

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Policy & Resources Cabinet Board

7th January 2016

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy & Democratic Services

Mrs K. Jones

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Wales Audit Office (WAO) Review of Performance Management Arrangements

Purpose of Report

1. For Members to receive a presentation from Mr Steve Barry, Audit Manager, Wales Audit Office (WAO) on the findings of the Wales Audit Office follow up review of the Council's performance management arrangements (WAO report appended at Appendix 1)
2. For Members to receive an update from the Head of Corporate Strategy & Democratic Services on the progress made on addressing the proposals for improvement provided to the Council by the Wales Audit Office following the above review.

Executive Summary

In 2014, the Auditor General for Wales undertook a Corporate Assessment of the Council which identified the need to strengthen the performance management framework. However, it was acknowledged by the Wales Audit Office the Council had already recognised this and was seeking to address it. Consequently, the Corporate Assessment included a proposal for improvement for the Council to implement planned performance reporting improvements to bring together information in a way that allowed the Council to evaluate whether it is making effective use of resources. During the summer of 2015, the Wales Audit Office undertook a follow up review to assess the Council's subsequent progress which sought to answer the question; "Has the

Council made progress in implementing its new performance management arrangements?

Findings of the Review

It is pleasing to report the Wales Audit Office found the Council has made progress in implementing its new corporate performance:

- The Council has improved the corporate performance framework and managers are committed to using the new processes
 - The Council has introduced guidance that encourages improvements in business planning practice across the organisation
 - The Council has adopted a report card template that has the potential to strengthen the evaluation of service performance, linked to resources and corporate priorities
- Heads of Service are planning more consistently but there is scope to continue developing and refining the business plans and report cards
- The Council is beginning to improve the coordination and presentation of performance information to support decision-making and scrutiny but does not yet have a complete overview of performance.

The following proposals for improvement were included in the draft Wales Audit Office report:

P1 - Further refine the service business plans, in line with corporate guidance

P2 - Further refine the report cards, including strengthening the narrative evaluation and the link between priorities and actions

P3 – Further develop performance reporting by coordinating and bringing together information to support scrutiny and strategic decision making

To address the proposals for improvement the following action plan has been developed:

| Proposal for Improvement | Action | Target Date |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| P1: Further refine the service business plans, in line with corporate guidance | Revised business planning guidance to be issued to Heads of Service for 2016/2017 which will incorporate the requirement for consideration of both workforce planning and asset management issues. Support will be offered to Heads of Service to ensure alignment with the revised guidance. | 01.04.2016 |
| P2: Further refine the report cards, including strengthening the narrative evaluation and the link between priorities and actions | An assessment is currently underway of those report cards that have been reported to scrutiny committees during 2015/2016 to inform the delivery of more targeted support for managers during 2016/2017. Guidance will also be issued to all managers to support the updating of their report cards for 2016/2017. | 01.04.2016 |
| P3 – Further develop performance reporting by coordinating and bringing together information to support scrutiny and strategic decision making | A further review of performance reporting will be undertaken in order to rationalise reporting arrangements. This will also take account of a review of the Council’s Corporate Improvement Plan and the transition to the requirements | 31.03.2017 |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| | contained within the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. | |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

Financial Appraisal

Actions to implement the recommendations contained within this report have been accommodated within existing resources.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

There is no requirement to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment for this item.

Workforce Impact

Workshops have been held with each management team to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the corporate performance management system across the Council and that officers have the skills to work within the framework.

Legal Impact

To support the discharge of the duty placed on the Council, as contained within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, to 'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions'.

Risk Management

This improvement work ensures the Council has a robust, fit for purpose corporate performance management framework and thereby avoids negative audit opinions/statutory recommendations.

Consultation

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

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

1. Note the progress made by the Council in implementing the proposals for improvement contained in the Wales Audit Office report.
2. Note the findings of the Wales Audit Office follow up review of the Council's performance management arrangements.

3. Endorse the actions proposed in relation to the recent WAO report.

Reason for Proposed Decision

To ensure the Council has a robust, fit for purpose corporate performance management framework to support the delivery of our commitment to protect jobs and services particularly to those that are most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our communities in times of severe and enduring austerity.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period

Appendices

Wales Audit Office Report – Review of Performance Management Arrangements

List of Background Papers

Policy & Resource Cabinet Board 27th March 2014 – Corporate Performance Management Framework

Officer Contact:

Mrs Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services.
Tel: 01639 763284 or e-mail: k.jones3@npt.gov.uk

Ms Caryn Furlow, Corporate Policy, Performance & Partnerships
Manager. Tel: 01639 763242 or email: c.furlow@npt.gov.uk