

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

21st September 2016

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – K.JONES

SECTION A- MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARDS AFFECTED - ALL

Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan – April - August Progress Report 2016-2017

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on progress made on the Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan (Appendix 1) for the period April – August 2016. The action plan reflects the governance issues identified in the Council’s Annual Governance Statement for 2015-16. This action plan also incorporates the outstanding actions from the Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment report: “Neath Port Talbot Annual Improvement Report, incorporating the Corporate Assessment Report 2014, November 2014.”

Executive Summary

The Corporate Governance Group continues to oversee the improvement work identified in the Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan to ensure the Council’s processes and procedures enable the Council to carry out its functions effectively. During the period April – August 2016, good progress has been made on most of the improvement work contained within the action plan. However, there has been a delay in taking some improvement actions forward due to pressures of other work which has needed to have priority.

Background

The Annual Governance Statement describes the Council’s governance arrangements and the controls we employ to manage the risks of failure

to achieve strategic objectives. The Annual Governance Statement forms part of the Annual Statement of Accounts and provides a public statement of the extent to which the Council complies with the Code of Governance.

Progress:

During the period, good progress has been made across a number of the areas of improvement work contained within the action plan.

This has included:

- The issuing of revised guidance for both business plans and service report cards to further strengthen and improve our performance management processes.
- The roll-out of the new performance appraisal process across the Council.
- Continuing the roll-out of Modern Gov.
- Continuing to strengthen and improve the Council's Corporate Risk Management processes.
- Rolling out data protection training across the Council.
- Making arrangements to ensure the Council meets the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Undertaking the review of the Workforce Strategy Collective Agreement.

There are some areas where progress has been slower due to a number for reasons including capacity and this will be addressed during the next period. This includes:

- Updating the Council's Property Asset Management Plan
- The production of revised equalities guidance to incorporate examples of good practice for data collection and data sources.

Financial Appraisal

The progress described was delivered against a challenging financial backdrop.

Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to “pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.”

As the focus is a progress report, there is no requirement to undertake an equality impact assessment.

Workforce Impact

The progress described was delivered as the Council saw a further downsizing of its workforce by a further 197 employees during 2015-2016.

Legal Impact

This progress report is prepared under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and discharges the Council’s duties to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions”.

Risk Management

The Council also has a general duty under the local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions”. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk. Failure to monitor progress on the action plan may lead to the Wales Audit Office making statutory recommendations the Council would be obliged to address.

Consultation

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note the progress made on the Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan for the period April – August 2016 attached at Appendix 1.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Corporate Governance Group Improvement Action Plan 2016-17

List of Background Papers

Annual Governance Statement 2015-16 (Audit Committee 23.09.16)

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Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan 2016-2017

Key Improvement Area		Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress April – August 2016	RAG Status
G1	Corporate Performance Management Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> further embed the business planning and service report card arrangements 	KJ	Mar 17	On-going. Revised guidance issued for 2016/2017 taking on board the proposals for improvement in WAO report. Business Plans and Service Report Cards being presented to Cabinet / Scrutiny Committees. On-going support being provided.	Green
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete Member training on scrutiny of service report cards 	KJ	July 16	Completed. Steve Barry (WAO) will provide feedback to Corporate Management Group (September). Positive feedback received from Members.	Green

Key Improvement Area		Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress April – August 2016	RAG Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete the roll-out of new performance appraisal process across the Council 	SR	Mar 17	On-going. New process has been rolled out and Human Resources receiving feedback from teams. Checks will be made to ensure staff are receiving appraisals. Review scheduled at end of March 17.	Green
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the outcomes of the workforce planning process in business plans to identify any corporate issues that require a corporate response 	SR	Oct 16	On-going. There are some key themes arising from the information contained in Business Plans. These will be looked at in further detail when all business plans have been reported to relevant Cabinet Boards along with other sources of information including Welsh language and equalities.	Green

Key Improvement Area		Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress April – August 2016	RAG Status
G2	Modernise and Strengthen Democratic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> address the remaining issues raised by Members in the survey undertaken during 2014-2015 	KJ	May 17	On-going. The focus of work is on the development of the Member Induction Programme for May 17.	Green
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> initiate roll-out of workflow functions of Modern Gov to ensure consistency in the way reports are administered and realise efficiency savings 	KJ	Dec 16	On-going. The next phase - Report Flow Management is currently being rolled out.	Green
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> roll-out the Modern Gov application to more Members in line with the revised ICT Scheme for Members 	KJ	Dec 16	On-going. To date 45 Members have indicated they would like to take up Modern Gov.	Green

Key Improvement Area		Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress April – August 2016	RAG Status
G3	Corporate Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement work plan for Audit Committee to discharge their role contained within the Corporate Risk Management Policy and as contained in the Audit Committee Terms of Reference 	DR	Sept 16	On-going. A paper on the role was provided to the last Audit Committee and training for those members is planned in Sept. An initial review has been included in in the 16/17 Audit Plan	Green
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> undertake post-implementation review of the Corporate Risk Management Policy to identify any changes required to the process 	DR	Nov 16	Not yet started – This will commence following the above initial review undertaken by Internal Audit.	Green
G4	Regional collaborative arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to strengthen scrutiny arrangements by identifying areas for work programmes for the 2016-17 civic year. 	KJ	Oct 16	On-going and awaiting WG announcements in the Autumn	Green

Key Improvement Area		Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress April – August 2016	RAG Status
G5	Information Commissioner's Audit action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete roll-out of Data Protection training across the Council 	SJ	March 17	On-going. On-line training is being rolled out. Email to be issued to Heads of Service to remind staff to undertake training. Management information to be provided to Corporate Governance Group to review take-up.	Green
G6	Information Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> finalise the Council's Information Strategy and communicate this to all staff 	SJ	Oct 16	On-going. Strategy is complete. Head of IT to circulate to Corporate Governance Group for information.	Green

Key Improvement Area		Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress April – August 2016	RAG Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide an annual report on information management and information governance matters to members to enable them to evaluate performance and the effectiveness of arrangements 	SJ	Oct 16	On-going. Head of IT and Head of Legal Services to prepare report for Corporate Directors and Members.	Green
G7	Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the mechanisms for recording decisions taken by officers under delegated authority. 	DM	March 17	Awaiting sight of proposals for the amendment of local authority constitutions which are due in September.	Green

Key Improvement Area		Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress April – August 2016	RAG Status
G8	Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure the Council's planning and partnership arrangements comply with the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 	KJ	Sept 16	On-going. Work is underway to ensure the Council meets the requirements of the Act. Kate Carr, Director for Partnerships, Engagement and Communications from the Future Generations Commissioner's office is attending Corporate Management Group in September and an invite has been made to Sophie Howe (Commissioner) to attend a Members' Seminar in the Autumn. Action plans to amend the Council's Community Planning and Corporate Planning Processes have been established.	Green

Key Improvement Area		Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress April – August 2016	RAG Status
G9	Workforce Strategy Collective Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete the scheduled review 	SR	Oct 16	On-going. To be reported to Members in October.	Green
G10	Asset Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure the Strategic Asset Management Group is operational 	SB	on-going	The group has met and will meet again in Sept/Oct	Green
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make progress on updating the Council's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Property Asset Management Plan 	SB	Nov 16	On-going. An officer is now covering asset management and is currently working on the first draft	Green
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) ICT Asset Management Plan 	SJ	Dec 16	On-going. The scope of the plan is currently being considered and will be discussed with the WAO.	Green

Key Improvement Area		Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress April – August 2016	RAG Status
G11	Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure support is available for those officers completing complex and complicated Equality Impact Assessments 	KJ	Mar 17	On-going. Support continues to be provided. Recent examples include the support provided on the completion of the E.I.A. for residential care proposals.	Green
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> revise associated guidance to incorporate examples of good practice for data collection, data sources 	KJ	Oct 16	Work to start in September. Responses to the Welsh Language Commissioner and work to implement the Welsh Language Standards has taken priority over this work	Red

Key Improvement Area		Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Progress April – August 2016	RAG Status
G12	Welsh Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure the systems established to implement the Welsh Language Standards are robust 	KJ	Mar 17	On-going. Additional evidence to support the challenge has been submitted and now awaiting response. The Welsh Language Officers' Group has been re-established to ensure compliance with the Standards accepted by the Council is secured.	Green