

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

12th JULY 2024

Report of the Director of Strategy & Corporate Services

Noelwyn Daniel

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Audit Wales – Use of performance information: Service user perspective and outcomes – Neath Port Talbot Council

Purpose of Report

1. To present Members with the council's response to the above examination undertaken by Audit Wales during 2023 and to provide an update on progress made on recommendations.

Executive Summary

2. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a “well-being duty” on 48 public bodies. The duty requires those bodies to set and publish “well-being objectives” that are designed to maximise their contribution to achieving each of the Act's seven national well-being goals.
3. Section 15(1) (a) of the above Act requires the Auditor General to carry out examinations to assess the extent to which public bodies have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives.
4. The aim of the examination was to determine:

‘Does the council's performance data enable senior leaders to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of its activities to effectively manage its performance?’

Summary of Findings

5. The examination found:

'The performance information provided by the council to senior leaders to enable them to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of the council's activities is limited'

A copy of the Audit Wales report is attached at Appendix 1

6. The examination concluded with the following three recommendations:

Information on the perspective of the service user

R1 - The council should ensure that the information provided to its senior leaders enables them to understand the service user perspective on a broader range of services and policies. The council should ensure this information is drawn from the diversity of service users.

Outcomes information

R2 - The council should strengthen the information provided to senior leaders to help them evaluate whether the council is delivering its objectives and intended outcomes

Quality and accuracy of data

R3 - The council needs to assure itself that it has robust arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of the information it provides to senior leaders relating to service user perspective and outcomes.

7. Whilst we did not wholly accept the above recommendations, it was acknowledged that there is further work to be done to ensure that we bring together corporately the service user feedback we already have processes in place to collect across a number of service areas. This will further strengthen decision making and service delivery.
8. The council's response to the above recommendations is set out in the attached Organisational Response Form (attached at Appendix 2). The Organisational Response Form was scrutinised at Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and approved at Cabinet on 17th April 2024.

9. A column has been added to the Form to provide the Governance & Audit Committee with an update on progress made against each of the recommendations.

Financial Appraisal

10. The programme of audit work undertaken by Audit Wales has been delivered within the budget allocated for audit and inspection work.

Integrated Impact Assessment

11. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment.

Valleys Communities Impact

12. No impacts.

Workforce Impact

13. There are no workforce impacts.

Legal Impact

14. Section 15(1) (a) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Auditor General to carry out examinations to assess the extent to which public bodies have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives.

Risk Management

15. The findings of Audit Wales examinations are a key input into the council's corporate governance and self-assessment arrangements.

Consultation

16. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

17. For Governance and Audit Committee to note the council's response attached at Appendix 2 and to note the progress against each of the recommendations.

Appendices

18. Appendix 1 – Audit Wales Report – Service user perspective and outcomes - Neath Port Talbot Council
Appendix 2 – Council Organisational Response Form and progress

List of Background Papers

19. None

Officer Contact

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