



AUDIT COMMITTEE – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: WALES AUDIT OFFICE PROPOSALS PROGRESS UPDATE

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES & S151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on progress against the proposals made by the Wales Audit Office since the Corporate Assessment in 2010, and subsequent Improvement proposals set out in the 2011 and 2012 Annual Improvement Reports (AIRs).

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The attached Action Plan (Appendix A) details how the Council is progressing against the outstanding proposals. A good number of proposals have now been addressed either on an individual basis or as part of the 2012/13 Performance report.
- 2.2 Those that are still outstanding are in the main, being addressed as part of the wider Council Improving Governance programme, which will be presented to Cabinet on 18th September and will be a standing item on the Audit Committee agenda for the future.
- 2.3 Only two recommendations fall outside this framework and they are being addressed separately and can be identified as 1) Improve how the Council monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of partnerships to ensure they are contributing to the delivery of corporate priorities and 2) Ensure there are robust and effective governance arrangements in place when creating integrated services and collaborations which are subject to regular evaluation of their impact.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Both the Corporate Assessment and the AIR are designed to assess and report on the Council's compliance with the Local Government Measure 2009. In addition it encapsulates other regulatory and inspection outcomes.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Council has put together a list of all outstanding proposals for improvement as made by the Wales Audit Office from the first corporate assessment in 2010 including Improvement Letters up to the current AIR 2012.
- 4.2 At this stage this update does not include any new recommendations or Improvement proposals that are likely to be incorporated when the AIR for 2013 is finalised.
- 4.3 This report does not include an update against the Public Interest Report Action plan, which forms part of the Improving Governance Programme, as this will be reported separately.

However, this Action Plan has now been integrated (apart from two recommendations mentioned above) into the Improving Governance Programme and further work will take place to ensure all proposals are consolidated into the Improving Governance programme and identified in one place. Regular updates on the Improving Governance programme will be reported to the Audit Committee in November 2013 and in the future for review.

4.4 Evidence of progress has been submitted to the Wales Audit Office on a number of these proposals. We are awaiting confirmation that the auditors are satisfied that these can be closed down which we understand will be part of the next Corporate Assessment. The WAO in their Improvement Assessment Letter (due approx Dec 2013) will give a position statement as to which proposals they consider can be closed down. An update will be presented to a future Audit Committee.

4.5 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 in creating more efficient, customer focused services.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No specific Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken on this report, however the Local Government Measure 2009 cites fairness and accessibility as part of a definition of what 'Improvement' means.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report although it is worth noting that External Audit fees could be reduced, if they can be assured and place reliance on the organisation's own ability to monitor and challenge itself to improve.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 There have been no consultations that have not been included in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that Audit Committee note the contents of this report and monitor the progress against the attached action plan.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To ensure members are aware of progress the Council's action plan and have an opportunity to monitor and challenge its content.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Measure (Wales) 2009

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Dave Thomas - Equalities Officer, Democratic Services
Gill Lewis – Seconded ABHB Director of Change Management
Councillor Keith Reynolds - Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Action Plan Progress Update of WAO Annual Improvement Report 2011/12