

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**
 Date of meeting: **27th February 2020**
 Report Subject: **Wales Audit Office: Well-being of Future Generations – Improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors’**
 Portfolio Holder: **Cllr G Collier, Deputy Leader / Executive Member Environment**
 Report Submitted by: **Chris Engel Team Manager – Natural Environment**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	✓	13.02.20	31.03.20		27.02.20			

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Community Services Scrutiny Committee with the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report, ‘*Well-being of Future Generations – Improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors’* (appendix 1). The report also includes the management response that the Council has made to the WAO in response to the proposals for improvement.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The WAO published their report, ‘*Well-being of Future Generations – Improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors’* in October 2019 and covers the 2019-20 audit year

2.2 The report considered how the Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle public bodies must take account of the following ways of working:

- Long Term;
- Prevention;
- Integration;
- Collaboration; and
- Involvement.

2.3 The WAO found that:

‘The Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle; it collaborates well with others, but lacks a clear long-term, joined –up plan.

Following this conclusion, the WAO identified areas for improvement. The response of which is found in the management response (appendix 2).

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 CLT has responded to the WAO that they approve of the information contained within the report.

Option 1 (Preferred option)

Accept the WAO review and actions to implement the proposals for improvement.

Option 2

To consider the report further and offer additional comment to Welsh Governments Audit Office

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has been used to scope out this WAO study. This will also be the focus of future reviews undertaken by the WAO.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no direct financial implications as part of these audit reports and all proposals for improvement will be met within existing resources.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Council recognises it needs to address the proposals for improvement from the WAO in order to ensure compliance with legislation and audit reports. If these requirements are not met, the Council is at risk of reputational damage and intervention.

5.3 ***Legal***

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no additional workforce implications as part of the WAO review as business plans already identify where capacity is required in order to deliver the service.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

In response to the WAO's proposal for improvement the Council has identified the steps it will take to achieve these suggested improvements (appendix 2).

The activity of the proposal for improvement will be undertaken largely by the Community Services Department, but as indicated within the report the step is a corporate responsibility and as such all departments will be

responsible for the development of the step in order to ensure its successful development and will be monitored as part of the business plans, and reported within the Joint Finance and Performance Report.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The priority, 'Improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors' The step was designed to prevent ecosystem decline and promote wellbeing of local people, but more data is needed to measure and monitor progress.

6.3 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Council has designed some projects to deliver longer term outcomes, but has yet to plan the delivery of the step over the long term.

6.4 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The step is designed to deliver multiple benefits and is integrated across Gwent however it is not yet fully reflected across Council Plans as it remains in the 'ownership of the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate.

6.5 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Council is collaborating well to deliver the step and wants to expand its network of partners, but better coordination is needed.

6.6 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Council demonstrate a number of strengths in its approach to involving a number of community groups but could do more to involve business and local people

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The proposals for improvement from the WAO will be included within the relevant business plan which will be updated with progress on a quarterly basis.

The information will be reported within the Joint Finance and Performance Report to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – WAO Report

Appendix 2 – Management Response