

GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE: 23 JANUARY 2024

AUDIT WALES REPORT – USE OF PERFORMANCE INFORMATION: SERVICE USER PERSPECTIVE AND OUTCOMES

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PERFORMANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

AGENDA ITEM: 7.2

Reasons for this Report

1. The Governance and Audit Committee's Terms of Reference requires members of the Committee:
 - To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditors
 - To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
2. This report provides the Governance and Audit Committee with an overview of the findings of a local report by Audit Wales, entitled "*Use of performance information: service user perspective and outcomes – City of Cardiff Council*". A copy of the report is attached as **Appendix A** to this report.

Background

3. During 2023, Audit Wales undertook an audit of Cardiff Council, which focused on the performance information that the Council provides to senior officers and senior elected members about the service user perspective and the outcomes of its activities, and how this information is used by them to monitor progress and take action where necessary to improve outcomes and secure value for money in the use of resources.
4. As part of this work, Audit Wales reviewed corporate documents and held interviews with the Cabinet Member, Director and senior officers with responsibility for the Council's performance management arrangements.
5. A report was issued by Audit Wales in November 2023. Further details of the audit questions and audit criteria used by Audit Wales are set out in Appendix 1 to the Audit Wales report (**Appendix A**).

Issues

6. Overall, the Audit Wales report found that: *“the Council’s performance information does not consistently enable senior leaders to have a full understanding of the service user perspective but provides information to help senior leaders understand the outcomes of the Council’s activities”*.
7. This assessment is based on the following key findings set out within the Audit Wales report:
 - *“The performance information provided to senior leaders to help them understand the perspective of service users does not consistently cover all service areas”*
 - *“The performance reports to senior leaders provide a balance of output and outcome focused information, although the large volume of information can make it challenging to navigate”*
 - *“The Council has effective arrangements in place to ensure the accuracy of the performance information it provides to senior leaders regarding the service user perspective and outcomes”*
 - *“The Council uses its performance information to help it achieve its intended outcomes”*
 - *“The Council is planning to review the effectiveness of its own arrangements but does not routinely seek to learn from other organisations about gathering the service user perspective”*
8. The Audit Wales report makes just one recommendation. This recommends that the Council should strengthen the information that is provided to senior leaders about the perspective of the service user to enable them to understand how well services and policies are meeting the needs of service users. The organisational response to this recommendation is set out in **Appendix B** to this report.
9. As part of consideration of this agenda item, the Governance and Audit Committee will receive a verbal overview of the scope and findings of the report from Audit Wales officials. Council officers will also be asked to respond verbally setting out the organisation’s response to the report’s findings and recommendation.

Legal Implications

10. The Audit Wales Report was produced under section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It is for the Committee to note and consider the contents of the Report and its recommendation. There are no other legal implications arising from this Report.

Financial Implications

11. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to note and consider the contents of the report by Audit Wales.

Gareth Newell
Head of Performance & Partnerships
17 January 2024

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix A: Audit Wales Report – Use of performance information: service user perspective and outcomes – City of Cardiff Council (November 2023)

Appendix B: Organisational Response