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Ms Bronwen Morgan  
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Reference	627A2013
Date	29 November 2013
Pages	1 of 2

Dear Bronwen

## Improvement Assessment

In my letter of 27 August 2013, I gave my opinion on whether Ceredigion County 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 its improvement reporting duties under the Measure although there is potential to strengthen its arrangements further.**

The Council has discharged its improvement reporting duties under the Measure:

- the Council published an assessment of its performance during 2012-13 in its *Improvement Plan – Performance 2012-13* (the Improvement Plan) before 31 October 2013;
- the Improvement Plan assesses the Council's performance in the preceding financial year (2012-13) and sets out how the Council has sought to discharge its duties under the Measure;
- the Improvement Plan details the Council's activity aimed at achieving its improvement objectives and expresses its performance in a generally fair and balanced way;
- the Improvement Plan includes brief reference and contact information for citizens who want to provide feedback or make comments on the Council's performance, although this could be enhanced and made more prominent;
- the Improvement Plan includes details of performance and comparisons as measured by the national statutory performance indicators; and

- the Improvement Plan includes references to the ways in which the Council has sought to collaborate.

I have identified the following areas where the Council can strengthen its improvement reporting:

- The breadth and quality of analysis of performance measures, qualitative information and comparative data contained within the Improvement Plan are too limited. Overall, it does not provide citizens with a clear evaluation of the progress the Council is making towards achieving its improvement objectives and the impact of its improvement activities on service users and citizens.
- The Improvement Plan does not provide information on the benefits of collaborative activity to date. This should include what has been delivered and whether intended outcomes are being achieved. This type of information would enable the Council to measure, evaluate and report more transparently on the actual benefits achieved through collaborative activities.

### Further proposals for improvement

I am making one new proposal for improvement in this letter. I will continue to monitor and report on the progress made by the Council in implementing the proposals set out in my previous reports and letters.

#### Proposal for improvement

- P1 The Council should strengthen its improvement reporting by providing:
- a clearer evaluation of the progress it has made against its improvement objectives and the impact this is having on service users and citizens; and
  - information on the benefits of collaborative activity and whether intended outcomes are being achieved.

I will undertake more detailed work on the arrangements that support the Council's performance management and reporting over the following months and report this, as well as summarising all of my work and that of relevant regulators during 2013-14, in an Annual Improvement Report for the Council that I will publish as part of the Corporate Assessment by the end of May 2014.

Yours sincerely,



**HUW VAUGHAN THOMAS**  
**Auditor General for Wales**

cc: Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Local Government and Government Business