



## AUDIT COMMITTEE – 24TH JULY 2018

**SUBJECT: CERTIFICATE OF CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL'S 2018-2019 IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES & S151 OFFICER**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This is an information item to inform members of the Certificate of Compliance issued by the Auditor General for Wales in April 2017 regarding Wales Audit Office's (WAO) assessment of our compliance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to produce an Improvement Plan.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report presents the Wales Audit Office Certificate of Compliance for 2018-19 under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Measure requires the Council to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. This involves setting Improvement Objectives (called Wellbeing Objectives) and annually publishing an assessment which describes its performance.

The certificate does not give opinion on how well this is done but simply states whether we have or have not met our improvement duty.

The Auditor General's certificate attached states "As a result of my audit, I believe that the Council has discharged its duties under section 15(6) to (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties".

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Although the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has been introduced and replaces Part 2 of the 2009 Local Government Measure, Part 1 is still a legal requirement and this part puts a duty on an authority to 'make arrangements to continuously improve'. These arrangements and their effectiveness are assessed by the WAO.

### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Under the Measure, the Council is required to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan (Set Improvement Objectives, now changed to Wellbeing Objectives) describing its plans to discharge its duties to:

- make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions;
- make arrangements to secure achievement of its improvement objectives; and
- make arrangements to exercise its functions so that any performance standard specified by Welsh Ministers is met.

The Measure requires the Council to publish its Improvement Plan as soon as is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year to which it relates, or after such other date as Welsh Ministers may specify by order. In practice the Improvement Plan is published by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March each year, to additionally comply with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

- 4.2 The Certificate of Compliance (Appendix 1) known as 'Certificate of Compliance for the Audit of Caerphilly County Borough Council's 2018-19 Improvement Plan' confirms the Council has complied with its duty.

## **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Its aim is to make public bodies listed in the Act to think more about the long term, work better with people, communities and each other. It is about preventing problems and taking a more joined-up approach. The arrangements we have in place to comply with the Act are progressing well and an update on the Council's progress is provided separately to Audit Committee.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not needed because the issues covered are for information purposes only, therefore the Council's full EIA process does not need to be applied.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications to this report.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications to this report.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

- 9.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 The report is for information only.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 The certificate tells members and the public if the council has complied with its statutory duties therefore members need to be advised in order to gain assurance as part of their monitoring role.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Local Government Measure 2009 (Part 1). Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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Consultees: Nicole Scammell – Head of Corporate Finance and Section S151 Officer  
Ed Edmunds - Director of Corporate Finance and Education  
Deborah Gronow- Acting Head of Internal Audit  
Rob Hartshorn - Head of Public Protection  
Kathryn Peters - Corporate Policy Manager

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Certificate of Compliance for the Audit of Caerphilly County Borough Council's 2018-19 Improvement Plan



**Reference:** 595A2018-19

**Date issued:** May 2018

## APPENDIX 1

# Audit of Caerphilly County Borough Council's 2018-19 Improvement Plan

## Certificate

I certify that, following publication on 16 May 2018, I have audited Caerphilly County Borough Council's (the Council's) Improvement Plan in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) and my Code of Audit Practice.

As a result of my audit, I believe that the Council has discharged its duties under section 15(6) to (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

## Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Auditor General

Under the Measure, the Council is required to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan describing its plans to discharge its duties to:

- make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions;
- make arrangements to secure achievement of its improvement objectives; and
- make arrangements to exercise its functions so that any performance standard specified by Welsh Ministers is met.

The Measure requires the Council to publish its Improvement Plan as soon as is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year to which it relates, or after such other date as Welsh Ministers may specify by order.

The Council is responsible for preparing the Improvement Plan and for the information set out within it. The Measure requires that the Council has regard to guidance issued by Welsh Ministers in preparing and publishing its plan.

As the Council's auditor, I am required under sections 17 and 19 of the Measure to carry out an audit of the Improvement Plan, to certify that I have done so, and to report whether I believe that the Council has discharged its duties to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 15 and statutory guidance.

## Scope of the Improvement Plan audit

For the purposes of my audit work I will accept that, provided an authority meets its statutory requirements, it will also have complied with Welsh Government statutory guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

For this audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information, or whether the Improvement Plan published by the Council can be achieved. Other assessment work that I will undertake under section 18 of the Measure will examine these issues. My audit of the Council's Improvement Plan, therefore, comprised a review of the plan to ascertain whether it included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the plan complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing its plan.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Measure cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.



**Huw Vaughan Thomas**  
**Auditor General for Wales**

CC: Alun Davies – Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services  
Non Jenkins, Manager  
Gareth Jones, Performance Audit Lead