

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE

31 MARCH 2010

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

RELATIONSHIP MANAGER'S ANNUAL LETTER 2008/09

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1** To introduce the Wales Audit Office Relationship Manager's Annual Letter (incorporating the Appointed Auditor's report) for 2008/09. This is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

- 2.1** The Relationship Manager's Annual Letter (RMAL) includes the Auditor's opinion that the arrangements for the development of the Corporate Improvement Plan complied with statutory requirements.

3. Background.

3.1 The RMAL has statutory status and was considered by Council at its meeting on 10 February 2010. The Council is expected to take note of the key findings and to respond to any recommendations made.

- 3.2** The letter includes a summary of audit and inspection work undertaken in the year. It draws on reports of other inspectorates and provides a summary of the key findings from all regulatory activity. It will also inform the regulatory plans for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

- 3.3** Members are reminded that the arrangements for reviewing and reporting on the performance of Councils are in the process of changing. This will be the final year for the publication of an RMAL as once the new Local Government Measure is fully implemented, the requirement will cease.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1** The letter reflects the Auditor's opinion that the Council continues to respond positively to audit/inspection recommendations and identifies several examples of good performance across a range of activities. Overall, it presents a positive assessment of the management of the Council's operations and the stewardship of its resources. It also identifies areas where improvements are needed.

- 4.2** Some of the key findings are:-

- the Council had appropriate arrangements to administer and report financial matters and to secure value for money in its use of resources in 2008/09

- the Statement of Accounts 2008/09 was prepared to a high standard but there are some areas for continued improvement
- the Council's improvement planning arrangements complied with statutory requirements and its performance management processes continue to improve
- reviews of services and corporate arrangements show that the Council has achieved improvements and recognises that sustaining progress will require difficult choices to focus available resources
- the Council has recently developed a Medium Term Financial Strategy and made progress in improving the links between strategic plans and the budget process but there are still improvements to be made
- the Council has been successful in making ICT central to its corporate strategies. The approach to developing its IT strategy is an example of good practice
- the Council is in the process of improving its procurement process but progress has been slower than anticipated
- CSSIW's follow-up review of Children's Social Services concluded that sufficient progress had been made to lift the serious concerns protocol, under which services had been monitored since 2005
- the Council anticipated most of the recommendations from the E.coli Public Inquiry and took action in relation to many of the key issues before the Inquiry reported
- the Council has identified the most significant risks to delivering its responsibilities and priorities for improvement and has agreed them with its regulators; and
- no statutory inspections are recommended this year.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules.

- 5.1** Activities and procedures identified within the RMAL as in need of improvement lead to management action and facilitate improved use of Council resources. The acting Chief Internal Auditor has confirmed that the RMAL will be used to inform the development of the Internal Audit work programme in 2010/11.

6. Legal Implications.

- 6.1** There is a statutory requirement for the Relationship Manager's Annual Letter to be considered by Members.

7. Financial Implications.

- 7.1** None in this report.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 That the Audit Committee notes the content of the RMAL to inform the Internal Audit work programme for 2010/11.

David MacGregor
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10 March 2010

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Background documents

Wales Audit Office Relationship Manager's Annual Letter 2008/09