

## **SECTION C – MATTER FOR MONITORING**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL**

### **CORPORATE ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

#### **Purpose of Report:**

To report progress on the Corporate Assessment action plan (Appendix 1) drawn up by Officers to respond to the proposals for improvement from the Wales Audit Office's report:

“Neath Port Talbot Annual Improvement Report, incorporating the Corporate Assessment Report 2014, November 2014.”

#### **Background**

The Wales Audit Office is required to deliver a rolling programme of in-depth corporate assessments once, during a four year period for each Council. Our corporate assessment was undertaken in June 2014.

The action plan to address the proposals for improvement set out in the Report, was agreed at Council on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and since then it has been incorporated into the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan 2015-2018 (as part of the delivery programme).

#### **Progress**

In total we received 20 proposals for improvement and to date, progress is as follows:

- 7 proposals for improvement have been completed. These are P5, P6, P7, P8, P10, P16 and P19;
- 13 proposals for improvement have been partially completed. These are P1, P2, P3, P4, P9, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P17, P18 and P20; and

Further progress reports will be brought back to Members on a quarterly basis throughout the civic year.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Corporate Assessment Action Plan

### **List of Background Papers:**

Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report, incorporating the Corporate Assessment Report 2014 <http://www.wao.gov.uk/publication/neath-port-talbot-county-borough-council-annual-improvement-report-including-corporate>

### **Officer Contact:**

Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy & Democratic Services,  
Telephone 01639 763284, email: [k.jones3@npt.gov.uk](mailto:k.jones3@npt.gov.uk)

Nita Sparkes, Corporate Strategy & Performance Manager,  
Telephone 01639 686172, email: [n.sparkes@npt.gov.uk](mailto:n.sparkes@npt.gov.uk)

**WALES AUDIT OFFICE CORPORATE ASSESSMENT****NEATH PORT TALBOT ACTION PLAN****LATEST UPDATE**

<b>Governance</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Proposal for Improvement</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>	<b>RAG</b>
<b>P1</b>	<b>Establish a skills training programme which supports members to discharge their roles and responsibilities effectively.</b>	1. Revised format for Member Seminars introduced.	Completed	Green
		2. Refresher training for Members undertaking Annual Development Reviews with other Members completed.	Completed	Green
		3. Survey of all Members to be conducted to identify development priorities for civic year 2015/16.	30.04.15 Survey is underway. Delay in completion – 31.07.15.	Amber
	<b>Introduce formal appraisal of the roles of Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs as a means of driving skills development.</b>	4. It has been decided that no further action will be taken at this time to introduce formal appraisal. Other mechanisms will be employed to ensure Members access the development they need.	n/a	n/a
<b>P2</b>	<b>Revised scrutiny arrangements to establish a more balanced range of scrutiny activity, produce a forward programme to enable planning and coordination of activity and end time-consuming practices that lack impact.</b>	1. Forward work programmes established for each committee and published.	Completed	Green
		2. Pre-decision work now operating on a selective basis.	Completed	Green
		3. Evaluation of changes to scrutiny to be undertaken towards the end of the civic year to identify further priorities for improvement.	30.04.15 Review underway. Discussing Wales Audit Office	Amber

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<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Proposal for Improvement</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>	<b>RAG</b>
			feedback from follow up work.	
<b>P3</b>	<b>Provide comprehensive and accessible information about the business conducted by the Council.</b>	1. Replacement committee administration system "Modern.gov" went live October 2014	Completed	
		2. Forward work programmes now in place for all scrutiny committees and cabinet boards.	Completed	
		3. Procedures to record decisions taken by officers under delegated authority to be reviewed.	30.09.15 Work not started.	
<b>Note</b>	<b>Actions P1 to P3 – Karen Jones to produce a report for Council prior to recess with next set of development actions.</b>			
<b>P4</b>	<b>Improve whistle blowing by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clarifying reporting arrangements.</b></li> <li>• <b>Bringing together the information currently held in different documents.</b></li> <li>• <b>Giving more information about safeguards that the council will provide to employees under the arrangements.</b></li> </ul>	1. The policy and procedure will be reviewed in line with WAO advice and amalgamated into one document.	30.06.15 Policy and procedure is being reviewed and this work will be completed by 31.8.15. (revised date). We are working with the Corporate Communications Team to develop a communication strategy and ensure that the policy is well publicised and known to employees and other workers of	

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<b>Governance</b>				
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			the Council.	
<b>P4</b>	<b>Improve whistle blowing by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clarifying reporting arrangements.</b></li> <li>• <b>Bringing together the information currently held in different documents.</b></li> <li>• <b>Giving more information about safeguards that the council will provide to employees under the arrangements.</b></li> </ul>	2. The policy and procedure will be reviewed in line with WAO advice and amalgamated into one document.	30.06.15 Policy and procedure is being reviewed and this work will be completed by 31.8.15. (revised date). We are working with the Corporate Communications Team to develop a communication strategy and ensure that the policy is well publicised and known to employees and other workers of the Council.	Amber
		3. The accessibility of the policy will be reviewed, again in line with WAO advice.	30.06.15 As above comment.	Amber

**Performance Management**

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Proposal for Improvement</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>	<b>RAG</b>
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**WALES AUDIT OFFICE CORPORATE ASSESSMENT****NEATH PORT TALBOT ACTION PLAN**

<b>Performance Management</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Proposal for Improvement</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>	<b>RAG</b>
<b>P5</b>	<b>Ensure programme delivery expectations are based on a realistic assessment of resources available – especially in the Transforming Adult Social Care Programme and Regeneration Programme.</b>	The scope and aims of the 2 priority programmes will be reviewed as part of the annual development of the Corporate Improvement Plan and confirmation that sufficient resources are available to deliver the agreed, revised programme will be part of that review.	Completed New programme established.	Green
<b>P6</b>	<b>Place a focus on poorer performing schools to drive and sustain improvements having regard to the levels of performance expected for schools in Wales with similar levels of deprivation.</b>	1. Already accommodated within the Corporate Improvement Plan priority 2 “Better Schools, Brighter Prospects.”	Completed	Green
		2. Enhanced scrutiny and monitoring arrangements have been identified to enable Members to have a greater insight into performance at schools level.	Completed	Green
<b>P7</b>	<b>Implement proposed performance reporting improvements to bring together information in a way that allows the council to evaluate whether it is making effective use of its resources.</b>	1. Post-implementation review of progress in developing report cards at accountable manager level to be carried out in early 2015.	Completed	Green
		2. Corporate performance and resource dashboard developed.	Completed	Green
	<b>Introduce performance review arrangements that enable evaluation of the contribution of internal trading agencies to the achievement of the council’s objectives.</b>	3. Arrangements to ensure systematic review of the operation of internal trading agencies to be considered.	To be decided Property Bay Wales business is in the process of being wound up and the accounts are being prepared accordingly.	Green

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<b>Financial Planning</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Proposal for Improvement</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>	<b>RAG</b>
<b>P8</b>	<b>Improve financial planning and monitoring by combining financial and performance information more effectively, particularly reinforcing links between the Forward Financial Plan and Business Plans.</b>	1. Revised budget monitoring arrangements have been introduced and will be subject to continuous improvement.	Completed	Green
		2. Timetabling of budget and performance monitoring subject of review with the aim of securing better integration.	Completed	Green
<b>P9</b>	<b>Clarify the corporate policy on income generation and charging to ensure a consistent approach to concessions and target groups.</b>	Prepare corporate policy on income generation and charging.	30.09.15 The income generation project is underway and the policy will be written in line with the findings of the project.	Amber
<b>P10</b>	<b>Improve reporting of financial information to assist understanding of:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The implications of savings plans and additional pressures on the quality and range of services especially those services which support improvement priorities.</li> <li>• The links between budget reports and the Forward Financial Plan to explain the impact on the savings target and risk assessment.</li> </ul>	Covered in actions taken regarding P8.	n/a	n/a
<b>P11</b>	<b>Review Accounting Instructions and Financial Regulations to ensure they</b>	Review started before the corporate assessment and will be on-going, each of the Accounting	To be decided This is an on-going piece of	Amber

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	<b>reflect the latest working practices and Council policies and communicate requirements to staff.</b>	Instruction's needs to be continually reviewed periodically.	work. Responsibility for the Accounting Instructions has been assigned to appropriate officers and all of them have to be reviewed on a three year cycle plus whenever there are significant changes in processes or procedures relevant to a particular Accounting Instruction.	

<b>Human Resources</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Proposal for Improvement</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>	<b>RAG</b>
<b>P12</b>	<b>Part 1: Ensure full adoption by December 2015 of an appraisal process that ensures staff are equipped to do their jobs and enables people to be held to account.</b>	Chief Officer Appraisal process implemented in 2014. An end of year review of process will take place post 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2015, to ensure fit for purpose.	Completed  Chief Officer Appraisal process implemented in 2014.  All Chief Officer appraisals have been completed in the 2015 cycle.  The review of this process is planned as part of the wider work in relation to Appraisal	Green



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<b>Human Resources</b>				
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			(see below), and will be discussed and agreed with representing trade unions.	
		Roll out to Accountable Managers has begun.	31.12.15 This is happening on a voluntary basis, and there is more take up in some parts of the Council than others. It is intended that the process itself will be reviewed as part of the wider work in relation to Appraisal (see below), and will be discussed and agreed with representing trade unions.	Amber
		Appraisal process for wider workforce to be developed and implemented during 2015.	31.12.15 (pilot) This will be developed over the coming months in partnership with representing trade unions. It is intended that the new process will be piloted by December 2015 with full roll and implementation by 31.03.15.	Amber

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Human Resources				
Ref:	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Target completion date	RAG
	<b>Part 2: Implement an induction process and ensure new staff are briefed on corporate expectations.</b>	A Corporate Induction process is in place – The Induction Checklist. This will be reviewed in line with WAO expectations. It will be determined if this can be linked to on line learning as part of the re-launch of the Checklist.	31.12.15  The Induction Checklist has been reviewed, however monitoring shows that completion rates run at around 5%.  Therefore a full review of the process is to take place with a view to ensuring that all new employees, and employees who move jobs within the Council do receive a proper induction and that this is recorded.  As this forms part of the Employee Performance Framework, this review will be carried out in conjunction with the review of appraisal process. On target for completion 31.12.15	Amber
	<b>Part 3: Establish a Workforce Plan.</b>	1. Establish a Workforce Plan.	30.04.16  We are focusing on starting to get workforce information out to management teams which will	Amber

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			<p>form the basis for developing plans – so the Organisations Structures database is the first step towards that, and then dashboards later in the year.</p> <p>We are looking to build in an element of workforce planning into the business planning process for next year.</p>	
		2. VISION development, under the Efficiency Programme Board aims to establish the collation of accurate workforce data to enable managers to workforce plan as part of the Business Planning process.	A costs benefits analysis of 'Reachout' is underway and will be reported to July Efficiency Programme Board to determine the future development of VISION.	Amber
		3. Data cleansing of the establishment data held on the VISION system will be completed by 30/4/15 and to enable the provision of accurate post data.	<p>30.04.15</p> <p>Initial cleansing has been completed.</p> <p>New processes are now established to maintain establishment data.</p> <p>In addition a 'Workforce Planning Organisational</p>	Amber

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			<p>Structures' database has been developed with I.T. and is currently being piloted by the Chief Executive / Directors of Finance &amp; Environment and the Finance &amp; Corporate Services / Chief Executives Heads of Services prior to full roll out to senior management teams.</p> <p>Not only will this provide useful information in relation to employees and posts within service areas for workforce planning purposes, it will also encourage managers to ensure that information is provided in a timely way to the HR team to maintain the validity of the data.</p> <p>Workforce profiles are being developed to provide Heads of Service with dashboards setting out key data in relation to their workforce – we aim to have this implemented across the Council</p>	

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<b>Human Resources</b>				
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			by 31.3.16.	
		4. The Corporate Improvement Plan will set out the actions the Council plans to take to improve its workforce planning.	Completed	Green
<b>Asset Management</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Proposal for Improvement</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>	<b>RAG</b>
<b>P13</b>	<b>Update the Asset Management Plan so that it acts as a point of reference for the next five years and corresponds more closely to current priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan.</b>	Plan to be revised and aligned to the Corporate Improvement Plan.	30.09.15  Some work has started but been delayed due to resource implications.	Amber
<b>P14</b>	<b>Ensure asset management consideration is included within Service Business Plans.</b>	Business planning guidance to be revised and reissued.	31.03.16  Will be considered as part of P15 and revised guidance to be issued for 2016/17 business planning framework.	Amber
<b>P15</b>	<b>Formalise arrangements for the Strategic Asset Management Working Group</b> by: • <b>Producing a terms of reference</b>	Terms of reference and reporting lines to be established and the Group will then meet at regular intervals.	31.08.15	Amber

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<b>Asset Management</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Proposal for Improvement</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>	<b>RAG</b>
	<p>and stating expected corporate working practices (based on existing custom and practice); and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce an indicative annual work programme, and produce notes of decisions made by the Group.</li> </ul>			

<b>Information Technology and Information Management</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Proposal for Improvement</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>	<b>RAG</b>
<b>P16</b>	<b>Ensure the Information Technology Strategy identifies and mitigates risks arising from reduced staff resources.</b>	Incorporated into the Service Business Plan	Completed	Green
<b>P17</b>	<b>Finalise the Council's Information Strategy and communicate this to all staff.</b>	Final draft to be presented to Members for approval.	31.03.15 Not yet presented to members. Target date September 2015.	Amber
<b>P18</b>	<b>Provide an annual report on information management and information governance matters to members to enable them to evaluate performance and the effectiveness</b>	Annual report to be produced alongside annual data protection report.	31.03.15 Work in progress, date for completion to be confirmed.	Amber

**WALES AUDIT OFFICE CORPORATE ASSESSMENT****NEATH PORT TALBOT ACTION PLAN**

Information Technology and Information Management				
Ref:	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Target completion date	RAG
	of arrangements.			

Collaboration				
Ref:	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Target completion date	RAG
P19	<b>Engage with key partners to establish a programme of community capacity building to support alternative methods of service delivery.</b>	Discussions have been initiated with the WCVA and NPTCVS to identify opportunities for developing further options for service delivery.	Completed	Green
P20	<b>Further develop reporting arrangements to enable evaluation of the effectiveness and sustainability of collaborative activity.</b>	1. Enhanced arrangements have been established to monitor the effectiveness of the ERW arrangements.	Completed	Green
		2. Discussions are taking place to put scrutiny of the Western Bay collaborative on an enhanced footing.	30.04.15 Discussions are underway.	Amber
		3. Scrutiny forward work programmes contained selected topics for scrutinising the work of the Local Service Board.	Completed	Green
		4. Scrutiny Members will be surveyed to establish what improvements to information they would wish to commission to their scrutiny of the large partnership contracts in place with Grwp Gwalia, NPT Homes and Celtic Leisure.	Completed	Green

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