

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

13th NOVEMBER 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY & CORPORATE SERVICES

MR NOELWYN DANIEL

Matter for Consideration

Wards Affected – All Wards

Report Title – Draft Self-Assessment 2022-2023

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is for the Governance and Audit Committee to review the Neath Port Talbot Council draft Self-Assessment for 2022-2023 further to a decision on approval being taken by Cabinet on 28th November 2023.
2. The council is required to publish the self-assessment within 4 weeks of approval.

Background

3. The completion of an annual self-assessment is a new requirement for all local authorities in Wales. The requirement is contained in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and is a corporate, organisational assessment rather than an assessment of individual services. There is a requirement to publish the Self-Assessment within 4 weeks of approval.
4. As part of the self-assessment, Neath Port Talbot Council is required to consider the extent to which it is:
 - exercising its functions effectively (*how well we are doing*)

- using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively (*how do we know*)
 - ensuring its governance is effective for securing the above (*what and how and we do better*)
5. As this is only the second year of the self-assessment process we have continued to work on our approach and have this year introduced an assessment of 'Physical assets and facilities. It is evident from having sighted other examples of completed self-assessments from across Wales, local authorities are still adopting different approaches. Many have combined the self-assessment with the annual report on the achievement of well-being objectives for 2022/2023. This approach was not adopted this year for Neath Port Talbot but is a consideration moving forward to ensure we are adding value to the process rather than duplicating.
6. In undertaking the self-assessment process, in addition to stating what arrangements we have in place to ensure we are exercising our functions effectively, using our resources economically, efficiently and effectively and ensuring our governance is effective we have also considered how those arrangements can be further improved.
7. The report sets out how we have approached the self-assessment – utilising the Local Government Association Efficiency Toolkit – which has provided a baseline enabling year on year improvement to be evidenced.

Conclusion:

8. The conclusion of the self-assessment is set out on the 'Self-Assessment Overview' on pages 18 & 19 and that Neath Port Talbot Council is identified as 'mature' when assessed against the Local Government Association Efficiency Toolkit. Whilst the rating remains the same as 2021-2022 it is felt that significant progress has been made but it will take some time for all core activity areas to be at a stage where we can progress into 'leading'.

9. A number of opportunities for improvement were identified during 2022-2023 as part of the extensive, council-wide work to continue its implementation and development of the revised Corporate Plan for the period 2022/2027. The self-assessment exercise has provided assurance that those opportunities for improvement were the right things to be focussing on during 2023/2024 (and onwards) and have been included in the Action Plan on pages 35-46. Progress on those improvement areas between April and November is also included.
10. In addition, the work undertaken to complete the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2022/2023 – which is an assessment of the effectiveness of internal control - identified 13 areas for improvement and these can be found in the Action Plan on page 35-46 along with progress made.

Financial Impact

11. There are no financial impacts in respect of this item.

Integrated Impact Assessment

12. There is no requirement for an integrated impact assessment in respect of this item.

Valleys Communities Impacts

13. There are no impacts in respect of this item.

Workforce impacts

14. There are no workforce impacts in respect of this item.

Legal Impacts

15. There are no legal impacts in respect of this item.

Risk Management

16. There are no risk management issues in respect of this item.

Consultation

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

Recommendation

18. No decision is required though Governance & Audit Committee are asked to review and comment on the draft Self-Assessment, and if applicable make recommendations for any changes to the conclusions or actions that they wish to propose the Cabinet consider when they come to approve the draft self-assessment.

Appendix

19. Neath Port Talbot Self-Assessment 2022-2023.

Background Papers

20. None

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