

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 26 September, 2016

Report of the Leader

Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment Report 2016 incorporating the Annual Improvement Report 2015-16: Progress against Proposals for Improvement

Purpose of the Report

1. The report seeks to inform Members of the approach to implement the Proposals for Improvement as included by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) in their recently published Corporate Assessment.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes the contents of this report and approves the Implementation Plan for progressing the Proposals for Improvement.
2. That a further report be brought to Cabinet in January 2017 to outline progress made in meeting the Proposals for Improvement.
3. That a copy of this report be referred to Audit Committee to be considered alongside the report of 5 September 2016 on the outcome of the Corporate Assessment.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To progress the Proposals for Improvement as made by the Wales Audit Office.
2. To monitor progress against the Proposals for Improvement.
3. To ensure that Audit Committee considers the appropriateness of arrangements put in place to monitor progress.

Background

2. The background to this report is as attached in the report and appendices to the Cabinet meeting of 5 September 2016, which resolved as follows:

"That Cabinet welcome and note the very positive outcome of the Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment Report 2016, and the Annual Improvement Report 2015-16.

That a report be submitted to the next Cabinet meeting on 26 September, 2016 on the progress being made towards the Proposals for Improvement, as

outlined in the Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment Report 2016 attached at Appendix A to the report, and how they will be implemented.

That a copy of the report be referred to Full Council, and Auditor Steve Barry from the Wales Audit Office be invited to present the report to all Members.

That after the meeting of Council on 28 September, 2016 the report be referred to the Audit Committee for consideration.

That the thanks of Cabinet be extended to all those concerned who contributed to the assessment, and all staff be congratulated for their hard work in achieving such a positive outcome for the Vale of Glamorgan Council."

3. For completeness the report and all appendices are attached to this report. ([Appendix A](#))
4. As advised on 5 September 2016, the WAO will keep track of the Council's progress in responding to the Proposals for Improvement.

Relevant Issues and Options

5. With reference to the Proposals for Improvement listed in the report from the Wales Audit Office, two proposals relate to performance management as follows:

Performance Management

- Implement proposed changes to the performance management framework, continuing to engage and review arrangements, and they:
 - Focus performance reporting on the most important areas;
 - Make the connection between the activity undertaken across the organisation and outcomes achieved; and
 - Provide members and senior officers with a more rounded view of performance by setting it in the context of other corporate factors.
 - Align the target setting process with the service planning process, to ensure that targets are considered in the context of priorities and resources.
6. The report (pages 14 through to 18) outlines the work undertaken to date in putting in place changes to performance management and concludes that the developments have the potential to improve our ability to evaluate performance and outcomes if supported by appropriate measures and balanced reporting. Paragraph 46 refers to previous audit work indicating the need for performance monitoring to be more outcome focussed and that these conclusions and the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act has provided the impetus for significant changes to the planning and performance framework. Members will be aware that the new Corporate Plan outcomes and the reconfiguring of Scrutiny Committees to align to the Corporate Plan outcomes has been developed to provide more of a focus on outcome based performance monitoring. The quarterly performance reports based on the new method of monitoring performance will be presented during the October cycle of Scrutiny Committees. Outcome based reports will also include measures of corporate health as indicated in paragraph 51 (page 17) of the Corporate Assessment report.
 7. The second Performance Management Proposal for Improvement deals with the issue of aligning the budget setting and service planning processes. The report (in paragraph 55 - page 18) indicates that target setting should take place as part of the

service planning process to avoid duplication and effort. This will be addressed as part of the service planning process for 2017/18.

8. In relation to Finance, the Proposal for Improvement states:

Finance

- Include detailed savings monitoring reports as part of wider budget monitoring reports, and identify those proposals that relate to the Reshaping Services Programme.
9. The Wales Audit Office has suggested that savings plans and the reports of savings would benefit from further detail. This is something that is currently being considered, and it is recognised that regular reporting of budget positions require further detail, particularly having regard to the reshaping services programme. It should be noted that this Proposal for Improvement follows from the financial resilience audit work undertaken across Wales during 2015-16. In relation to the Vale of Glamorgan, three Proposals for Improvement were put forward, referring to the need to develop more detailed savings plans, the need to develop an income generation/charging policy and the need to develop key indicators to monitor the Medium Term Financial Plan. For completeness, these proposals have been included in a suggested Implementation Plan that is presented to members at [Appendix B](#).
10. The Wales Audit Office also put forward a proposal for Improvement in relation to ICT as follows:

ICT

- Complete work in progress to establish a vision and objectives for the ICT service to enable it to plan and discharge its role as a corporate enabler.
11. This is in recognition that work is already underway and indeed Corporate Management Team has already considered a draft document prior to the site work carried out by the Wales Audit Office in March. Work will now progress to complete the vision and objectives document.
12. The fifth and final Proposal for Improvement relates to asset management, as follows:

Asset Management

- Accelerate the gathering of buildings and compliance data for properties under the Council's control, and ensure it is recorded centrally. Thereafter, accelerate premises Managers/Duty Holders compliance training to ensure that all buildings comply with appropriate statutory, regulatory, and corporate standards, and are maintained to an appropriate level.
13. This is put forward in recognition of the need to ensure up to date building compliance data and that it is recorded centrally on an accessible database. The Wales Audit Office has recognised that a Compliance Group exists, and as a consequence this work is underway. The Wales Audit Office (para 92 - page 29) notes that work is ongoing to integrate asset and compliance data, but that this work needs to be accelerated. This will also require training on compliance issues.
14. In terms of taking forward this work linked to the Proposals for Improvement, [Appendix B](#) includes an implementation plan that has been put together to detail the Proposals for Improvement, the current position and responsible officers. This will allow progress to be monitored with timelines put in place to ensure that work is

progressed in a timely fashion. The work will be monitored by the Corporate Management Team and it is intended that a report be brought back to Cabinet in 3 months to provide an update on progress.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

15. None over and above those identified in the body of the report. Members will note that a key element of the Corporate Assessment process involved an assessment of the Council's approach to financial management and people management.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

16. None directly attributable to this report, although the Corporate Assessment process does consider the way in which the Council manages its assets.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

17. None over and above those identified in the body of this report.

Crime and Disorder Implications

18. None directly attributable to this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

19. None directly attributable to this report.

Corporate/Service Objectives

20. This reports links to the performance and reputation of the Council in terms of its capability and capacity to deliver quality services to citizens and to deliver its vision of 'Strong Communities with a Bright Future' as well as all corporate outcomes and related objectives.

Policy Framework and Budget

21. This is a matter for Executive decision.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

22. As the report is not Ward specific, no consultation has been undertaken.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

23. Corporate Performance and Resources.

Background Papers

WAO Corporate Assessment Report 2016 (incorporating the Annual Improvement Report 2015-18)

WAO Press Release dated 25 August 2016

Contact Officer

Rob Thomas, Managing Director

Officers Consulted

Corporate Management Team

Responsible Officer:

Rob Thomas, Managing Director