

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

21st March 2024

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – SHEENAGH REES

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Audit Wales – Springing Forward: Strategic Workforce Management – Neath Port Talbot Council

Purpose of Report

1. To present Members with the council response to the above review undertaken by Audit Wales.

Executive Summary

2. Audit Wales examined Neath Port Talbot Council's overall arrangements and approach in relation to the strategic management of our workforce. Asking the question 'Is the Council's strategic approach strengthening its ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of its services in the short and longer term?' Audit Wales' focus has been on the challenges highlighted during the pandemic that have exacerbated some long-standing workforce issues.
3. When Audit Wales began their work under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, they recognised that it would take time for public bodies to embed the sustainable development principle, but also set out expectations that over the medium term we would expect public bodies to be able to demonstrate how the Act is shaping what we do. Audit Wales now expect public bodies to be able to demonstrate that the Act is integral to our thinking and genuinely shaping what we do.
4. The aim of the review was to:
 - to gain assurance that councils are putting in place arrangements in relation to its workforce to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services;

- to explain the actions that councils are taking both individually and collectively to strengthen their arrangements; and
- to inspire councils and other organisations to further strengthen their arrangements through capturing and sharing notable practice examples and learning and making appropriate recommendations.

Summary of Findings

5. The review found:

‘The Council has a clear vision for its workforce, strengthened by its work with partners’.

Audit Wales reached this conclusion because:

- the Council has a clear vision for its workforce which continues to be a strategic priority for delivering its Well-being Objectives;
- the Council has a clear workforce planning approach, strengthened by its work with partners. However, it does not have succession plans or identified business-critical roles for all service areas;
- the Council has proactively learnt from others and is developing a broader range of workforce measures

A copy of the Audit Wales report is attached at Appendix 1

6. The examination concluded with the following recommendation:

R1 Workforce planning and delivery:

- to ensure there are progression pathways for staff and there is resilience around its business-critical roles, the Council should ensure all services have succession plans and have identified their business-critical roles.

R2 Workforce governance and monitoring:

- to have a better understanding of the impact of its workforce strategy the Council should develop measures that focus on outcomes and impacts in addition to inputs.
- the Council should build on its benchmarking with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and consider where there may be opportunities to benchmark its measures and metrics with its peers to ensure it can identify areas of good practice and potential areas for improvement.

- to enable the Council to have a clearer understanding of the progress it is making towards meeting its workforce ambitions the Council should assure itself that the Organisational Delivery Board is providing effective oversight and driving integration across related programmes of work.

7. The council's response to the above recommendation is attached at Appendix 2.

Financial Appraisal

8. The programme of audit work undertaken by Audit Wales has been delivered within the budget allocated for audit and inspection work.

Integrated Impact Assessment

9. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment.

Valleys Communities Impact

10. No impacts.

Workforce Impact

11. Strategic workforce planning ensures that the workforce is aligned to the council's priorities, aims and objectives.

Legal Impact

12. Section 15(1) (a) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Auditor General to carry out examinations to assess the extent to which public bodies have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives.

Risk Management

13. The findings of Audit Wales examinations are a key input into the council's corporate governance and self-assessment arrangements.

Consultation

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

Recommendation

15. For Governance & Audit Committee to note the council response attached at Appendix 2.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – NPT Cabinet and Cabinet Scrutiny Comments

16. Appendix 2 – Audit Wales Report – Springing Forward: Strategic Workforce Management – Neath Port Talbot Council

Appendix 3 – Council Response Form

List of Background Papers

17. [The Future of Work Strategy - Strategic Workforce Plan 2022-2027](#)

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