

COUNCIL: 26 OCTOBER 2017

CABINET PROPOSAL

ANNUAL STATUTORY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2016-17

Reason for this Report

1. This report has been prepared to enable the Cabinet 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 2017, and its publication by 31st October 2017.

Background

2. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires that the Council publish its Improvement Objectives and how it plans to achieve them. In previous assessments, the Auditor General for Wales highlighted the need for the Council to be more focussed on its key priorities and the delivery of these. In recognition of this opinion, and the growing pressure on the Council's finances available to deliver services to the citizens and communities of Cardiff in 2016-17, the following four priorities were identified as key areas of focus:
 - Better Education and Skills for all
 - Supporting Vulnerable People
 - Creating More and Better Paid jobs
 - Working Together to Transform Services
3. The Council's Corporate Plan 2016-18 focussed on what the Council would deliver to achieve these four priorities, and in turn they helped to shape our Improvement Objectives for 2016-17.
4. The Council's Improvement Objectives for 2016-17 focussed on:
 - Every Cardiff school is a good school
 - 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
- All young people in Cardiff make a successful transition into employment, education or training
- 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

Annual Statutory Improvement Report 2016-17

5. The Council's Annual Statutory Improvement Report provides a retrospective summary evaluation of performance for the financial year 2016-17 and Members should note that the Report attached at Appendix 1 is a final draft.
6. The Cardiff Council Annual Statutory Improvement Report 2016-17, attached as Appendix 1, is a text document which once approved will be translated into Welsh prior to publication on the Council's website by 31 October 2017.
7. The Improvement Report should:
 - provide a picture of the Council's performance for the reporting year against the agreed outcomes (the Council's 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

The Council's Performance

8. The Council is required under the Measure to assess its performance against the National Indicator set. These are set by the Welsh Government. Where these indicators and measures are relevant to the progress the Council made against our Improvement Objectives, they are included in this Improvement Report. The Council's performance against the full National data set is shown in the 'How We Measure Up' section of the Improvement Report.
9. In 2016-17 Cardiff's performance improved to 13th position relative to all Local Authorities across Wales, and 60% of the Council's National Indicator results were better than the Wales Average, compared to 48% in 2015-16. Furthermore, the outturn of 60% of the Indicators is in the top 2 Quarters of performance, compared to 52% in 2015-16. Cardiff's Education performance in 2016-17 (academic year 2015-16) is significantly better than all Wales performance with 82% of indicators showing improvement, compared to the all Wales result of 64% of indicators.

10. Within Social Services, the overall picture of performance during 2016-17 generally improved and was on target. These improvements have resulted from focused work over several years to improve outcomes for looked after children, and an increased focus on joint working between the Council's Children's and Education services.
11. This continuing trend of improvement comes despite Cardiff being ranked 21st out of the 22 Welsh Local Authorities in terms of spend per head of the population for 2016/17.
12. Despite positive trends, however, it is recognised that the Council will need to continue to focus on addressing areas of underperformance. These areas will in part inform future planning arrangements in the context of changing demographics, a growing population and ongoing budgetary pressures.

Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment of the City of Cardiff Council

13. The Wales Audit Office undertook a Corporate Assessment Follow-on in October 2015, and in February 2016, the Auditor General published his report on the Corporate Assessment Follow-on. This report concluded at that time 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'.
14. The Council responded positively and developed a Statement of Action that detailed how it would achieve the Proposals for Improvement. As part of this, the Council developed a Performance & Governance programme to further develop and embed its performance management arrangements. This has allowed the Council to develop a Performance Management Framework that supports effective planning, reporting and performance support.
15. Between February and May 2017, the Wales Audit Office reviewed the Council's progress in relation to its Statement of Action. The subsequent report of this work concluded that the Council had demonstrated sufficient progress in implementing the 2016 proposals for improvement and is in the process of embedding new performance management and reporting arrangements.

Role of the Auditor General for Wales

16. The Auditor General for Wales through the Wales Audit Office (WAO) audit each 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

17. The Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee considered the Statutory Improvement report on October 4th 2017 and the Chair's letter, is attached at Appendix 2.

Reason for Recommendations

18. To recommend the Council's Annual Statutory Improvement Report 2016-17 to Council in time for the Plan to be published by the statutory date 31 October 2017.

Financial Implications

19. 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

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

HR Implications

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

CABINET PROPOSAL

Council is recommended to approve the Council's Annual Statutory Improvement Report.

THE CABINET

12 October 2017

The following appendices are attached:

Appendix 1 – Annual Statutory Improvement Report

Appendix 1a – Further information in relation to the Statutory Improvement Report

Appendix 2 – Letter from the Chair of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee