

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

27 November 2019

Report of

**Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer
K.Jones**

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Wales Audit Office (WAO): Neath Port Talbot Council Annual Improvement Report (AIR) 2018-2019

Purpose of Report

1. To receive a presentation from Colin Davies (from Wales Audit Office) on the Wales Audit Office's (WAO) Annual Improvement Report 2018-19 for Neath Port Talbot Council.

Executive Summary

2. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires the Auditor General to undertake a forward – looking annual improvement assessment and to publish an Annual Improvement Report (AIR) for each improvement authority in Wales. The Annual Improvement Report is attached at appendix 1.
3. The WAO also produce a number of different types of reports. Some of the reports are termed “Local Reports” as they relate to audit work undertaken in specific Council's and are funded from local fees. Other reports are termed “National Reports” as they relate to a programme of national studies and local government studies which are funded from the Welsh Consolidated Fund.
4. During the course of the year, no formal recommendations were made by the Auditor General deriving from the local work undertaken by the

WAO. However, a number of proposals for improvement were made (as set out in Exhibit 1 in the AIR).

5. Exhibit 2 in the AIR sets out the recommendations made in relation to the National Reports issued by the WAO during 2018-19.
6. The Auditor General will monitor progress against those proposals for improvement derived from the local work and any relevant recommendations made to local government in the National Reports published.

Background

7. In 2018-19, the WAO undertook improvement assessment work; an assurance and risk assessment project; and work in relation to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.
8. The improvement assessment work considers the likelihood a Council will comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. This is the main piece of work that enables the Auditor General to fulfil his duties and by producing the AIR, discharging the duties under the section 24 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.
9. Based on the work carried out by the Wales Audit Office and other relevant regulators since publication of the last AIR, the Auditor General believes Neath Port Talbot Council is likely to comply with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Local Reports 2018-2019

10. Below is a brief summary of the outcome of the work undertaken by the WAO (as set out in Exhibit 1) and the Council's reporting processes in place to respond to the proposals for improvement.
 - Assurance and Risk Assessment Project – there were no proposals for improvement.
 - Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 examination work (first 1,000 days) – there were no proposals for improvement but a number of opportunities to further embed the five ways of working were identified. These are set out in a full report issued separately for this work in the form of an action plan and have been reported to Cabinet on 2 October 2019.
 - Annual Audit Letter 2017-18 – there were no proposals for improvement, also reported to Cabinet on 19 June 2019.

- Service User Perspective Review: Online Services – there were two proposals for improvement - reported to Cabinet 31 July 2019.
- Leisure Services review - follow up of review undertaken in 2014 as part of the 'delivering with less' themed studies – there were two proposals for improvement. This is scheduled to be reported to Leisure and Culture Sub Committee on 5 December 2019.
- Environmental Health review – follow up of review undertaken in 2014 as part of the 'delivering with less' themed studies - there were two proposals for improvement - reported to Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board on 18 October 2019.

National Reports 2018-19

11. Exhibit 2 of the AIR sets out all of the recommendations included in National Reports published by the WAO during 2018-19. The expectation from the WAO is that consideration is given to the recommendations relevant to local government, followed by a response to indicate whether the Council is accepting the relevant recommendations.
12. Appendix 2 (Council's Response Form) contains only those recommendations relevant to local government and the Council's response as to whether it is accepting these recommendations.

Financial Appraisal

13. The programme of audit and improvement assessment work undertaken by the Wales Audit Office during 2018-19 has been delivered within the budget allocated for audit and inspection work.

Integrated Impact Assessment

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

Valleys Communities Impact

15. No implications.

Workforce Impact

16. There are no workforce impacts.

Legal Impact

17. 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

18. 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

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

Recommendations

20. For Council to note the work that has been undertaken or is in the process of being undertaken in relation to the proposals for improvement / recommendations contained within 2018-19 AIR.

Reason for Proposed Decision

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

Implementation of Decision

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

Appendices

23. Appendix 1 – Wales Audit Office (WAO): Neath Port Talbot Council Annual Improvement Report (AIR) 2018-2019.
24. Appendix 2 – Council's Response Form.

List of Background Papers

25. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Annual Report (2018-2019).
26. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Corporate Plan (2018-2022).

Officer Contact

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