



CABINET – 5TH JULY 2017

SUBJECT: WAO GOOD GOVERNANCE WHEN DETERMINING SIGNIFICANT SERVICE CHANGES – CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES & S151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Cabinet with the Wales Audit Office (WAO) report on Good Governance when determining significant service changes.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In February 2017 the Authority received a report from the WAO in respect of good governance when determining significant service changes. This report focused on a review of the effectiveness of Caerphilly County Borough Council's (the Council) governance arrangements for determining significant service changes. WAO define this as any significant change in delivering services and/or any significant change in how services are experienced by external service users.
- 2.2 The review concluded that the Council's approach to service change has been proportionate to the scale of changes it has made to date and it is strengthening its arrangements to prepare for potentially more significant future changes.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Good governance is essential for the effective stewardship of public money and the continued delivery of efficient and trusted public services.
- 3.2 This report and its recommendations contribute to the following Well-being Goal within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:
- *A resilient Wales*
- 3.3 Good governance leads to sound and robust decision making that makes a public body more resilient.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The WAO report on 'Good governance when determining significant service changes' was issued February 2017 and is attached as Appendix 1. Due to the pre-election period, local elections and establishment of a new Cabinet the report was deferred until early July.

4.2 This WAO report and the assessment was based on a review undertaken during the period September to November 2016, WAO looked at aspects of decision-making arrangements in relation to a range of significant service change proposals. The examples of service changes WAO looked at included:

- Ceasing the mobile customer service centre;
- Independent sector domiciliary care – elderly - review of shopping service;
- Parks and playing fields – cessation of pitch marking and handing over responsibilities to the clubs;
- Closure of Bedwas swimming pool on Sundays;
- Closure of civic amenity sites for one day a week;
- Review of library opening hours; and
- Review of day centre provision.

WAO did not look in detail at each of the individual service change decisions, but rather used them as examples to draw from and inform how the Council goes about making decisions in relation to service changes.

4.3 The review concluded that the Council's approach to service change has been proportionate to the scale of changes it has made to date and it is strengthening its arrangements to prepare for potentially more significant future changes.

4.4 The WAO review concluded that there were a number of proposals for improvement.

Proposal(s) for improvement	
The Council's governance arrangements could be strengthened by:	
P1	Introducing a more systematic and transparent arrangement for monitoring the impact of service changes.
P2	More clearly setting out in reports how feedback from engagement and consultation has been taken account of in developing proposals for service change.

4.5 The officer response to the above proposals for improvement are as follows:-

P1 – As part of the Council Report in February each year to establish a balanced budget for the next financial year an Appendix will be attached to this report listing all the service changes due to take place in the next financial year. This Appendix will include a description of the service, estimated date for implementation of changes and the relevant responsible Senior Officer and Cabinet Member. This list will be reviewed half yearly in the first instance by Corporate Management Team, followed by a report to Cabinet during the Autumn of each year as part of the mid-year budget monitoring report. This report will provide a commentary on any adverse impacts not originally envisaged/reported with actions where possible to address or mitigate these variations.

P2 – Final reports to Cabinet/Council in respect of proposals for service change will describe in the relevant section titled "Consultations" how any consultation or engagement has influenced/changed the final proposal.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

5.1 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act as detailed below:-

- Long Term – Good governance and decision making will take account of long term consequences/benefits of service changes.
- Prevention – Good governance and decision making should consider how service changes stop a problem worsening.

- Collaboration – Opportunities to collaborate should be considered where appropriate when service changes are determined, where there is a viable business case.
- Involvement – Proposed service changes should be subject to consultation and engagement. There should be evidence that the feedback has been considered prior to the decision being made.
- Integration – not applicable.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report is for information purposes so the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Cabinet is asked to:-

10.1.1 Consider and comment upon the content of the WAO report.

10.1.2 Note the officer response to the WAO proposals for improvement as detailed in paragraph 4.5.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 To ensure that Cabinet is aware of the review work undertaken by the WAO and the resultant findings, conclusion and proposals for improvement.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2003.

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Stephen Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance
Stephen Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager

Background Papers:
WAO File – Reviews 2016/17

Appendices:
Appendix 1 WAO Report – Good governance when determining significant service changes –
Caerphilly County Borough Council – February 2017