delegated financial and service management responsibilities in line with the Council's approved arrangements, ensuring effective stewardship, value for money and long-term sustainability.
- Lead and enable a coordinated response to school financial pressures and deficits, including support for robust recovery and transformation planning, progress monitoring, early risk identification and strengthened financial capability, within the respective responsibilities of the Council, schools and governing bodies.
- Use financial and performance insight to monitor school financial risk, assess options and trade-offs, provide clear reporting and assurance, and support timely, transparent decisions and escalation.
- Explore appropriate funding, partnerships, income opportunities and service delivery models to strengthen the sustainability and reach of community learning, libraries and cultural services, in line with Council policy.

Your key accountabilities

Leadership, culture and performance

- Create clarity of purpose and direction, supporting leaders and teams to operate with confidence and accountability.
- Promote a culture of inclusive, high-performing services, continuous improvement, learning, staff wellbeing and constructive accountability.
- Act as a role model for the Council's values and leadership behaviours, supporting their embedding across the Directorate.
- Develop talent, professional capability, succession and leadership capacity across the functions within the postholder's remit.

Stakeholder and member engagement

- Build and maintain effective relationships with elected members, senior leaders, schools, partners and external organisations.
- Support Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Members and other elected members in their roles.
- Represent the Council professionally in external forums and partnerships.

Corporate responsibilities

- Drive service efficiency and effectiveness by identifying opportunities to improve outcomes through collaboration, innovation and partnership working.
- Lead and contribute to the development and implementation of policies, procedures and ways of working that support the Council's objectives.
- Champion equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring equality of opportunity and Welsh language duties are embedded across the workforce and service delivery.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, Council policies and procedures, including employee management, health and safety, safeguarding, information governance, equalities, environmental responsibilities, and Financial and Contract Procedure Rules.
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the role, as required to meet changing organisational needs, without altering the overall purpose or level of responsibility of the post.

Our values in this role



Open

- Creating the conditions for honest, constructive conversations about priorities, choices and impact.
- Using evidence, feedback and professional judgement to explain decisions clearly, encourage constructive challenge and remain accountable for outcomes.
- Listening carefully to schools, partners, elected members, colleagues and communities, and responding thoughtfully.
- Demonstrating political awareness and taking responsibility in complex and sensitive situations.



Proud

- Acting as a credible ambassador for the Council and the Learning and Skills Directorate.
- Demonstrating stewardship of public resources and pride in supporting learning and opportunity for all.
- Role-modelling professionalism, integrity and respect for the expertise of others.
- Celebrating progress, learning and shared achievement across the system.



Together

- Working alongside schools, library and community learning colleagues and partners to solve problems, strengthen services and achieve shared outcomes.
- Bringing people together across organisational and professional boundaries to align effort and purpose.
- Building strong relationships with headteachers, governing bodies, partners and colleagues to support collective ownership of outcomes.
- Enabling collaboration and co-production rather than directive solutions.



Ambitious

- Providing leadership that looks beyond immediate pressures to build sustainable approaches for the long term.
- Supporting innovation and continuous improvement across strategy, schools, community learning, libraries and resource use.
- Enabling schools and services to develop the confidence, skills and insight needed to make informed, balanced decisions.
- Championing learning, curiosity and evidence-led thinking across the system.

Person specification

What you will bring

Experience

ESSENTIAL

- Significant senior leadership experience in a complex organisation.
- Experience of leading substantial financial improvement, organisational change or transformation, with evidence of sustained outcomes and effective stakeholder engagement.
- Significant experience of leading or working collaboratively across complex services and partnerships, with the ability to apply this experience to education, community learning, libraries and related public services.
- Experience of managing or overseeing significant budgets and responding to financial pressures, with evidence of improving financial sustainability, efficiency or value for money.

DESIRABLE

- Experience of place-based or community-focused leadership.

Knowledge

ESSENTIAL

- Strong understanding of financial sustainability, financial improvement planning, organisational transformation and the use of performance and risk information to support decisions.
- Understanding of public sector accountability and governance.
- Knowledge of education, community learning or local government contexts.
- Understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing public-facing learning, library or community services, including access, inclusion and sustainable delivery.

Skills and aptitudes

ESSENTIAL

- Ability to influence, negotiate and build trust in complex, politically sensitive environments.
- Ability to connect financial analysis, long-term strategy and practical transformation plans, with sound judgement about risks, trade-offs and educational or service outcomes.
- Highly effective communication skills, able to engage credibly with diverse audiences.
- Strong relationship-building capability, grounded in respect and professional credibility.
- Ability to strengthen others' financial confidence and capability, provide constructive challenge and support delivery through influence.

Person specification

Qualifications, motivation and other requirements

Qualifications and training

ESSENTIAL

- Degree-level qualification or equivalent experience.

DESIRABLE

- Leadership or management qualification.

Attitude and motivation

ESSENTIAL

- Highly motivated senior leader with a strong sense of public service.
- Adaptable and resilient, able to work effectively in ambiguity and change.
- Committed to collaborative, values-led leadership.
- Passionate about enabling others to succeed and creating sustainable impact.

Other

ESSENTIAL

- Personal and professional credibility.
- Capacity to work flexibly, including attendance at evening meetings as required.
- Ability to travel within the Vale, as necessary.

DESIRABLE

- Ability to speak or willingness to learn Welsh.

A chance to make a difference. A place to belong.