



## **C O U N C I L   S U M M O N S**

***To all Members of Council***

***You are hereby summoned to attend a***

***MEETING OF THE COUNCIL***

***to be held at 2.30 pm on***

***WEDNESDAY 6 July 2016***

***in the***

***COUNCIL CHAMBER - PORT TALBOT***

***Prayers will be said by the Mayor's Chaplain prior to the commencement of the meeting.***

### **--- A G E N D A ---**

#### **PART A**

1. *Mayor's Announcements.*
2. *To receive any declarations of interest from Members.*
3. *To receive and, if thought fit, confirm the Minutes of the previous meeting of Council: (Pages 3 - 18)*

Civic Year 2015/16

11 May 2016

Civic Year 2016/17

20 May 2016 and 25 May 2016

## **PART B**

4. *To receive a presentation from Mr Steve Barry of the Wales Audit Office on the attached Annual Improvement Report (Pages 19 - 48)*
5. *Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services re Treasury Management Update Downgrading of UK Sovereign Rating (Pages 49 - 54)*
6. *Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re Members' Outside Body Representation (Pages 55 - 58)*

## **PART C**

7. *To receive the following-and any questions raised by Members, or any matters to be raised by Cabinet Members:- (Pages 59 - 78)*

## **Record of Executive Decisions of the Cabinet and Cabinet Boards.**

## **PART D**

8. *To receive any questions from Members, with Notice, under Rule 9.2 of the Council's Procedure Rules.*
9. *Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Mayor pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.*

*Sen P...*

**Chief Executive**

**Civic Centre  
Port Talbot**

**Thursday, 30 June 2016**

## COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

**Members Present:**

**11 May, 2016**

**The Mayor:** Councillor A.P.H.Davies

**The Deputy Mayor:** Councillor Mrs.S.M.Penry

**Councillors:** A.Carter, Mrs.A.Chaves, Ms.C.Clement-Williams, M.Crowley, Mrs.R.Davies, J.S.Evans, M.Harvey, H.N.James, Mrs.L.H.James, M.L.James, R.James, A.Jenkins, E.E.Jones, M.Jones, Mrs.D.Jones, R.G.Jones, S.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.Llewelyn, Mrs.K.Lloyd, A.R.Lockyer, J.Miller, Mrs.S.Miller, C.Morgan, J.D.Morgan, Ms.C.Morgans, Mrs.K.Pearson, L.M.Purcell, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards, J.Rogers, A.Taylor, A.H.Thomas, A.L.Thomas, R.Thomas, J.Warman, D.Whitelock, I.D.Williams, Mrs.L.G.Williams and A.N.Woolcock

**Officers in Attendance:** H.Jenkins, A.Evans, G.Nutt, N. Jarman, M.Roberts, D.Michael, Mrs.K.Jones, Ms.C.Furlow, R.George and Mrs.A.Manlipp

**Representatives of the Translation Service:** Present

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### 1. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

It was with deep regret that the Mayor advised Council that the following had passed away since the last meeting of Council:-

Mr Jackie Myers former Councillor with the Authority;

Mr George Griffiths, Chief Executive and Freeman of the former Neath Borough Council;

Ms Moira Lewis Councillor and Mayor of the former Neath Borough Council;

Mr Jeffrey Llewelyn Councillor in the former Lliw Valley Borough Council.

As a mark of respect Members stood for a minute's silence.

As this was the last ordinary meeting of Council that Cllr. A.P.H.Davies would preside over, he took the opportunity to thank all Members for their support in carrying out his Civic duties.

## 2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting:-

Councillor P.A.Rees	Re Decision Record of the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board of 7 April 2016 as it refers to the Schools Admission Policy 2017/18 as he took part in the decision to commend the Policy to the Cabinet Board.
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Councillor Mrs.K Pearson	Re Decision Record of the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board of 23 March 2016 as it refers to the appointment of school governors at Creunant Primary School as she is a school governor.
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Councillor M.Harvey	Re Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services in relation to the Corporate Improvement Plan as it relates to CCTV as he is employed by South Wales Police.
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3. **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2015/16**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the following meetings of Council be confirmed:-

Council	10 March 2016
Council	30 March 2016

4. **STREET LIGHTING**

Members received a comprehensive presentation by the Head of Streetcare on the work carried out on upgrading the Authority's street lighting stock.

Members noted the work carried out by Officers since the original decision to upgrade had been taken in 2010. Extensive work had been carried out to assess the condition of the existing stock, the process of procurement together with the installation throughout the County Borough. It was anticipated that the new stock would last between 25 to 40 years.

Members also noted that Officers were looking into the installation of solar/ wind powered lights for use on street signage, etc.

Following the presentation Members were pleased with the outcome of the process to date and in particular that the use of private sector finances had not been required.

Members praised the flexibility of the system, in that it was possible to change the brightness, etc. of individual units, or groups of units, from a control centre with immediate effect. In addition there was now minimum delay in repairing units as the system highlighted when units were not working and repairs were effected as soon as possible.

Members also noted that this Authority was the first in Wales to address the '2 wire line problem' and that other Local Authorities had not addressed the deteriorating condition of the posts, etc.

5. **CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Members received a detailed presentation on the Draft Corporate Improvement Plan which had been commended to Council, subject to agreed amendments, by Cabinet at its meeting on 27 April, 2016. Members were advised that a summary of the document could be

found at Appendix 2 to the circulated report, and that copies would be made available to Members, on request, to circulate to their constituents.

Following the presentation Members raised the following points:-

- The Corporate Improvement Plan raised expectations of achievements that could be met during the last year of the current administration;
- The perception of many residents that the Authority had control over the economic viability of town centres and the decisions reached by some retailers to relocate – this was not the case and the town centres within Neath Port Talbot were as vibrant as any other;
- Members asked the Director for assurances that the Recycle+ Scheme currently being rolled out would not adversely affect the amount of recycling, and were advised that, although there had been initial teething troubles, the Authority had improved. The Authority was currently 7<sup>th</sup> across Wales, however there was no room for complacency as the Welsh Government's target would increase year on year;
- Concern was expressed at the number of days lost due to pupil exclusion in particular in secondary schools (1255) and how this would be monitored going forward. The Director advised that the number of exclusions had decreased significantly over recent years, however there was still a need for improvement. Work would be undertaken in partnership with schools and also with parents addressing any issues where possible. It was however stressed that the Authority was the best across Wales at Key Stage 4;
- In relation to the Authority's schools and the results of the Estyn's inspections, it was noted that one of the schools was in Special Measures. Members asked what would be done to improve the school's performance and were advised that both Estyn and the Authority itself were providing significant support. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council was however one of the lowest in Wales with any statutory follow up by Estyn and that 80% of its pupils were in schools classed amber or green;
- Members questioned whether, due to its historical importance, the Cefn Coed Museum would be reopening during the summer, and were advised that there was an application to remove the Head Gear at the site for health and safety reasons and possibly the 2 big wheels. Officers would be reassessing

the site at the end of May with a view to removing the exclusion zone and reopening for the summer;

- Members expressed concern at the lack of framework for middle to long term financial planning and asked whether the WLGA could exert any influence on Welsh Government to address this potential issue. In response the Director advised that Welsh Government was expected to announce its Revenue budget for 2017/18 and 2018/19 in September/October along with the 3 year Capital budget. It was expected that the Welsh Government would receive an increased budget from Central Government until 2020/21, although it was not known how this would be disaggregated between local government, health and other partners. Officers would be reporting to Members in July/September in relation to budget proposals to address the shortfall in the region of £36m over the next 3 years;
- Members requested details of the provision for Welsh Medium education and were advised that the demand did not exceed the number of vacant places. The Strategic School Improvement Plan sought to promote Welsh Medium provision and meet demand. Officers would seek to address any issues surrounding accessibility;
- Members sought clarification on how the Authority would meet any employees' skills gap and were advised that an appraisal process was in place to identify any such issues. This was particularly important in the current economic climate, where the policy of the Authority was to redeploy staff and to avoid compulsory redundancies wherever possible;
- Members sought details of the Valley Regeneration Project and noted that there was a range of projects throughout the County Borough including Rheola and Afan Argoed;
- In relation to the bilingual content of the Authority's website it was noted that 95.7% was also available through the medium of Welsh, although the Authority had no control on interfaces with partner agencies.

The Leader of Council then summed up, highlighting the Authority's focus on children and young people, education, adult social services, Recycling+, Digital By Choice and the Regeneration Programme. The Leader then gave the Chief Executive's apologies from today's meeting due to his involvement in discussions with Tata Steel.

The Leader then thanked Cabinet, all Members of Council, partners, Trade Unions and staff for their support in the Authority's

achievements to date and the work going forward and commended the report to Council.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That having given due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment, Council adopt the Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-2019;
  2. That the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive to make any further changes that are necessary prior to final publication and which do not materially change the content of the report.

## 6. REVISED MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

Members received the Report of the Head of Legal Services in relation to the revised Member Code of Conduct.

Members questioned the process of publicising complaints where the alternative resolution procedure was used and were advised that should the Monitoring Officer be able to resolve any issues between Members, through the procedure, a report containing statistics would be submitted to the Standards Committee. If this was not the case and the matter was referred to the Ombudsman it would be contained in his annual report which is submitted to the Standards Committee and the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board for information.

- RESOLVED:** That the revised Member Code of Conduct, as contained in Appendix 1 to the circulated report, be adopted.

## 7. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS OF THE CABINET AND CABINET BOARDS

- RESOLVED:** That the following Executive Decisions of Cabinet and Cabinet Boards, be noted:-

Cabinet	2 March, 2016
Cabinet	10 March, 2016
Cabinet	16 March, 2016



Children, Young People and Education	23 March, 2016
Children, Young People and Education	7 April, 2016
Economic and Community Regeneration	22 April, 2016
Environment and Highways	14 April, 2016
Social Care, Health and Housing	17 March, 2016
Social Care, Health and Housing	14 April, 2016
Policy and Resources	31 March, 2016

## **CHAIRPERSON**

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## ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

**Members Present:**

**20 May, 2016**

**The Mayor:** Councillor A.P.H.Davies

**The Deputy Mayor:** Councillor Mrs.S.M.Penry

**Councillors:** H.M.Bebell, Mrs P.Bebell, A.Carter, Mrs.A.Chaves, M.Crowley, D.W.Davies, Mrs.R.Davies, Mrs.J.Dudley, M.Ellis, J.S.Evans, C.P.Golding, M.Harvey, S.K.Hunt, H.N.James, I.B.James, Mrs.L.H.James, E.E.Jones, M.Jones, Mrs.D.Jones, R.G.Jones, D.Keogh, E.V.Latham, Mrs.M.A.Lewis, A.Llewelyn, Mrs.K.Lloyd, J.Miller, Mrs.S.Miller, C.Morgan, Ms.C.Morgans, Mrs.S.Paddison, Mrs.K.Pearson, L.M.Purcell, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards, J.Rogers, A.J.Taylor, A.Taylor, A.H.Thomas, A.L.Thomas, J.Warman, D.Whitelock, Mrs.L.G.Williams and A.N.Woolcock

**Officers in Attendance:** S.Phillips, H.Jenkins, A.Evans, G.Nutt, R.George and Mrs.A.Manlipp

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### 1. **ELECTION OF MAYOR FOR 2016/17**

On the motion of Councillor Mrs.S.Miller, seconded by Councillor Mrs.D.Jones, it was:-

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Mrs.Sheila Penry be elected Mayor for the Civic Year 2016/17 pursuant to Section 23(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Councillor Mrs Sheila Penry then subscribed to the Oath of Allegiance administered by the Chief Executive and made the formal Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Chief Executive was pleased to announce that the Mayor's Consort would be Mr. Glen Clarke and the Mayor's Chaplain would be the Father Neil Evans.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2016/2017**

On the motion of Councillor L. Purcell seconded by Councillor Mrs. R. Davies, it was:-

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor Mrs. Janice Dudley be appointed the Deputy Mayor for the Civic Year 2016/2017 pursuant to Section 24(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Councillor Mrs. Janice Dudley then made the formal Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Chief Executive was pleased to announce that the Deputy Mayor's Consort for the Civic Year would be Mr. David Evans.

3. **INVESTITURE OF MAYOR'S CONSORT AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S CONSORT**

The Outgoing Mayoress Mrs. Linda Goode, invested the Mayor's Consort with his Insignia of Office.

The Mayor's Consort invested the Deputy Mayor's Consort with his Insignia of Office.

4. **MAYORAL ADDRESS.**

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs. Sheila Penry, then made her Mayoral Address and also took the opportunity to thank Members for their support in electing her as Mayor and to acknowledge the services of the retiring Mayor and Mayoress.

5. **VOTE OF THANKS TO THE OUTGOING MAYOR.**

On behalf of the Council, Councillor John Warman was pleased to extend a vote of thanks to the Outgoing Mayor, Councillor Arthur

Davies, for the manner in which he and his Mayoress had carried out their Mayoral duties. Councillor Mrs Karen Pearson was pleased to endorse the vote of thanks on behalf of the Council.

The Mayor then presented the Outgoing Mayor, Councillor Arthur Davies, with his Past Mayor's Medallion and a Photographic Album, and the Mayor's Consort presented the Outgoing Mayoress with her Medallion.

6. **RESPONSE BY THE OUTGOING MAYOR.**

Councillor Arthur Davies, in response to the vote of thanks, offered the Mayor and Mayoress his congratulations and took the opportunity to thank those who had given him support and encouragement throughout his Mayoral Year, including Members and Officers of the County Borough Council and his Chaplain.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR 2016/2017**

On the motion of Councillor E.E.Jones seconded by Councillor A.N.Woolcock, it was:-

**RESOLVED:** that, pursuant to Part 4, Section 1(1.1) of the Constitution, Councillor A.H.Thomas be appointed Leader of the Council and Councillor P.A.Rees be appointed Deputy Leader of the Council for the Civic Year 2016/17.

8. **ADMINISTRATION ISSUES FOR 2016/17**

The Chief Executive reported that, as it was not practicable for the various administration issues to be dealt with at the Annual Meeting, it was intended to convene a Special Meeting of Council on Wednesday, 25 May, 2016

**RESOLVED:** that the Administration Issues be considered at the Special Meeting of Council to be held on 25 May, 2016.

The Mayor then declared the Meeting closed.

**CHAIRPERSON**



**COUNCIL**

**(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)**

**Members Present:**

**25 May, 2016**

**The Mayor:** Councillor Mrs.S.M.Penry

**The Deputy Mayor:** Councillor Mrs.J.Dudley

**Councillors:** H.M.Bebell, A.Carter, Mrs.A.Chaves, M.Crowley, A.P.H.Davies, D.W.Davies, Mrs.R.Davies, M.Ellis, J.S.Evans, M.Harvey, I.B.James, H.N.James, Mrs.L.H.James, M.L.James, A.Jenkins, E.E.Jones, Mrs.D.Jones, R.G.Jones, D.Keogh, E.V.Latham, A.Llewelyn, Mrs.K.Lloyd, J.Miller, Mrs.S.Miller, C.Morgan, Ms.C.Morgans, Mrs.S.Paddison, Mrs.K.Pearson, D.M.Peters, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards, J.Rogers, A.Taylor, A.J.Taylor, A.H.Thomas, A.L.Thomas, D.Whitelock and A.N.Woolcock

**Officers in Attendance:** S.Phillips, H.Jenkins, A.Evans, G.Nutt, A.Jarrett, D.Michael, Mrs.K.Jones, R.George and Mrs.A.Manchipp

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1. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

It was with great sadness that the Mayor referred to the recent death of the mother of Councillor Paul Greenaway.

As a mark of respect Members stood for a minute's silence.

**Report of the Chief Executive**

2. **DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE ARRANGEMENTS 2016/17**

Council considered the various administrative issues deferred from the Annual Meeting of 20 May, 2016, as set out in the above report, and the Addendum Report circulated at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the amended Policy and Budget Framework, as set out in **Annex A**, attached hereto, be approved;

**Executive**

- (b) that the arrangements for the Civic Year 2016/17 i.e. the period to the next Annual Meeting, in respect of the size of the Cabinet; the appointment of Members thereto; the appointment of the Cabinet Boards; and the allocation of the Cabinet Portfolios be approved as contained in **Annex B** attached hereto;

**Scrutiny and Council Committees**

- (c) that the apportionment of seats amongst the constitution of Political Groups be confirmed as set out in **Annex C** attached hereto (but it be unanimously RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the political balance requirements of Sections 15 and 16 should not apply to the Appeals Panel, Standards Committee and the Licensing and Gambling Acts Sub Committee), and should not be applied generally in so far only as an allocation of seats shall be made to the one Member who is not a Member of any political group.
- (d) that the apportionment of the Scrutiny Committees for the Civic Year 2016/17 and the number of places thereon, together with the appointment of Members thereto, be approved as set out in **Annex D** attached hereto;
- (e) that the proposals in respect of the other Committee arrangements for the Civic Year 2016/17 be approved, together with the appointment of Members thereto, as set out in **Appendix E** attached hereto.



-The Council Meeting was suspended at this point for a Special Audit Committee to be convened. Thereafter Council was reconvened.-

**Other Matters**

- (f) that a Staff Council of 12 Members of the Personnel Committee (plus advisors) be appointed for the Civic Year 2016/17, together with appropriate Trade Union representative, as set out in **Annex F** attached hereto;
- (g) that the proposals in respect of the other Member/Officer Groups for the Civic Year 2016/17 be approved, together with the appointment of Members thereto, as set out in **Appendix F** attached hereto.
- (h) that, subject to the note below, the appointments to Joint Committees, Outside and Other Public Bodies for the Civic Year 2016/17 be approved, together with the appointment of Members thereto, as set out in **Annex G** attached hereto.

**Note:** The appointment of Representatives to Joint Committees, together with the Executive representation on Outside and Other Public Bodies, is the responsibility of the Cabinet (Minute Nos. 1 and 2 of the Special Cabinet refers);

- (i) that the timetable and cycle of meetings including the schedule of Members Seminars as set out in **Annex H** attached hereto, be approved.
- (j) that it be noted that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Audit Committee for 2016/17, be Councillors Mrs L.H.James and J.D.Morgan respectively;

- (k) that the Chairman of the Democratic Services Committee for 2016/17, be Councillor Mrs.L.H.James.

**CHAIRPERSON**

## **Wales Audit Office – Annual Improvement Report 2015-2016**

### **Purpose of Report**

For Mr Steve Barry (Audit Manager, Wales Audit Office) to present the Wales Audit Office's Annual Improvement Report 2015-16 (Appendix 1).

### **Executive Summary**

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires the Auditor General to undertake an annual improvement assessment and to publish an Annual Improvement Report (AIR) for each improvement authority in Wales.

The Annual Improvement Report (AIR) attached at Appendix 1 summarises the audit work undertaken since the Corporate Assessment and combined Annual Improvement Report which was published in November 2014. The AIR also includes a summary of the key findings from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW); Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (Estyn); and the Welsh Language Commissioner (WLC). A list of the audit work carried out since November 2014 which has informed the content of the report is included on page 5 of the AIR.

Overall, the Auditor General concluded the Council has continued to improve in its priority areas, financial management is sound, and its arrangements are likely to support future progress.

### **Findings**

For 2015-2016, the Wales Audit Office undertook improvement assessment work under three themes: use of resources; governance; and performance and concluded:

#### **Performance:**

1. The Council is securing improvement against its corporate priorities, whilst overall performance as measured by national indicators has declined compared to previous years it is still better than the Welsh average for over half of indicators.
2. The Council made progress in implementing its new corporate performance framework and was sustaining its focus on improvements to performance reporting and service business planning.
3. The Council made improvements to its provision of Welsh material, training and access to Welsh-speaking staff, but more work was needed to comply with the provisions of the Welsh Language Act.

4. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales considered the Council to have sustained progress in delivering its strategic improvement plan and lifted the Serious Concerns Protocol it had applied to Children's Services.

#### **Use of Resources:**

5. The Council's financial management and governance arrangements are sound but savings plans for the medium term need to be developed and more fully integrated with the corporate planning process.
6. Performance and the rate of improvement in younger children's education is below the Wales average whilst results for those in secondary schools are much higher than in similar authorities, and school attendance is now in line with the Welsh average.

#### **Governance:**

7. The Council has made some positive changes to scrutiny and is sustaining its focus on continuous improvement.
8. The Council is improving its arrangements to effectively manage its exposure to risk.

#### **Financial Impact**

The programme of audit and improvement assessment work undertaken by the Wales Audit Office during 2015-2016 has been delivered within the budget allocated for audit and inspection work.

#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The programme of audit and improvement assessment work undertaken by the Wales Audit Office during 2015-2016 has not focused on people with protected characteristics.

#### **Workforce Impacts**

There are no workforce impacts from the process of audit and improvement assessment work of significance.

#### **Legal Impacts**

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires the Auditor General to undertake an annual improvement assessment and to publish an annual improvement report for each improvement authority in Wales.

### **Risk Management**

The findings of the Wales Audit Office are a key input into the Council's corporate governance arrangements and the areas identified for improvement work inform the Annual Governance Statement and the associated improvement plan.

### **Consultation**

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

### **Recommended**

For Council to acknowledge the Annual Improvement Report 2015-2016 and for the Report to be published on the Council's website.

### **Reason for Proposed Decision**

To meet statutory requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2015-2016

### **List of Background Papers**

Annual Report 2014 -15 'Doing What Matters'  
Corporate Improvement Plan 2015-2018 'Rising to the Challenge'

### **Wards Affected**

All

### **Contact Officer:**

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WALES AUDIT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

# Annual Improvement Report 2015-16

## Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Issued: June 2016

Document reference: 114A2016



This Annual Improvement Report has been prepared on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales by Steve Barry, Samantha Clements and Catryn Holzinger under the direction of Jane Holownia.

**Huw Vaughan Thomas**  
**Auditor General for Wales**  
**Wales Audit Office**  
**24 Cathedral Road**  
**Cardiff**  
**CF11 9LJ**

The Auditor General is independent of government, and is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General. The Wales Audit Office is held to account by the National Assembly.

Together with appointed auditors, the Auditor General audits local government bodies in Wales, including unitary authorities, police, probation, fire and rescue authorities, national parks and community councils. He also conducts local government value for money studies and assesses compliance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Beyond local government, the Auditor General is the external auditor of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, the Assembly Commission and National Health Service bodies in Wales.

The Auditor General and staff of the Wales Audit Office aim to provide public-focused and proportionate reporting on the stewardship of public resources and in the process provide insight and promote improvement.



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# Summary report

## About this report

- 1 This Annual Improvement Report (AIR) summarises the audit work undertaken at Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (the Council) since the Corporate Assessment and combined AIR was published in November 2014. This report also includes a summary of the key findings from 'relevant regulators', namely: the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW); Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (Estyn); and the Welsh Language Commissioner (WLC). Nonetheless, this report does not represent a comprehensive review of all the Council's arrangements or services. The conclusions in this report are based on the work carried out at the Council by relevant external review bodies and, unless stated otherwise, reflect the situation at the point in time that such work was concluded.
- 2 Taking into consideration the work carried out during 2015-16, the Auditor General will state in this report whether he believes that the Council is likely to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2016-17.
- 3 This statement should not be seen as a definitive diagnosis of organisational health or as a prediction of future success. Rather, it should be viewed as providing an opinion on the extent to which the arrangements currently in place are reasonably sound insofar as can be ascertained from the work carried out.
- 4 We want to find out if this report gives you the information you need and whether it is easy to understand. You can let us know your views by e-mailing us at [info@audit.wales](mailto:info@audit.wales) or writing to us at 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ.

## 2015-16 performance audit work

- 5 In determining the breadth of work undertaken during the year, we considered the extent of accumulated audit and inspection knowledge as well as other available sources of information including the Council's own mechanisms for review and evaluation. For 2015-16, we undertook improvement assessment work under three themes: use of resources; governance; and performance.
- 6 The work carried out since the last AIR, including that of the 'relevant regulators', is set out below.

Project name	Brief description	Dates
Wales Audit Office Study: Delivering with Less Environmental Health	All-Wales review of the impact of financial pressures on Environmental Health Services and citizens.	January 2015
Wales Audit Office review of Scrutiny Arrangements	Follow-up to assess changes to the Council's scrutiny arrangements which found improvements are being sustained.	July 2015
Wales Audit Office review of Performance Management Arrangements	Follow-up effectiveness of the Council's approach to reporting and evaluating performance. Our report identified progress was being made and included three proposals for improvement which the Council is implementing.	June 2015
Wales Audit Office review of Risk Management Arrangements	An assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements which identified weaknesses and included two proposals for improvement which the Council is implementing.	November 2015
Wales Audit Office Financial Resilience Assessment	Review of the Council's financial position and how it is budgeting and delivering on required savings. The report includes three proposals for improvement which are being considered by the Council.	March 2016
Wales Audit Office Annual 'Improvement Plan' Audit	Review of the Council's published plans for delivering on improvement objectives which confirmed the Council is complying with statutory requirements.	May 2015
Wales Audit Office Annual 'Assessment of Performance' Audit	Review of the Council's published performance assessment, including testing and validation of performance information which confirmed the Council is complying with statutory requirements	November 2015

Project name	Brief description	Dates
Wales Audit Office Audit of Accounts	Review the Council's financial statements which concluded they give a true and fair view of its financial position and expenditure and income for the year.	November 2015
CSSIW Inspection of Children's Services Report	CSSIW's inspection of Children's Social Services to assess which concluded the Serious Concerns protocol implemented in November 2012 could be lifted.	April 2015
CSSIW Performance Evaluation Report 2014-15	CSSIW's review of the Council's performance in both Adults' and Children's Social Services.	October 2015
Welsh Language Commissioner review	A review of the Council's compliance with Welsh Language Standards which concluded that the Council had made improvements to its provision of Welsh material, training and access to Welsh speaking staff, but more work was needed to comply with the provisions of the Welsh Language Act.	February 2015

**The Council has continued to improve in its priority areas, financial management is sound, and its arrangements are likely to support future progress**

- 7 Based on, and limited to, the work carried out by the Wales Audit Office and relevant regulators, the Auditor General believes that the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of the Measure and secure improvements during 2016-17. The Auditor General has reached this conclusion because:
- a the Council is securing improvement against its corporate priorities and is continuing improvements to performance management and governance arrangements; and
  - b the Council's financial management arrangements are sound although savings plans for the medium term need to be developed and more fully integrated with the corporate planning process.

## Proposals for improvement

- 8 Given the wide range of services provided by the Council and the challenges it is facing, it would be unusual if we did not find things that can be improved. The Auditor General is able to:
- a make proposals for improvement – if proposals are made to the Council, we would expect it to do something about them and we will follow up what happens;
  - b make formal recommendations for improvement – if a formal recommendation is made, the Council must prepare a response to that recommendation within 30 working days;
  - c conduct a special inspection and publish a report and make recommendations; and
  - d recommend to Ministers of the Welsh Government that they intervene in some way.
- 9 During the course of the year, the Auditor General did not make any formal recommendations. Lower-priority issues, known as ‘proposals for improvement’, are contained in our other reports. During the year we made a total of eight proposals for improvement in three reports. The Council is implementing five of these proposals and is in the process of considering the three that were made in our most recent report. We will continue to monitor the implementation of proposals for improvement during the course of our future performance audit work.

# Detailed report



# Performance

The Council is securing improvement against its corporate priorities, whilst overall performance as measured by national indicators has declined compared to previous years it is still better than the Welsh average for over half of indicators

- 10 The Welsh Government requires all councils to report on a common set of indicators to enable a comparison of performance in key service areas across Wales. Thirty National Strategic Indicators (NSIs) have been set that cover the Welsh Government's strategic priorities in education, social care and waste management. For 2014-15, there are also 13 Public Accountability Measures (PAMs) chosen to reflect issues of importance such as support for carers, school attendance and the condition of highways.
- 11 Councils are also required to set improvement priorities. These are set out in the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan 'Rising to the Challenge' 2015-2018. They represent six areas where the Council has decided to protect investment or limit spending reductions in order to remain within budget. In spite of these spending reductions the Council has secured improvement for example:
  - a outcomes for children in need and children looked after (LAC) – in 2014-15 it reduced the numbers of LAC by 7.3 per cent compared to 4.8 per cent in the previous year,
  - b to raise educational standards and attainment of all young people the Council achieved a reduction of those young people 'Not in Education, Employment or training' (NEET) for 2014-15 to 3.8 per cent, an improvement on the previous year of 4.4 per cent; and
  - c towards maximising the number of adults who are able to live independently, within the home of their choice within their community, the Council supported a further 810 adults bringing the total to 3,070.
- 12 Overall performance in 2014-15 indicated that 57 per cent of the performance measures were better than the All Wales figure which is below last year's performance of 63 per cent. While 63 per cent of the national measures either achieved maximum performance or improved, this is below last year's performance of 79 per cent.

## The Council made progress in implementing its new corporate performance framework and was sustaining its focus on improvements to performance reporting and service business planning

- 13 Our 2014 Corporate Assessment identified inconsistencies in service business planning and a weak connection between strategic priorities, directorate activity and individuals' performance. It included a proposal for improvement for the Council to implement its planned performance reporting improvements to bring together information in a way that allowed the evaluation of whether it was making effective use of its resources. Consequently, we undertook a further review in 2015 to assess whether the Council had made progress in implementing these new arrangements.
- 14 We found that the Council has improved the corporate performance framework, supported by the introduction of clear business planning guidance and a report card template to bring together information on service performance and corporate measures linked to resources. The corporate team responsible for designing the process had engaged closely with managers and there was commitment to using the new processes.
- 15 This support and guidance has led to greater consistency in service planning, although there is still scope to continue to refine business plans, in line with corporate expectations. The report cards were introduced after the business plans and are therefore less well established. As they become embedded the focus should be on continuing to develop the range of information, ensuring that the supporting narrative is evaluative and there is a clear link between priorities, actions and measures.
- 16 The report cards are one of the ways the Council is beginning to improve the presentation of performance information to support decision-making and scrutiny. In addition to this, the newly developed 'corporate report card' will provide an overview of how the Council is making progress towards key corporate priorities, and the new online 'performance hub' will improve the provision of performance information to a range of audiences. However, the Council will need to consider how this information can be co-ordinated to ensure it supports decision-making and scrutiny to best effect. Furthermore, it will need to review whether there is a gap in the provision of information at a directorate or portfolio level, as well as how it provides an overall picture of corporate and wider performance information to the Cabinet and Corporate Directors' Group.
- 17 The review resulted in three proposals for improvement which the Council adopted. Since the review we have identified progress in implementing the proposals and further refinement to its performance management arrangements, which is ongoing.



## Outputs from Local Government Studies programme

- 18 During 2014-15, the Auditor General undertook a study of environmental health services across Wales. Our local summary report was issued to the Council in January 2015 and we found that overall the Council was delivering Environmental Health Services at above minimum levels with reduced staffing while achieving positive outcomes.
- 19 In January 2015, the Auditor General published his report on how well councils were managing the impact of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. Our review found that the Council monitors the level of, and reason for, Discretionary Housing Payments, but was unable to establish the impact being achieved and how the payments contribute to a Council-wide policy on Welfare Reform.

## The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales considered the Council to have sustained progress in delivering its strategic improvement plan and lifted the Serious Concerns Protocol it had applied to Children's services

- 20 In February 2015, the CSSIW completed a full inspection on the Council's Children and Young People Services department, and the outcome was reported on 23 April 2015. As a result of the significant improvements made during the past two years, the Chief Inspector of the CSSIW announced that the Serious Concerns Protocol had been lifted from the department.
- 21 The CSSIW published its Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2014-2015 in October 2015. **The report includes detailed findings together with recognition of successes and areas for improvement and this is available on its website.**
- 22 The CSSIW considered that the Director of Social Services' own evaluation highlighted the successes and challenges during the year and sets out the Council's priorities for 2014-15. The CSSIW was of the view that the Council could demonstrate committed leadership had made progress in delivering its strategic improvement plan and was realistic about the challenges of improving services within the context of reducing financial resources.

**The Council made improvements to its provision of Welsh material, training and access to Welsh-speaking staff, but more work was needed to comply with the provisions of the Welsh Language Act**

- 23 The role of the Welsh Language Commissioner (the Commissioner) was created by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. New powers to impose standards on organisations came into force through subordinate legislation on 31 March 2015. The Commissioner will continue to review Welsh-language schemes by virtue of powers inherited under the Welsh Language Act 1993.
- 24 The Commissioner works with all councils in Wales to inspect and advise on the implementation of language schemes. It is the responsibility of councils to provide services to the public in Welsh in accordance with the commitments in their language schemes. Every council is committed to providing an annual monitoring report to the Commissioner outlining its performance in implementing the language scheme. The Commissioner analyses every monitoring report, provides a formal response and collects further information as required.
- 25 The Commissioner reported that there was an increase in the website's Welsh content and online services during the year. However, there is considerable scope to improve the provision in order to comply with the Welsh-language scheme. The opening of a one-stop shop in Pontardawe, and the provision of a dedicated Welsh-language switchboard line, expanded the available frontline service. A new procedure for approving applications to attend Welsh-language training based on service needs was developed with two staff members attending training during the year. There remains a need to develop further training to raise staff awareness of the requirements of the language scheme. The monitoring of external social care providers continued during the year. An increase was seen in the number of providers employing Welsh speakers, but the numbers that produce bilingual literature for clients remains low. The Council's Youth Service contributes to the cost of employing the local Menter Iaith's young people's officer.

# Use of resources

## Audit of the Council's accounts

- 26 On 23 November 2015 the Auditor General issued an Annual Audit Letter to the Council. The letter summarises the key messages arising from his statutory responsibilities under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 as the Appointed Auditor and his reporting responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice. The Auditor General issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's accounting statements confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council's financial position and transactions. The Annual Audit Letter can be found in [Appendix 4](#) of this report.

## The Council's financial management and governance arrangements are sound but savings plans for the medium term need to be developed and more fully integrated with the corporate planning process

- 27 In April 2016 we issued a report following our assessment of the Council's financial planning, controls and governance. Our overall conclusion was that arrangements were sound and we made three proposals for improvement that are being considered by the Council.
- 28 The Council has a track record of delivering a balanced budget or a surplus and is achieving the majority of in-year planned savings. It is recognised that the Council has good short-term planning arrangements and usually starts work early in the financial year to develop the annual budget with the emphasis being on the following year. However, given the estimated savings shortfall for 2017-18 to 2019-20 is £31.7 million the Council needs to focus on its medium to longer-term planning arrangements to ensure that it can meet the scale and pace of change required to identify and deliver future savings proposals.
- 29 The Council has adequate financial controls in place and a clear framework for managing its financial affairs. Policies on financial and budget management are embedded in the Council's Constitution which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of Members and Officers. However, the Council does not have a formal corporate policy on income generation or charging to guide a more commercially orientated approach to budget decisions. In order to help address future financial challenges the Council should ensure directorates review levels of income and charges using a consistent approach when setting budgets.
- 30 The Council's financial governance arrangements support its financial planning arrangements. The Council demonstrates a commitment to financial governance and is working with Scrutiny Members to strengthen and improve the level of financial understanding. The Council has an experienced Finance Department and currently has sufficient capacity and capability to deliver its day-to-day statutory financial responsibilities. However, the scale and type of savings proposals and pace of implementation may mean that additional capacity will be required in the medium term. The Head of Finance has been working with Scrutiny Members to strengthen and improve the level of financial understanding.

- 31 Performance monitoring reports are used alongside financial budget monitoring reports, and there is evidence that the impact of financial decisions on performance is considered. However, performance and financial reporting mechanisms are not yet integrated to routinely illustrate a whole authority view of both performance and finance. For example, for each directorate the range and trend of performance indicators and scale and achievement of financial savings targets. This will promote a clear understanding of the impact of financial decisions/performance on service performance for the Council.

**Performance and the rate of improvement in younger children's education is below the Wales average whilst results for those in secondary schools are much higher than in similar authorities, and school attendance is now in line with the Welsh average**

- 32 The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals in Neath Port Talbot is much higher than the Wales average. This is taken into account when evaluating the performance in the authority.
- 33 In the age range from five to eleven years, performance is well below that found nationally for many key performance measures. Although performance has improved over time, it has done so at a slower rate than the Wales average.
- 34 However, in the age range from 14 to 16 years, pupils' performance in English or Welsh and Mathematics in 2015 is above the national average and well above the benchmark for performance as set by the Welsh Government. There is a trend of improvement in outcomes over time. Also the proportion of pupils achieving five A or A\* grades at GCSE or equivalent is much higher than for similar authorities.
- 35 In 2015, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is better than the Wales average in most of the main indicators for the age group from 14 and 16 years.
- 36 There have been improvements in attendance in recent years whereby both primary and secondary schools are now in line with the Wales average.

# Governance

## The Council has made some positive changes to scrutiny and is sustaining its focus on continuous improvement

- 37 Our November 2014 Corporate Assessment concluded that scrutiny committees were inefficient and overly focussed on pre-decision scrutiny with limited examination of performance and improvement.
- 38 Since then, both members and officers have been working to address these issues. We observed scrutiny meetings between January and May 2015 to assess developments and identify any further opportunities for improvement.
- 39 We found improvements in the quality and accessibility of information on the Council's website whereby papers, reports and agendas were available seven days prior to meetings and had clearer labelling of contents. Forward work programmes had also been established for each Scrutiny Committee.
- 40 However, we also observed areas where the effectiveness of meetings could be improved by:
  - a ensuring both officers and members have a clear understanding of the purpose, roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Board and Scrutiny Committees;
  - b using introductions and name/role cards to provide clarity as to whether participants and others present were councillors, officers, partners, press or residents;
  - c explaining in forward work programmes the specific elements of the service to be scrutinised, such as 'food waste' or 'side waste'; and
  - d discussing and updating forward work programmes at committee meetings.

## The Council is improving its arrangements to effectively manage its exposure to risk

- 41 The Council adopted a risk management policy in 2010 which was not implemented effectively. The Policy set out clear roles and responsibilities for key individuals, such as, 'the Chief Executive will ensure that Corporate Directors establish and maintain effective risk management systems and ensure the arrangements are followed as appropriate' and, 'the Director of Finance and Corporate Services will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the policy'. However, the policy was not routinely implemented across the organisation, and a corporate risk register was never developed.

- 42 In July 2015, the Council adopted a revised Corporate Risk Management Policy which attempts to simplify the process. It has removed the requirement to populate an electronic risk register and make roles and responsibilities for risk management clearer at leadership level. Roles are specified for Directorate Management Teams and above in an attempt to create an environment and culture where risk management is promoted, facilitated and appropriately undertaken within the Council. However, the policy does not make it clear how officers with roles and responsibilities for risk will be held to account. It does not express how the discharge of roles and responsibilities will be monitored and whether these will be included in personal objectives.
- 43 The Council's new annual business planning template includes a section on risk analysis which contains details of the risks to achieving key objectives and plans to mitigate those risks. However, this section of the template has not been satisfactorily completed.
- 44 The means by which the Council proposes to ensure compliance with the new policy is unclear. Holding to account those responsible is vitally important to the effective implementation of the revised Policy, since our analysis has revealed that this has been the key failing in the past. The previous policy identified roles and responsibilities but we found no evidence they were being discharged. Whilst the new policy makes reference to responsibilities there is no description of the arrangements to ensure senior managers will discharge their responsibilities effectively.
- 45 The review resulted in two proposals for improvement which the Council adopted. Since the review we have identified progress in implementing the proposals and further refinement to its risk management arrangements, which is ongoing.

# Appendix 1 – Status of this report

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) requires the Auditor General to undertake an annual improvement assessment, and to publish an annual improvement report, for each improvement authority in Wales. This requirement covers local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue authorities.

This report has been produced by staff of the Wales Audit Office on behalf of the Auditor General to discharge his duties under section 24 of the Measure. The report also discharges his duties under section 19 to issue a report certifying that he has carried out an improvement assessment under section 18 and stating whether, as a result of his improvement plan audit under section 17, he believes that the authority has discharged its improvement planning duties under section 15.

Improvement authorities are under a general duty to ‘make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of [their] functions’. Improvement authorities are defined as local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue authorities.

The annual improvement assessment is the main piece of work that enables the Auditor General to fulfil his duties. The improvement assessment is a forward-looking assessment of an authority’s likelihood to comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. It also includes a retrospective assessment of whether an authority has achieved its planned improvements in order to inform a view as to the authority’s track record of improvement. The Auditor General will summarise his audit and assessment work in a published annual improvement report for each authority (under section 24).

The Auditor General may also, in some circumstances, carry out special inspections (under section 21), which will be reported to the authority and Ministers, and which he may publish (under section 22). An important ancillary activity for the Auditor General is the co-ordination of assessment and regulatory work (required by section 23), which takes into consideration the overall programme of work of all relevant regulators at an improvement authority. The Auditor General may also take account of information shared by relevant regulators (under section 33) in his assessments.

# Appendix 2 – Audit of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's 2015-16 Improvement Plan

## Certificate

I certify that I have audited Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's (the Council) Improvement Plan in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) and my Code of Audit Practice.

As a result of my audit, I believe that the Council has discharged its duties under section 15(6) to (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

## Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Auditor General

Under the Measure, the Council is required to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan describing its plans to discharge its duties to:

- make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions;
- make arrangements to secure achievement of its improvement objectives; and
- make arrangements to exercise its functions so that any performance standard specified by Welsh Ministers is met.

The Measure requires the Council to publish its Improvement Plan as soon as is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year to which it relates, or after such other date as Welsh Ministers may specify by order.

The Council is responsible for preparing the Improvement Plan and for the information set out within it. The Measure requires that the Council has regard to guidance issued by Welsh Ministers in preparing and publishing its plan.

As the Council's auditor, I am required under sections 17 and 19 of the Measure to carry out an audit of the Improvement Plan, to certify that I have done so, and to report whether I believe that the Council has discharged its duties to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 15 and statutory guidance.



## Scope of the Improvement Plan audit

For the purposes of my audit work I will accept that, provided an authority meets its statutory requirements, it will also have complied with Welsh Government statutory guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

For this audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information, or whether the Improvement Plan published by the Council can be achieved. Other assessment work that I will undertake under section 18 of the Measure will examine these issues. My audit of the Council's Improvement Plan, therefore, comprised a review of the plan to ascertain whether it included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the plan complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing its plan.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Measure cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.

**Huw Vaughan Thomas**  
**Auditor General for Wales**

CC: Leighton Andrews, Minister for Public Services  
Steve Barry, Manager  
Samantha Clements, Performance Audit Lead

# Appendix 3 – Audit of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council’s assessment of 2015-16 performance

## Certificate

I certify that I have audited Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council’s (the Council) assessment of its performance in 2014-15 in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) and my Code of Audit Practice.

As a result of my audit, I believe that the Council has discharged its duties under sections 15(2), (3), (8) and (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

## Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Auditor General

Under the Measure, the Council is required to annually publish an assessment which describes its performance:

- in discharging its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions;
- in meeting the improvement objectives it has set itself;
- by reference to performance indicators specified by Welsh Ministers, and self-imposed performance indicators; and
- in meeting any performance standards specified by Welsh Ministers, and self-imposed performance standards.

The Measure requires the Council to publish its assessment before 31 October in the financial year following that to which the information relates, or by any other such date as Welsh Ministers may specify by order.

The Measure requires that the Council has regard to guidance issued by Welsh Ministers in publishing its assessment.

As the Council’s auditor, I am required under sections 17 and 19 of the Measure to carry out an audit to determine whether the Council has discharged its duty to publish an assessment of performance, to certify that I have done so, and to report whether I believe that the Council has discharged its duties in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 15 and statutory guidance.

## Scope of the audit

For the purposes of my audit work I will accept that, provided an authority meets its statutory requirements, it will also have complied with Welsh Government statutory guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

For this audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information. Other assessment work that I will undertake under section 18 of the Measure may examine these issues. My audit of the Council's assessment of performance, therefore, comprised a review of the Council's publication to ascertain whether it included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the assessment complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing it.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Measure cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.

**Huw Vaughan Thomas**  
**Auditor General for Wales**

CC: Leighton Andrews, Minister for Public Services  
Steve Barry, Manager  
Samantha Clements, Performance Audit Lead

# Appendix 4 – Annual Audit Letter – Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council 2014-15

Councillor A H Thomas  
Leader  
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Port Talbot  
SA13 1PJ

Dear Councillor Thomas

This letter summarises the key messages arising from the Auditor General for Wales' statutory responsibilities under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and my reporting responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice.

## **The Council complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources**

It is the Council's responsibility to:

- put systems of internal control in place to ensure the regularity and lawfulness of transactions and to ensure that its assets are secure;
- maintain proper accounting records;
- prepare a Statement of Accounts in accordance with relevant requirements; and
- establish and keep under review appropriate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 requires me to:

- provide an audit opinion on the accounting statements;
- review the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- issue a certificate confirming that I have completed the audit of the accounts.

Local authorities in Wales prepare their accounting statements in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. This Code is based on International Financial Reporting Standards. On 29 September 2015 I issued an unqualified audit opinion on the accounting statements confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council's financial position and transactions. My report is contained within the Statement of Accounts. The key matters arising from the accounts audit were reported to members of the Audit Committee in my Audit of Financial Statements report on the 24 September 2015, and a more detailed report for officers has also been issued.

The Council was found to have continued to refine its closure processes building on the significant improvements made in the last few years, although the closure of the capital accounts still needs some work. I also reported that clearer evidencing of any settlement payments made outside the normal voluntary redundancy/early retirement framework was needed.

**I am satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources although areas for improvement have been identified**

My consideration of the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness has been based on the audit work undertaken on the accounts as well as placing reliance on the work completed as part of the Improvement Assessment under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Overall, I am satisfied there are no issues that would impact on the unqualified audit opinion given on the 2014-15 statement of accounts but there are areas where improvements can be made. My Annual Improvement Report and Corporate Assessment 2014 concluded that the Council had been delivering its key priorities but limitations in governance arrangements and performance evaluation presented risks to it being able to sustain progress in the future. Follow up work undertaken on performance management and risk management in 2015 has identified that progress has been made in implementing the new corporate performance management framework, although it now needs to be fully embedded in service business planning, but there is still a lot to be done to effectively manage the Council's exposure to risk. Work is currently ongoing to follow up the remaining issues identified in last year's report which will be reported in the 2015 Annual Improvement Report in the New Year. It is vital that the Council addresses any issues raised if it is to achieve improved performance.

Going forward the continuing extremely challenging financial position faced by all local government bodies in Wales will continue to have significant implications. In its 2015-16 budget setting report the Council reported a budget gap of £50 million for the period 2016-2020 with £18 million of these savings needing to be made in 2015-16.

To date the Council has been proactive in managing its growing funding gap, it has acknowledged that it needs to look at longer term fundamental changes in the way it operates and delivers its services and there is an appreciation that difficult decisions will need to be made. It is important that the Forward Financial Plan is closely monitored by officers and Members and clearly linked to directorate savings, service delivery plans etc. with any slippage dealt with quickly and effectively if these significant savings targets are to be achieved.

**I issued a certificate confirming that the audit of the accounts has been completed on 29 September 2015.**

**Previous years' work on certification of grant claims and returns identified areas for improvement which I expect to be actioned for the 2014-15 grants audit**

I have been reporting for a number of years that the processes in place for the management and production of grant claims needed to improve. Officers have put processes in place but these are not always adhered to. My audit of the Council's 2014-15 grants has now begun and I am anticipating improved processes will be in place, I will report on the outcome of this work early in the New Year when the work has concluded.

The financial audit fee was in line with the agreed fee set out in the 2015 Audit Plan.

Yours sincerely

Richard Harries  
For and on behalf of the Appointed Auditor

23 November 2015



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## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COUNCIL

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES – MR HYWEL JENKINS

6 July 2016

#### Matter for Information

#### Wards Affected - All

#### TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE – DOWNGRADING OF UK SOVEREIGN RATING

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members regarding movements to the United Kingdom's Sovereign rating following the vote to leave the European Union with reference to the Council's Treasury Management Policy.
- 1.2 The information set out in this report was presented to Policy and Resources Cabinet Board on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016. There are many changes and issues arising daily from the decision to leave the E.U. and the most relevant of these will be verbally reported at the meeting of Council.

#### 2. UK Sovereign Rating

- 2.1 Following the referendum decision to leave the European Union the three main credit rating agencies have taken the decision to downgrade the credit rating of the UK. The Council utilises credit rating information provided by the Fitch credit rating agency who, on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016, have downgraded the UK sovereign rating from AA+ to AA.

- 2.2 The reason for the downgrading is that Fitch believes the uncertainty following the referendum outcome will induce a slowdown in the UK economy in the short term as businesses defer investment and consider changes to the legal and regulatory environment.
- 2.3 The medium term forecast, according to Fitch, will depend on the nature of any future trade agreement(s) negotiated with the EU.
- 2.4 Mark Carney, the Governor of the Bank of England, stated on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016, immediately following the announcement of the result of the referendum that "...the capital requirements of our largest banks are now ten times higher than before the crisis (2007 banking crisis). The Bank of England has stress tested them against scenarios more than the country currently faces. As a result of these actions, UK banks have raised over £130bn of capital, and now have more than £600bn of high quality liquid assets.

### 3. **Treasury Management Strategy Implications**

- 3.1 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy includes the following statement:

'should the UK sovereignty rating reduce the Council will immediately review its investments but will continue to invest in UK institutions in line with the agreed strategy and a report will be forwarded to Members for consideration'

- 3.2 In line with this strategy Officer's will continue to invest in UK institutions as long as they meet the credit criteria shown for the relevant investment organisation as set out in Appendix 1 of this report. A list of Sovereign ratings is also included in Appendix 2.

#### **Financial Impact**

4. The report is for information only and relevant financial consequences will be reported to Members as part of the Forward Financial Plan/Budget considerations.

5. **Equality Impact Assessment**

An equality impact assessment was not required for this report.

**Workforce Impacts**

6. There are no workforce impacts arising from this report.

**Legal Impacts**

7. There are no legal impacts arising from this report.

**Risk Management**

8. Officers will continue to monitor the UK credit rating and report to Members as necessary.

**Consultation**

9. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

**Appendices**

10. Appendix 1 – Investment Criteria  
11. Appendix 2 – Financial Institution and Sovereign Credit Ratings  
12. Appendix 3 – Investment totals by institution as at 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016

**Officer Contact**

Mr Hywel Jenkins – Director of Finance and Corporate Services  
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## Appendix 1 – Investment Criteria

	Minimum 'High' Credit Criteria	Funds Managed	Max Amount	Max Duration
<b>Term deposits</b>				
Term deposits - Debt Management Office	N/A	In-house	Unlimited	1 year
Term deposits – local, police and fire authorities	N/A	In-house	£10m	1 year
Term deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+, F1	In-house	£20m	1 year
Term deposits – UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+	In-house	£20m	1 year
Term deposits – UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1	In-house	£15m	6 months
<b>Callable deposits</b>				
Callable deposits – Debt Management Agency deposit facility	N/A	In-house	Unlimited	
Callable deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+, F1	In-house	£20m	
Callable deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F2	In-house	£10m	
Callable deposits - UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+ or F1	In-house	£15m *	
Term deposits – non UK banks	Fitch short-term rating F1+	In-house	£5m	6 months

\* Where necessary this limit may be temporarily exceeded with the Authority's bankers only.

## **Appendix 2 – Financial Institution and Sovereign Credit Ratings**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Short Term Credit Rating</b>
Bank of Scotland Plc	F1
Barclays Bank	F1
Goldman Sachs International Bank	F1
HSBC Bank Plc	F1+
Lloyds Bank Plc	F1
Santander UK plc	F1
Nationwide Building Society	F1

### **Approved Countries for Investment (AA+ plus UK)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Sovereign Rating</b>
Australia	AAA
Canada	AAA
Denmark	AAA
Germany	AAA
Netherlands	AAA
Singapore	AAA
Sweden	AAA
Switzerland	AAA
USA	AAA
Finland	AA+
UK	AA

### **Appendix 3 - Investment totals by institution as at 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Total Invested</b>
	£'000
Lloyds Banking Group	15,000
Nationwide Building Society	11,000
Goldman Sachs	9,000
Santander	11,880
<u>Local Authorities</u>	
Eastbourne Borough Council	4,000
Glasgow City Council	6,000
Leeds City Council	5,000
Merseyside Police	3,000
Middlesbrough Borough Council	2,000
Nottingham City Council	3,000
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	4,000
Peterborough City Council	6,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>79,880</b>

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL CASTELL-NEDD PORT TALBOT**

**COUNCIL  
6<sup>th</sup> July, 2016**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND  
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION  
WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

**OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

**Purpose of the Report**

To make amendments to the Council's Outside Body representation Arrangements.

**Executive Summary and Background**

To remove Councillor P.A.Rees as the Authority's representative on NIACE, as Council representation is no longer required.

**Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact.

**Equality Impact Assessment**

There is no Equality Impact.

**Workforce Impacts**

There are no Workforce Impacts.

**Legal Powers**

Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

## **Risk Management**

There are none.

## **Consultation**

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

## **Recommendation:**

That Council approves the above change.

## **Reason for Proposed Decision:**

To update the Council's representation on Outside Bodies.

## **Implementation of Decision**

The decision is for immediate implementation.

## **List of Background Papers**

The Constitution.

## **Officer Contact**

Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services  
Contact: [k.jones3@npt.gov.uk](mailto:k.jones3@npt.gov.uk) or telephone 01639 76328





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## EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD

### CABINET

27 APRIL 2016

#### **Cabinet Members:**

Councillors: A.H.Thomas, P.A.Rees, M.L.James, E.V.Latham,  
Mrs.S.Miller, P.D.Richards, A.J.Taylor and A.N.Woolcock

#### **Officers in Attendance:**

H.Jenkins, A.Evans, G.Nutt, Mrs.K.Jones, Ms.C.Furlow and Mrs.A.Manlipp

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#### 1. **CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - 2016-2019**

##### **Decision:**

That, having given due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment:

- a. the draft Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-2019, contained as an Appendix to the circulated report together with the supporting documentation, be approved, subject to;
  - an amendment to the foreword of the document to reflect that there is a greater awareness of the need for self-help in our communities and the Authority wants to, with partners, help build the capacity for communities to do more for themselves, which in time will help manage demand on public services;
  - More Details of the Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration projects completed and ongoing in Port Talbot being included;
  - In relation to the work of the Local Service Board (LSB) on the impact of the next set of Welfare Benefit changes, could reference be made to the Public Service Board (PSB) which will supersede the LSB. Officers agreed to look into whether this was appropriate at this time as the PSB had not yet convened its first meeting and as such had not agreed its priorities going forward.

- b. the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive, to make any further changes necessary, which do not materially change the content of the report, prior to its final publication;
- c. Members commend this report, together with the attachments, to Council for formal adoption at its meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.

**Reason for Decision:**

To meet the statutory requirements set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call in period.

**Consultation:**

An extensive consultation and engagement exercise was undertaken which ran alongside the Council's overarching budget setting consultation (1 October, 2015 – 3 January, 2016).

2. **OFFICER URGENCY ACTION - THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 SECTION 85(1)**

**Decision:**

That the following urgency action taken by the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services, in consultation with the requisite Members, be noted:-

Officer Urgency Action No. 0028

The Local Government Act 1972 Section 85(1), Leave of absence granted for Cllr.J.R.Bryant.

**CHAIRPERSON**

**EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD**  
**CABINET BOARD - 28 APRIL, 2016**  
**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION**

**Cabinet Board Members:**

Councillors: P.A.Rees (Chairperson) and P.D.Richards

**Officers in Attendance:**

A.Evans, C.Millis, A.Jarrett, J.Hodges and Mrs.J.Woodman-Ralph

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1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

Agreed that Cllr.P.A.Rees be appointed Chairperson for the meeting.

2. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

3. **FOSTERING STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

4. **NEATH PORT TALBOT FOSTERING SERVICE REGULATION 42  
QUALITY OF CARE REPORT 2015/16**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

5. **FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT STRATEGY AND FINANCE POLICY**

**Decisions:**

1. That the current foster carers' fees be increased by £50 a week for children aged 11 plus;
2. That a retainer be paid of up to 6 weeks per annum to foster carers who are approved for children aged 11 plus, subject to terms and conditions that will apply.

**Reason for Decisions:**

To enable the Local Authority to support the recruitment and retention of foster carers for teenagers in order to reduce the number of young people placed in independent foster placements. This will promote outcomes for young people and reduce the cost of independent placements, enabling the Council to make greater savings.

**Implementation of Decisions:**

The decisions will be implemented after the three day call in period.

6. **FINANCING OF SCHOOLS SCHEME**

**Decision:**

That in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010 the Financing of Schools Scheme be approved with effect from 2016/17 financial year.

**Reason for Decision:**

To enable the Local Authority to make changes in the existing scheme made in statute.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call in period.

7. **PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT AND PLAY STRATEGY**

**Decision:**

That the Play Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan and Play Strategy that provides priorities for the delivery and development of play in Neath Port Talbot be approved.

**Reason for Decision:**

To enable the Local Authority to undertake its statutory duty to produce a Play Sufficiency Assessment and to develop an action plan and to ensure that all available resources are maximised for play and to improve the quality of the provision offered across the County Borough.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call in period.

**Consultation:**

This item has been subject to external consultation as detailed in the circulated report.

8. **CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT YEAR THREE ACTION PLAN 2016/2017**

**Decision:**

That the implementation of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan 2016/2017 in Neath Port Talbot be approved.

**Reason for Decision:**

To enable the Local Authority to deliver elements of The Childcare Act 2006 and the recommendations of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call in period.

9. **HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEALS PANEL**

Members were supportive of the request made by the previous Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee for the following addition to be included in the procedure.

**Decision:**

That the establishment of a Home to School Transport Appeals Panel be approved subject to the inclusion of the following wording in the “Where an in person representation is made, the appellant may choose to be accompanied by a friend, partner or relative for support”.

**Reason for Decision:**

To enable the Local Authority to convene and consider Appeals in regard to decisions taken on free Home to School Transport.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision be implemented after the three day call in period.

10. **REVIEW OF SCHOOL MUSIC SERVICE**

**Decisions:**

1. That the Authority withdraw from the current joint West Glamorgan Music Service;
2. That a new music service be established to support Neath Port Talbot Schools from 1 September 2016.

**Reason for Decisions:**

To confirm the disaggregation of the shared music service and to establish a new music service in Neath Port Talbot to support Neath Port Talbot schools from 1 September, 2016.



**Implementation of Decisions:**

The decisions will be implemented after the three day call in period.

11. **WESTERN BAY YOUTH JUSTICE AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

12. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

**Decision:**

That pursuant to Regulation 4 (3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No.2290, the public be excluded for the following item of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 14 and 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

13. **HILLSIDE PLACEMENT FEES**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

14. **THE CHILDREN'S HOME (WALES) REGULATIONS 2002**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

15. **THE MANAGER'S REPORT ON HILLSIDE SECURE CHILDREN'S HOME**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

**CHAIRPERSON**

**EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD**

**CABINET BOARD - 12 MAY, 2016**

**SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING CABINET BOARD**

**Cabinet Board Members:**

Councillors: J.Rogers (Chairperson) and P.D.Richards

**Officers in Attendance:**

N.Jarman, Ms.L.Livinsgtone, N.Evans and Mrs.T.Davies

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1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

Agreed that Councillor J.Rogers be appointed Chairperson for the meeting.

2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING CABINET BOARD HELD ON 14 APRIL, 2016**

Noted by the Committee.

3. **NPT HOMES PROGRESS UPDATE - TO APRIL 2016**

Following the discussion at the Scrutiny Committee meeting, Cabinet Members requested that an additional report concerning damp in NPT Homes properties be brought to a future meeting of the Social Care, Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet Board, for Members' information.

**Decision:**

That the monitoring report be noted, and a further information report regarding damp in NPT Homes properties be brought to a future meeting of the Social Care, Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet Board.

4. **HOUSING RENEWAL AND ADAPTATION SERVICE - EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND APPLICATION**

**Decision:**

That the outline project proposal, together with the preparation and submission of a detailed project proposal for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding to support a housing energy efficiency and renewable energy regeneration scheme, be approved, with a final scheme proposal to be submitted to the Social Care, Health and Housing Cabinet Board for approval.

**Reason for Decision:**

To enable the application for European Regional Development Fund funding to progress.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call in period.

5. **DIRECT SERVICE - COMMUNITY INTEGRATED MODEL**

**Decision:**

That Option Three – Community Integrated Model, as detailed within the circulated report, be approved.

**Reason for Decision:**

To choose an operating Option for the services in-scope which is the best fit between meeting the needs and wishes of the widest number of service users/carers possible, delivering the most economical solution for the Authority in the Forward Financial Plan context, and responsiveness and resilience.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call in period.

**Consultation:**

This item has been subject to external consultation.

6. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17**

Members noted that the dates attached to the Social Care, Health and Housing Cabinet Board Forward Work Programme 2016/17 were draft, and subject to agreement at the Annual Meeting of Council 2016.

**Decision:**

That the Forward Work Programme 2016/17, be noted.

7. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

**Decision:**

That pursuant to Regulation 4(3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290, the public be excluded for the following item of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

8. **HOUSING RENEWAL AND ADAPTATION SERVICE - FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS 2016-17**

**Decisions:**

1. That the General Capital Fund allocation be apportioned as detailed within the private circulated report;
2. That the Specific Capital Grant allocation be split as detailed within the private circulated report, and apportioned to the individual operational categories for each Renewal Area;
3. That the Vibrant and Viable Places funding be fully allocated to the Vibrant and Viable Places Regeneration works;
4. That the recyclable loans be distributed as detailed within the private circulated report.

**Reason for Decisions:**

To enable the Authority to utilise its Capital Allocations for 2016/17.

**Implementation of Decisions:**

The decisions will be implemented after the three day call in period.

**CHAIRPERSON**

**EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD**

**COMMITTEENAME**

**MEETINGDATE**

**Cabinet Members:**

Councillors: MembersPresentShortRolesList

**Officers in Attendance:**

StaffInAttendanceShortList

**Wales Audit Office:**

PublicInAttendanceShortList

**CHAIRMAN**

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**EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD**  
**CABINET BOARD - 19 MAY, 2016**  
**POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD**

**Cabinet Board Members:**

Councillors: A.N.Woolcock (Chairperson) and P.A. Rees

**Officers in Attendance:**

Mrs.K.Jones, D.Rees, Mrs.S.Rees and Miss.G.Cirillo

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1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

Agreed that Cllr. A.N.Woolcock be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD HELD ON 31 MARCH 2016**

**Decision:**

Noted by the Committee.

3. **DIGITAL INCLUSION CHARTER**

The Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services reported that the Welsh Government had developed a Digital Inclusion Charter through Digital Communities Wales which Local Authorities and others were being invited to sign up to. It was also noted that the members of the new Public Service Board which replaces the Local Service Board, would be asked to sign up to the Charter.

**Decision:**

That the implementation of a Digital Inclusion Charter within Neath Port Talbot be approved.

**Reason for Decision:**

To gain Member approval for the Council to sign up to the Digital Inclusion Charter.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

4. **COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS - ANNUAL REPORT**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

5. **CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2016-2017**

**Decision:**

That the Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services Business Plan 2016-2017 as detailed in the circulated report, be adopted.

**Reason for Decision:**

In order to comply with the requirements of the Council's Corporate Performance Management Framework.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

6. **HUMAN RESOURCES BUSINESS PLAN 2016-2017**

**Decision:**

That the Human Resources Business Plan 2016-2017 as detailed within the circulated report, be approved.

**Reason for Decision:**

In order to comply with the requirements of the Councils's Corporate Performance Management Framework.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

7. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

8. **FINANCIAL SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2016-2017**

**Decision:**

That the Financial Services Business Plan 2016-17 as detailed in the circulated report, be adopted.

**Reason for Decision:**

In order to allow the Division to operate in line with the Financial Services Business Plan for the financial year 2016/17.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

9. **TO RECEIVE THE DRAFT FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17  
JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2016 (DATES TO BE CONFIRMED AT THE  
ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNCIL 2016)**

**Decision:**

That the Forward Work Programme be noted.

10. **URGENT ITEM**

Because of the need to deal now with the matter contained in Minute No.11 below, the Chairperson agreed that it could be raised at today's meeting as an urgent item pursuant to Statutory Instrument 2001 No.2290 (as amended).

**Reason for Urgency**

Due to the time element.

11. **WALES AUDIT OFFICE - THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015**

**Decision**

That the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services be authorised to submit the draft response to the consultation paper “The Wellbeing of Future Generations and what it means for your Audit” as detailed within the circulated report, as the Council’s formal response to the said consultation.

**Reason for Decision**

In order to authorise a response to consultation being undertaken by the Auditor General on the way he might discharge new duties placed on him by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

**Implementation of Decision**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

12. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

**Decision:**

That pursuant to Regulation 4(3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12, 13 & 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

13. **SOCIAL SERVICES RESIDENTIAL CARE WRITE OFFS**

**Decision**

That the Social Services Residential Care Write Offs and detailed in the private circulated report, be approved.

**Reason for Decision**

The amounts are irrecoverable.

**Implementation of Decision**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

14. **COUNCIL TAX WRITE OFFS**

**Decision**

That the Council Tax Write Offs as detailed within the private circulated report, be approved.

**Reason for Decision**

The amounts are irrecoverable.

**Implementation of Decision**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

**CHAIRPERSON**

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