

COUNCIL:

13 OCTOBER 2016

CABINET PROPOSAL

CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL ANNUAL STATUTORY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2015-16

Reason for this Report

1. This report has been prepared to enable the Council to approve the Council's Annual Statutory Improvement Report, a document required under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, for submission to Council in October 2016, and its publication by 31st October 2016.

Background

2. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires that we publish our Improvement Objectives and how we plan to achieve them. In previous assessments of how the Council fulfils this requirement, the Auditor General for Wales has highlighted the need for the Council to be more focussed on its key priorities and on the delivery of these. In recognition of this opinion, and the growing pressure on the finances available to deliver services to the citizens and communities of Cardiff, in 2015-16 the Council focused on the following four priorities:
 - Education and Skills for People of All Ages
 - Supporting People in Vulnerable Situations
 - Sustainable Economic Development as the Engine for Growth and Jobs
 - Working with People and Partners to Design, Deliver and Improve Services
3. The Council's Corporate Plan 2015-17 addressed what the Council would deliver to achieve these four priorities, and in turn they helped to shape our Improvement Objectives for 2015-16 and the content of our Outcome Agreement with the Welsh Government for 2013-16.
4. The Council's Improvement Objectives for 2015-16 were:
 - Every Cardiff school is a good school where learners achieve well
 - Looked After Children in Cardiff achieve their potential
 - Adult learners achieve their potential
 - People at risk in Cardiff are safeguarded

- People in Cardiff have access to good quality housing
 - People in Cardiff are supported to live independently
 - Cardiff has more employment opportunities and higher value jobs
 - Cardiff has a high quality city environment that includes attractive public spaces and good supporting transport infrastructure
 - Communities and Partners are actively involved in the design, delivery and improvement of highly valued services
 - The City of Cardiff Council has effective governance arrangements and improves performance in key areas
 - The City of Cardiff Council makes use of fewer, but better buildings
5. The Council is required under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to assess our performance against the National Strategic Indicator (NSI) and Public Accountability Measures (PAM) data sets. These are set by the Welsh Government. The Council's performance against the full range of NSI and PAM data sets is shown in the 'How We Measure Up' section of the Improvement Report. Specific indicators are also referenced throughout the report when they are relevant to self-assessment of a particular Improvement Objective or the achievement of the Outcome Agreement.

City of Cardiff Council's Annual Statutory Improvement Report 2015-16

6. The Council's Annual Statutory Improvement Report provides a retrospective summary evaluation of performance for 2015-16 and Members should note that the Report attached at Appendix 1 is a final draft.
7. The City of Cardiff Council's Annual Statutory Improvement Report 2015-16, attached as Appendix 1, is a text document which, once approved, will be translated into Welsh prior to publication by 31 October 2016.
8. The Improvement Report should:
- provide a picture of the Council's performance for the reporting year against the agreed outcomes, activities (Improvement Objectives), and targets
 - communicate improvement information that is timely and accurate to Members, officers, citizens, communities, stakeholders, other councils, the Welsh Government and regulators
9. As outlined by the Wales Audit Office in its assessment of the Council's 2014-15 performance, the Council must also ensure that its annual report contains a summary assessment of the Council's view of its success in achieving its Improvement Objectives for the previous year (in this case, 2015-16).
10. The Council's Annual Statutory Improvement Report 2015-16 seeks to fulfil these requirements.

Our Performance

11. In 2015-16 the Council improved or maintained its performance in 70% of our National Performance Indicators compared to 47.7% in 2014-15. Performance in 2015-16 exceeds the all-Wales improvement of 65% and this makes the Council the third most improved Local Authority in Wales.
12. Despite positive trends, however, it is recognised that the Council will need to continue to focus on addressing areas of underperformance which are also underlined by the NSI and PAM results 2015-16. These areas will in part inform future planning arrangements in the context of changing demographics, a growing population and ongoing budgetary pressures.
13. Within its Performance & Governance Programme, the Council has embarked on a programme of activity to further develop and embed its performance management arrangements. This will allow the Council to develop a meaningful Performance Management Framework to support effective business planning, performance reporting and performance support.
14. A key part of this Performance Management Framework will be the development of a consistent approach to setting targets for performance indicators across the Council, ensuring targets that are both realistic and sufficiently challenging.
15. In March 2016, Estyn deemed that the Council had made sufficient progress and was moved from any further Estyn monitoring.
16. In a report entitled 'Inspection of Children's Services in City of Cardiff Council' of March 2016, the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) reported that the Council's Elected Members and Management Team demonstrated a common understanding of the direction and drive needed to ensure Social Services effectively supports improved outcomes for children and young people in Cardiff, and partnership agencies are well engaged strategically and evidence understanding of the complex issues facing the Council. CSSIW also highlighted that the needs of the child were kept at the forefront of assessment and the core assessments observed were comprehensive and of good quality.
17. In its Annual Improvement Report of May 2016 the Wales Audit Office reported that during 2016-17 the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, providing arrangements to support improved outcomes are embedded and the current pace of improvement is maintained.

Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment of the City of Cardiff Council

18. The Wales Audit Office (WAO) undertook a Corporate Assessment Follow-on in October 2015, and, in February 2016, the Auditor General

published his report of this Follow-on activity. This report concluded that 'The Council has put in place better arrangements to support improvement and to address longstanding issues, but is now at a critical point in embedding them if it is to achieve a step change in delivering improved outcomes'. The outcome of this work was a formal recommendation that 'The Council must ensure that it addresses the proposals for improvement as set out in the report to deliver improved outcomes within the next 12 months'.

19. The Council responded constructively to the Corporate Assessment Follow-on and prepared a Statement of Action to address the recommendation made and the associated Proposals for Improvement. The Statement of Action was resolved at the Council's Cabinet meeting on 21 March 2016 to drive through the required improvements.
20. The Council's Annual Statutory Improvement Report, as outlined earlier, provides a picture of the Council's performance for the reporting year against the agreed outcomes, activities (Improvement Objectives), and targets and is therefore a key strand of our performance arrangements.
21. The Council's Annual Statutory Improvement Report will be audited by the Wales Audit Office in November 2016.

Role of the Auditor General for Wales

22. The Auditor General for Wales, through the work of the Wales Audit Office (WAO), audits each Welsh Local Authority's Improvement Report to assess the extent to which the Report has been prepared and published in accordance with statutory requirements and will determine whether or not to issue a Certificate of Compliance.

Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee

23. The Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee considered the Statutory Improvement report on 11th October 2016 and the Chair's letter is attached at Appendix 2.
24. Following the discussion at the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee, the self-assessment for each of the Improvement Objectives has been reviewed to ensure it reflects the challenges that remain for the Council's improvement journey in light of demographic pressures and continued financial restraint.

Reason for Recommendations

25. To recommend the Council's Annual Statutory Improvement Report 2015-16 to Council in time for the Plan to be published by the statutory date 31 October 2016.

Financial Implications

26. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report, however action on identified priorities for improvement may well have financial implications which would need to be addressed in the budget setting process.

Legal Implications

27. The recommendation is made for the purposes of enabling the Council to comply with its legal duties as outlined in this report

HR Implications

28. There are no HR implications arising directly from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Council is recommended to approve the City of Cardiff Council Annual Statutory Improvement Report (attached at Appendix 1) for publication by 31 October 2016.

THE CABINET

The following appendices are attached:

- Appendix 1 – Annual Statutory Improvement Report
Appendix 2 – Letter from Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny
Committee (Committee date 11 October) (*Response to follow*)