

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE

15 NOVEMBER 2018

REPORT OF THE INTERIM SECTION 151 OFFICER

WALES AUDIT OFFICE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT (AIR) 2017-18 BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

1. Purpose of this report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to introduce the Annual Improvement Report (AIR) 2017-18 from the Auditor General which is attached at **Appendix A**.

2. Connections to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priorities:-

1. **Supporting a successful economy** – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
2. **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

2.2 The Wales Audit Office (WAO) report assesses whether or not the Council meets its continuous improvement duties under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, taking account of a range of audit, regulatory and inspection work reported during 2017-18.

3. Background

3.1 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 for each improvement authority in Wales.

3.2 For 2017-18, the Auditor General undertook improvement assessment work at all councils as well as work in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015; a service-user perspective themed review and a review of overview and scrutiny arrangements. For some councils, local risk-based audits were also carried out.

- 3.3 A summary of the findings is set out in Exhibit 1 (pp. 6-9 of the attached report).
- 3.4 The report also includes a summary of the national studies the WAO undertook during the year (Exhibit 2, pp. 14-25), with recommendations that require all local authorities to address.

4. Current Situation / Proposal

- 4.1 The overall conclusion of the AIR is positive, as follows:

“The Council is meeting its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement, based on the work carried out by the Wales Audit Office and relevant regulators, the Auditor General believes that the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Measure (2009) during 2018-19”.

- 4.2 Headline findings under each project are summarised below:

‘Scrutiny : Fit for the Future?’ Review

Findings – “the Council overview and scrutiny function is well-run, but needs to adapt to meet future challenges and should consider opportunities to work differently”.

The Auditor General did not make any formal recommendations but made five proposals for improvement as outlined on page 6 of the Report.

Annual audit letter 2016-17

Finding – “the Council complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources”.

The Auditor General did not make any formal recommendations nor proposals for improvement.

Annual improvement plan audit

Finding – “the Council has complied with its statutory improvement planning duties”.

The Auditor General did not make any formal recommendations nor proposals for improvement.

Annual assessment of performance audit

Finding – “the Council has complied with its statutory improvement reporting duties”.

The Auditor General did not make any formal recommendations nor proposals for improvement.

- 4.3 Exhibit 1 also includes the findings of work undertaken by the CIW – Inspection of Children’s Services.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

5.1 There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and the Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment.

6.1 No equality impact assessment has been undertaken as the Auditor General's Annual Improvement Report is essentially a retrospective assessment of the Council's performance.

7. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Implications

7.1 The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.

8. Financial Implications.

8.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

9. Recommendations.

9.1 It is recommended that the Audit Committee:

- Note the Annual Improvement Report 2017-18 produced by Wales Audit Office (**Appendix A**)

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Background Documents: WAO Annual Improvement Report 2017-18