



## AUDIT COMMITTEE – 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2020

**SUBJECT: REGULATOR PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT PROGRESS UPDATE**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & CORPORATE SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on progress against proposals or recommendations made by all regulators since the last Audit Committee update (January 2019) and to advise on any new proposals that have been added since that time.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Since June 2019 there has been 5 new recommendations added onto the register.

- 2.2 Currently we have **5** statutory recommendations, **10** proposals and **5** areas for improvement on the register totalling **20** altogether. There are **9** proposals and recommendations which are now considered to be actioned and completed. If agreed by the Audit Committee, that would leave **11** outstanding.

- 2.3 We have received 3 reports since the last time an update was provided, but only 1 has been put on the register as the other two are still to be formalised and presented to their relevant scrutiny. They are:

- Corporate Safeguarding arrangements for Children Services (on the register).
- The Well-being of Future Generations 'Steps' examination on 'Preventing unnecessary admissions to hospital and facilitating timely discharges' which is part of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) work on how public bodies are implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.
- Environmental Health – Follow up review.

- 2.4 For clarity, the WAO issue Proposals and Recommendations. The difference between the two is that a proposal is a 'suggestion for improvement'. This means the Authority does not have to act on it, but if it is on the register it has been agreed that we will. A 'recommendation' is statutory which means we have a 'statutory duty' to act on the recommendation. Areas for Improvement are a new category as noted in para 2.2 and looks at how we have used the Sustainable Development principle in forming actions to deliver the Well-being Objectives. They do not have specific proposals, but rather identify areas for improvement.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 We recommend the 9 proposals and recommendations be closed down as completed and encourage members to view the specific proposals attached within Appendix A and judge if they concur that these are now complete. It is recommended that Audit Committee give their agreement (if appropriate) to close the proposals that are noted as 'recommended as completed' within Appendix A.

### 4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure members are aware of progress the Council's actions for progressing regulator recommendations and proposals and have assurance that progress is being made through an opportunity to monitor and challenge content.

### 5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 As of January 2020 there are 11 proposals/areas for improvement outstanding, 5 of these are new recommendations. We are recommending 9 be closed down as completed leaving 11 outstanding. See breakdown below:

Name of Report	How many proposals / recommendation outstanding	How many completed in this reporting period	How many left?
Asset Management	1	0	1
Financial Resilience	1	0	1
Review of arrangement to address external audit inspection	1	0	1
Savings planning (Financial Resilience)	1	1	0
Overview Scrutiny Fit for the Future?	2	2	0
Service User Perspective Review	1	1	0
Welsh Housing Quality Standard Follow up Review	3	2	1
Well-being of Future Generations 'steps' examination of 'improve the take up of Flying Start'	5 improvement actions	0	5
Corporate Safeguarding – Children Services	5 <b>New</b>	3	2
	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>

- 5.2. **Asset Management** – This proposal is a long term activity requiring each service to develop a Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP). As noted in an earlier report, Property Services appointed an Asset Management Officer to work with services on a two year fixed term basis to develop SAMPs (Appendix A). Good progress has been made with 14 of 22 SAMPs finished and several more almost ready to be signed off; we are confident all SAMPs and therefore this proposal will be finished this year. SAMPs then will become part of normal day to day business and will help the Council manage its property assets.
- 5.3 **Financial Resilience and Review of arrangement to address external audit Inspection** – the Financial Resilience proposal is almost complete with a set of dates early in the year for a ‘Commercial Strategy’ to be approved. This means the action will be complete by the next Audit update in June 2020. The Organisational Development Strategy was not completed by January 2020, however as noted in the appendix an appointment has been made to progress the completion of the strategy this year. With an officer now in place the draft Workforce Development Strategy will be consulted upon by Summer 2020.
- 5.4 **Overview Scrutiny Fit for the Future?** This came on to the register in July 2018 and had made good progress so we now recommend that this is complete.
- 5.5 **Service User Perspective Review** was a survey carried out with housing tenants and the **Welsh Housing Quality Standard Follow up** review came onto the register January 2019. Both are making good progress with only 1 action now outstanding.
- 5.6 **Well-being of Future Generations** ‘steps’ examination of ‘improve the take up of Flying Start’ was published in April 2019. This work was to identify how the Sustainable Development Principle (the five ways of working) was used in developing actions to address our Well-being Objectives. Although in terms of counting we have noted 5 areas for improvement, there are at least 12 activities addressing these 5 so the work is more detailed than 5 areas would suggest. Good progress has been made on these actions and all are on track to be completed by the target dates.
- 5.7 **New - Corporate Safeguarding** is a new report received in June 2019 and was presented to Social Services Scrutiny on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 with the full management response. Very good progress has been made with 3 of the 5 recommendations being completed and the remaining 2 between 50% and 80% completed. These were categorised as ‘recommendations’ because although WAO assessed safeguarding locally it was against a national review held in 2016 in which national recommendations were made across Wales at that time.
- 5.8 **New** - There are two new reports coming through the system that are not yet noted on the register; the first one is: **Follow up on Environmental Services** (Nov 2019). The report has been finalised but still needs to be presented to committee by the Wales Audit Office. The overall summary is that the *“Council has acted upon the recommendations raised in 2014. The Council should use its strong financial position to explore more innovative ways in which it can ensure the long-term financial and operational sustainability of environmental health services, whilst contributing to the Council’s wider strategic objectives”* and there are 2 proposals accordingly. Actions to respond to these proposals will be on the next register update.
- 5.9 The second new report is the **Well being of Future Generations Steps 2** ‘preventing unnecessary admissions to hospital and facilitating timely discharges’. This new report (received November 2019) and has not yet been presented to Scrutiny. An action plan has been developed to address the areas for development.

There are 6 identified improvement actions although the action plan shows 11 activities. The reason for this is that actions are grouped under the 5 ways of working and some actions address more than one of the 5 ways of working, so are repeated. The action progress will be updated in more detail the next Audit report.

- 5.10 The Education Service have reviewed all recommendations from 2014 inspection when the local authority came out of monitoring, and we are currently awaiting the next Estyn inspection, therefore there are no proposals or recommendations to advise of at this time.
- 5.11 Social Services advise there are no Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) reports or studies to report on at this time, although to note CIW will be doing some work in Adults and Children's in the next two months.

### **Conclusion**

- 5.12 In the main most proposals are making good progress and there are no emerging issues or delays to report on at this time.

When monitoring progress against the proposals, members are advised to consider what value the proposals are making and what difference the activity in addressing them has made for our citizens. The WAO view is that the decision on whether a proposal is completed is an internal matter for the organisation to decide, (although it is within their remit to make more proposals if they do not believe it has been addressed). WAO receive this update as part of their attendance at Audit Committee.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 Progress of the proposals assumes there is no known slippage at this time and that the resources to deliver them remain unchanged.

## **7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES**

### **7.1 Corporate Plan 2018-2023.**

The Steps Examination Areas for Improvement looks at Flying Start which is an important part of the early year section in Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all

The Steps Examination Area for Improvement which is noted in 5.9 is an assessment of the Well-being Objective 6 – Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being.

The Corporate Plan can be found on the intranet on the Policy portal, within the performance management section. See link below:

<http://sc-aptdden1/KENTICO/getattachment/ab780120-3a2b-47f9-bff0-f383462fbb98/Corporate-Plan-2018-23.aspx>

## **8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no specific implications to the Well-being of Future Generations within this report, however some proposals are a result of the WAO review of our compliance

with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The proposals as noted in section 5.1 also relate to two of the Well-being Objectives that the Council has set itself to improve well-being. The Corporate Plan as noted shows which national goals our Well-being objectives maximise our contribution towards.

- 8.2 The five ways of working will be included within the actions to address these proposals and are not specific to the proposals themselves, with the exception of the last proposals as they were a direct review of how we applied the five ways of working to set our objective and actions (or steps) to deliver the objective.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 No specific Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken on this report, however the Local Government Measure 2009 cites fairness and accessibility as part of the definition of what 'Improvement' means and the Well-being Objectives which are part of the Corporate Plan (link in paragraph 7.1) contribute to a More Equal Wales.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report, although of note external audit fees can be reduced if regulators are assured that they can place reliance on the organisation's own ability to monitor and challenge itself to improve

## **11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this report

## **12. CONSULTATIONS**

- 12.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report

## **13. STATUTORY POWER**

- 13.1 Local Government Measure (Wales) 2009

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Background

Appendices:

Appendix A: Action Plan 2020 Response to Regulator Proposals