

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Cabinet Scrutiny Committee**

**2 October 2019**

### **Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer**

**K Jones**

#### **Matter for Monitoring**

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### **Report Title:**

1. Progress report on proposals for improvement contained within Wales Audit Office – Annual Improvement Report 2017-2018

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

2. To provide Members with an update on the progress made to address the proposals for improvement contained within the Wales Audit Office's Annual Improvement Report 2017-2018 (as set out in Appendix 1).

#### **Executive Summary:**

3. The Wales Audit Office's Annual Improvement Report (AIR) 2017-2018 was presented to Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018.
4. Members of Cabinet Scrutiny chose to scrutinise the AIR and requested as part of the Committee's forward work programme that a periodic report be brought to the committee on the progress of work against the Wales Audit Office proposals for improvement.
5. Work undertaken by the WAO during 2017-18, focused on: Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for the Future? The purpose of this work was to explore with councils how 'fit for the future' their scrutiny functions are. The outcome of this work resulted in six proposals for improvement (as set out in Appendix 1).

6. Two of six proposals for improvement were not accepted, these being P2 and P4. The improvement work for these had already been implemented by the time the Council received the audit findings (audit work undertaken in January 2018, proposals for improvement received in July 2018).
7. Of the four that were accepted, two have been completed, P1 and P6 and work is underway to ensure achievement of the remaining two proposals for improvement. These are:
  - P3 – The Council should review its arrangements for planning and undertaking scrutiny, and consider different ways of working that best suit the topic area and desired outcome – work is ongoing to ensure the method / criteria by which decisions may be evaluated is embedded into decision reports so as to inform post-decision scrutiny practice.
  - P5 - The Council should strengthen the arrangements for engaging the public in scrutiny – this is being progressed as part of the work tasked to the Democratic Services Committee by Council on 17 July 2019 (Engagement of the Public in the Democratic Processes of the Council).

### **Background:**

8. The Annual Improvement Report (AIR) 2017-2018 discharges the Auditor General's duties under Section 19, 17, 18 and 24, of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, by summarising his audit and assessment work undertaken in this Council during 2017-2018.

### **Financial Impact:**

9. The programme of audit and improvement assessment work undertaken by the Wales Audit Office during 2017-2018 has been delivered within the budget allocated for audit and inspection work.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment:**

10. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring purposes.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts:**

11. Options for engaging the public in the democratic processes for valley communities will be explicitly considered by the Democratic Services Committee.

### **Workforce Impacts:**

12. There are no workforce impacts from the process of audit and improvement assessment work of significance.

### **Legal Impacts:**

13. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires the Auditor General to undertake an annual improvement assessment and to publish an annual improvement report for each improvement authority in Wales.

### **Risk Management Impacts:**

14. The findings of the Wales Audit Office are a key input into the Council's corporate governance arrangements and the areas identified for improvement work inform the Annual Governance Statement and the associated improvement action plan.

### **Consultation:**

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

### **Recommendations:**

16. For Members to note the work that has been undertaken or is in the process of being undertaken in relation to the proposals for improvement as set out in Appendix 1.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

17. This is a matter for monitoring therefore no decision is required.

### **Implementation of Decision:**

18. This is a matter for monitoring therefore no decision is required.

**Appendix:**

19. Appendix 1 - Progress on Proposals for Improvement – Wales  
Audit Office Annual Improvement Report (AIR) 2017-2018

**List of Background Papers:**

20. Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report (2017-2018)

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