

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL REPORT

11TH MAY 2016

REPORT OF THE

HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

KAREN JONES

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All

**Draft Corporate Improvement Plan 2016–2019
“RISING TO THE CHALLENGE**

Purpose of Report

To present the Corporate Improvement Plan to Council for adoption.

Executive Summary

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires every local authority in Wales to prepare a forward looking plan detailing its improvement objectives for that year.

This report contains the Council’s Corporate Improvement Plan for the period 2016-2019 which outlines the actions we intend to take over the course of the Plan to further progress the six improvement objectives set by the Council’s political administration following the local government elections in May 2012. The Plan also sets out how we will monitor and evaluate the delivery of the objectives and how we are ensuring the alignment of available skills, capacity and governance to deliver the Plan.

Background

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 Statutory Guidance states:

“This forward looking report should cover an authority’s plans for that year. This principally means details of its improvement objectives as follows:

- 1. General statement outlining the nature of the authority’s improvement objectives for the year*
- 2. An explanation of why they were chosen and the outcomes that communities should expect if they are achieved*
- 3. A statement on the process followed on the consultation on the improvement objectives and any issues that arose*
- 4. The evidence that the authority has set itself in order to monitor its delivery of its improvement objectives*
- 5. Information on how communities or stakeholders may propose new improvement objectives during the year”*

Further, under section 2 (1) of the Measure the Council *“must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement”* and 3(2) – *“setting of improvement objectives”* should be included.

This Plan has been prepared under Section 15(6) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, which discharges the Council’s duties under sections 2(1), 3(2) and 8(7).

Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-2019 – “Rising to the Challenge”

The attached Plan (**Appendix 1**) outlines the actions we intend to take over the course of the Plan to further progress the six improvement objectives set by the Council’s political administration following the local government elections in May 2012.

Overall, we have continued to make good progress in delivering on our improvement objectives. However, this year our focus is more about what we can deliver and clarity on what we cannot, given the very challenging financial context we face.

The improvement objectives contained within the Plan have been subject to an extensive consultation and engagement exercise which ran alongside the Council's overarching budget setting consultation (1st October 2015 – 3rd January 2016). We received 125 responses and in summary:

- 52% of respondents agreed that the proposed activities for all six draft improvement objectives were clear and easy to understand. 25% did not agree and 23% did not answer the question.
- 34% of respondents agree that the proposed activities will help us achieve the improvement objectives, 36% disagreed and 30% did not answer

To address the comments received during the consultation period, additional work was undertaken with Heads of Service to further refine the draft set of objectives and the detailed activities to ensure they were more action and outcome focussed. We also removed the technical language and identified a basket of measures for each improvement objective to measure progress. The six improvement objectives are:

1. To improve outcomes for children in need and children looked after by improving the performance of the Council's Children and Young People Services Department;
2. To raise educational standards and attainment for all young people;
3. To maximise the number of adults who are able to live independently with or without support within the home of their choice within their community;
4. To support and invest in our town centres and communities to promote economic growth, regeneration and sustainability to maximise job opportunities and improve access to employment;
5. To increase the amount of waste the Council recycles and composts; and
6. To improve customer experience and make better use of public money.

The six improvement objectives also support the vision for Neath Port Talbot as set out in the County Borough's Single Integrated Plan 2013-2023:

'Creating a Neath Port Talbot where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous'

The Plan also provides information on how we are ensuring we are aligning available skills, capacity and governance to deliver the Plan.

An easy to read summary version of the Plan has been developed. This is based on the information contained within the attached Plan and is included in **Appendix 2**.

Financial Impact

There is no additional financial impact attached to the delivery of the improvement objectives set out in the attached Corporate Improvement Plan as any financial impacts have been identified as part of the Council's budget setting and planning process for 2016-2017 and were incorporated into revenue and capital budgets approved by the Council for the financial year 2016-2017.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. An overview of the Assessment has been included in this report in summary form only and it is essential that Members read the Equality Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at **Appendix 3**, for the purposes of the meeting.

Workforce Impacts

The net budget for 2016-2017 amounts to £270.9m. Financial savings of over £11m have been required offset by additional monies provided of some £9m including schools. A review of Capital Financing Charges and the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision Policy has generated a further £2m savings which has helped to protect jobs and services within the County Borough. The continuing reduction in financial resources available means that this Council's workforce is being continuously remodelled and downsized to reflect the changes needed to the delivery of services and functions. To aid this process, the Council has again operated a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme and an additional 77 people will have left the Council on these grounds prior to the beginning of 2016/2017.

Legal Impacts

The publication of the Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-2019 will ensure the Council discharges its statutory duties as contained within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Risk Management

Any associated risks have been identified on the Council's Corporate Risk Register as reported to the Cabinet on 2nd March 2016 and mitigating actions are being implemented and monitored by Senior Management Teams.

Recommendation

The attached Plan has been amended following comments by the Cabinet and Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and having given due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment:

1. It is recommended that Council adopt the Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-2019.
2. It is recommended that the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services is 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.

Reason for Proposed Decision

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

Implementation of Decision

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-19

Appendix 2 – Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-2019 - Summary

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers

- Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009
- Reforming the Wales Programme for Improvement (WPI) – Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 – Guidance

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