

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE

18 JUNE 2014

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### WALES AUDIT OFFICE – ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT (AIR) ON BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL MAY 2014

#### **1. Purpose of Report.**

- 1.1 To introduce the report of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) to the Committee (attached as Appendix 1).

#### **2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priority.**

- 2.1 Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, the Auditor General must report each year on how well Welsh councils plan to improve their services. The WAO report focuses on the Council's delivery of its improvement objectives and evaluation of services in relation to 2012-13 and its planning of improvement for 2013-14.

#### **3. Background.**

- 3.1 Each year, the WAO, on behalf of the Auditor General, carries out an improvement assessment for each improvement authority in Wales. The annual improvement assessment consists of two parts:
- a corporate assessment that reviews the council's likelihood to comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement; and
  - a performance assessment that reviews the previous financial year's progress of planned improvements as set out in the council's forward looking plan (in this case, the Council's Corporate Plan 2010-13).

The attached Annual Improvement Report is informed by the findings of these two assessments.

- 3.2 The report has also drawn on the CSSIW<sup>1</sup> *Annual Review Evaluation of Performance 2012-13*; the findings of the Estyn inspection that was carried out in October 2012; and the Council's self-assessment of performance (Annual Report 2012-13).

#### **4. Current situation / proposal.**

- 4.1 The overall conclusion of the WAO report is positive, reflecting what the Council achieved and the improvement it made in 2012-13.

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<sup>1</sup> CSSIW – the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales.

- 4.2 The report acknowledges that the Council:
- made good progress in delivering improvement in most of its priority areas and recognises the need to accelerate improvement in education.
  - has established a culture of self-evaluation which resulted in a fair and balanced account of its performance in 2012-13.
  - is ensuring it has sound plans for improvement, despite significant financial challenges.
- 4.3 The report recognises the Council has effective performance review arrangements in place, which it regards as “good practice”.
- 4.4 The report also recognises the Council’s approach to financial management as “positive practice”.
- 4.5 In June 2013, the WAO completed a review of the Council’s collaborative working arrangements with the third sector. The review made four proposals for improvement. In this report, the WAO acknowledges that the Council has continued its efforts to improve the arrangements with the third sector, and to put actions in place to implement the proposals.
- 4.6 Based on the findings, the report concludes that the Council is likely to make appropriate arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2014-15.
- 4.7 The report has not made any statutory recommendations for the Council to consider, nor specific proposals for improvement.

## **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.**

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. Financial Implications.**

There are no financial implications in this report.

## **8. Recommendation.**

- 8.1 That Committee notes the Annual Improvement Report produced by the WAO.

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**5 June 2014**

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**Background documents**

None