



## CABINET – 16TH JULY 2013

**SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2013/14**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Local Government Measure 2009 requires all local authorities in Wales to set and publish a set of priorities called Improvement Objectives. The Wales Audit Office (WAO) will use those Improvement Objectives to evaluate the council's likelihood of improvement and following that, the level of actual improvement that is achieved for the citizens of Caerphilly. This will form the main part of the WAO 'Annual Improvement Assessment' of the Council, which is made publicly available in January each year.
- 1.2 The Council is required to set or review their Improvement Objectives to ensure they remain relevant and current. This report details the process the Council has taken in setting its new Objectives and identifies the recommended set of Improvement Objectives for 2013/14.

### 2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 2.1 The local Government Measure 2009 requires each authority to publish priorities for improvement called Improvement Objectives.

### 3. THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Objectives must be published as soon as possible after the end of the financial year and although not stated in the measure informal expectation is no later than the end of the first quarter (June 2012).
- 3.2 In November 2012 the Council set its Corporate Priorities for 2013-17. The set of Corporate Priorities was used as a basis for selecting Improvement Objectives for 2013/14.
- 3.3 As part of the selection process the PMU worked extensively with services in assessing each of the proposed objectives against the questions below. This assessment will be available for the regulators as an audit trail so they can see the thought process that went into the selection and subsequent conclusions.
- 3.4 The assessment asked the following questions?
  - Relevance - Is this objective relevant as there is an 'unmet' need?
  - Consultation – are these what the citizens want? How does the service know?
  - Is there any evidence of collaboration to achieve the outcome?
  - Funding – Does the Medium Term Financial Plan affect whether some of these activities can still be delivered? Has external (central government, home office etc) funding affected the delivery of these objectives?
  - Has the Wales Audit Office made any recommendations that alter the objective?
  - Is there any new legislation, demographic or any other changes that need to be taken into

account?

- Will the council be able to evidence the improvements it will be making?

- 3.5 Following the initial assessment and selection, a public consultation exercise was carried out to test the relevance of the selection and to gather public feedback on the proposed set. This exercise also gave those who responded an opportunity to say what they felt was missing from the initial selection.
- 3.6 The Council received over 230 responses to the consultation exercise. Responses were received from local councillors, local businesses, and members of the public and members of staff. More than 60% of the total response was from staff members. The results and comments from the consultation were analysed and confirm that the Improvement Objectives selected are considered to be very important to the vast majority of respondents.
- 3.7 The consultation questionnaire included a question, "What is missing and why do you think it should be added?" Over 1/3 of respondents (87 people) thought that something was missing from the set. These comments were primarily received from members of staff. There were no comments received from local councillors, identifying anything they believed were missing from the proposed set.
- 3.8 A number of issues emerged in response to this question. A number of respondents noted that the Improvement Objectives were focussed towards younger people and commented that there should be more focus on Adult Care (14 comments) and improving job and business opportunities for all age groups (10 comments). There were also a number of comments relating to the environment (13 comments) as well as transport and road networks (5 comments), and educational attainment (5 comments).
- 3.9 Further investigation and analyses by the PMU confirms that all the 'missing' areas are adequately covered by proposed improvement activity either, as part of the 2013-17 Corporate Priority set, or the Single Integrated Plan. PMU met with Social Services to discuss the potential inclusion of an 'adult care objective in response to the consultation but the service did not identify anything further that was not already covered by the Priorities. The remainder of the comments on adult care were not specific in what was required. In conclusion, the PMU does not propose any changes to the Improvement Objectives for 13/14 as a result of the response to the public consultation.
- 3.10 A full copy of the consultation results area available from the members library and will be posted on both the intranet and Internet. The responses in addition to validating the 13/14 objectives will be used to review and help inform the 2014/2015 objectives (see para 3.8).
- 3.11 Below is a summarised list of each Improvement Objective for 2013/14, following the assessment and consultation described above. A full description of each objective is contained in **Appendix 1**. This document has been prepared for distribution to the general public, in accordance with the Local Government Measure 2009, and includes reasons for choice, expected outcomes, actions and the evidence we will use to assess whether we are making a difference.

Improvement Objective		Outcomes
IO1	Ensure children and young people who are looked after are supported to achieve their full potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will recruit more foster carers in order to meet the placement demands of children requiring foster placements. We hope to reduce the number of Independent Fostering Agency placements and provide placement stability</li><li>• Children requiring adoptive placements are matched and placed with adoptive families in a timely manner</li><li>• We hope to increase the attainment levels of all Looked after children (LAC) in an education</li></ul>

Improvement Objective		Outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>setting.</li> <li>We want to increase the number of young people engaged in education, training and employment so it gives them the best opportunities and part of that is to build upon arrangements to place young people in suitable accommodation.</li> </ul>
IO2	Improve job opportunities by implementing the Council's Passport Scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing the Council's Passport Scheme to create employment and training opportunities.</li> </ul>
IO3	Develop an effective and accessible Youth Service that supports the personal and social development of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help learners achieve formal and non-formal qualifications in a wide range of settings</li> <li>Improve attendance at Secondary school</li> <li>Improving life chances (opportunities for future employment).</li> </ul>
IO4	Improve awareness, access, variety and use of leisure, community and sporting facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the awareness, access and variety of leisure, community and sporting facilities to increase people's participation in sports and active recreation.</li> </ul>
IO5	Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the best quality home improvements scheme to our tenants as promised in the Offer Document.</li> <li>Their homes create real jobs in our communities</li> <li>Deliver wider community benefits.</li> </ul>
IO6	Improve the availability of private and public sector housing to reduce the number of residents who may become homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide as many opportunities as possible to prevent as few people as possible becoming homeless.</li> </ul>

3.12 Next steps would be for Cabinet to collectively agree the outcomes above for 13/14

#### 4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no equalities implications to this report that have not been considered or would adversely affect any individual or group who fall under one of the protected characteristics or wider issues as shown in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan.

4.2 Equalities and Welsh Language issues are crosscutting themes and to varying degrees, the Council's 7 Strategic Equality Objectives support the implementation of each of the 6 Improvement Objectives.

#### 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 A review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan against the 6 improvement objectives shows there are no cuts that will adversely affect their delivery at this time.

#### 6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no personnel implications

## **7. CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 All responses from consultations have been incorporated into this report

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 Cabinet approve the Improvement Objectives for 2013/14.

## **9 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The Council has a statutory requirement to agree and publish its improvement objectives as soon as possible after the financial year.

9.2 The measure (WPI 2010 guidance) requires Improvement Objectives to be approved by the Council's Executive function.

## **10. STATUTORY POWER**

10.1 Local Government Measure 2009

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 –Improvement Objective Plan