



24 Cathedral Road / Heol y Gadeirlan
Cardiff / Caerdydd
CF11 9LJ
Tel / Ffôn: 029 20 320500
Fax / Ffacs: 029 20 320600
Email / Epost: wales@wao.gov.uk
www.wao.gov.uk

Mrs Christine Salter
Acting Chief Executive
Cardiff City Council
County Hall
Cardiff
Atlantic Wharf
CF10 4UW

Reference	654A2013
Date	2 December 2013
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Dear Christine

Improvement Assessment

In my letter of 30 September 2013, I gave my opinion on whether Cardiff Council (the Council) had discharged its statutory duties in respect of improvement planning.

I am also required, under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) to give an opinion on whether the Council has discharged its duties in respect of improvement reporting and met the requirements of the Measure.

In my opinion, and based on audit work undertaken to date the Council has discharged most of its improvement reporting duties under the Measure and there is potential to strengthen its arrangements for meeting guidance

I have concluded that the Council discharged most of its duties because:

- the Council approved and published its Annual Performance Report 2012-13 (the Report) before the statutory deadline of 31 October 2013;
- the Report provides information about the Council's performance in 2012-13;
- the Report includes details of performance and comparisons, as measured by the national statutory performance indicators, against its targets and against Welsh averages; and
- the Report is available in English and Welsh to download from the Council's website.

However, to fully comply with its duties the Council should also have:

- provided an explanation of the processes the Council has gone through to discharge its general duty to improve under the Measure; and
- provided details of the ways in which the Council exercised its powers of collaboration to support the achievement of its improvement objectives and whether the activity has achieved its intended outcomes.

There is potential for the Council to strengthen arrangements further by:

- Providing a clearer evaluation of performance drawing attention to both less favourable and improving performance (this issue was identified as an area for improvement in our letter of last year and has not yet been addressed).
- Strengthening comparative information by comparing with other similar organisations.
- Providing details on the Council's approach to publishing the Report and how it has considered the needs of different target audiences and facilitating engagement with those it serves. (Access to the report remains dependent on the Council's website, the report did not indicate where hard copies would be made available or whether the report was available in other formats or language.)

Further proposals for improvement/recommendations

I make no new proposals for improvement because the Council is in the process of addressing the proposals for improvement I have previously made about its performance reporting. My corporate assessment will include more detailed work on the arrangements that support the Council's performance management and reporting over the following months. I will report this, as well as summarising all of my work and that of relevant regulators during 2013-14, in my Corporate Assessment Report for the Council that I will issue by the end of March 2014.

Yours sincerely



HUW VAUGHAN THOMAS

Auditor General for Wales

CC: Lesley Griffiths – Minister for Local Government and Government Business

Steve Barry – Manager

Sam Spruce – Performance Audit Lead