

WALES AUDIT OFFICE REPORT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST – ACTION PLAN AND PROGRESS TO DATE – 3RD OCTOBER 2013

Recommendations for improvement	Responsible Officer	SRO	Draft/Pilot Date	BAU date	Work programme	Progress	Status
1. Advertisement of Meetings	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services						
a) Re-arranged or ad hoc meetings not included in the fortnightly timetable of future meetings must be published in an addendum document on the Council's website and all Members informed as soon as a meeting date is agreed with the Chief Executive or other responsible senior officer.	Head of Legal and Democratic Services with Democratic Services Manager	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services	30.4.13	May 2013	Ensure system in place Test system Procedure note written	Protocol and procedure notes produced and relevant process implemented – part of the Democratic Procedure Manual <u>Follow-up</u> Process will be reviewed May 2014.	Achieved / Completed
b) The weekly notice of future meetings must be approved and published by the Monitoring Officer who also needs to have access to the planning of such meetings.	Head of Democratic Services	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services	30.4.13	May 2013	Ensure system in place for sign off Test sign off MO and Committee services to have a slot on CMT when FWP being decided	Protocol and procedure notes produced and relevant process implemented – part of the Democratic Procedure Manual . Due to practicality, the final responsibility is with the Head of Legal and not with the Monitoring Officer. <u>Follow-up</u> Process will be reviewed May 2014.	Achieved / Completed

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<p>c) The Head of Legal and Democratic Services must introduce a system to ensure that all council meetings have been advertised on the weekly timetable of council meetings. This could be achieved by introducing a 'Meetings Control Record' listing all council meetings. Before each council meeting a Committee Services Officer must check the weekly future meetings list against the 'Meetings Control Record' and sign to confirm the meeting has been properly advertised. Any meetings found not to be advertised must be cancelled and re-arranged in accordance with Local Government Act 1972.</p>	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>30.4.13</p>	<p>May 2013</p>	<p>Ensure system in place and documented</p> <p>'Meetings control record' and a separation of duties established</p>	<p>Protocol and procedure notes produced and relevant process implemented – part of the Democratic Procedure Manual</p> <p><u>Follow-up</u> Process will be reviewed May 2014.</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>

<p>2. Conflicts of Interest</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>						
<p>a) As a matter of urgency, but not later than 30th April 2013, all Members must complete training in the Code of Conduct.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>30.4.13</p>		<p>Members to attend training on Code of Conduct</p> <p>Training reviewed for content and forward programme developed</p> <p>Refresher training for small groups of members</p> <p>On-line training developed where appropriate</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>
<p>b) Following future elections and by-elections, all Members must complete Code of Conduct training within 3 months of the date of the election. (A requirement to this effect will need to be written into a review of the constitution). This training will continue to include detailed guidance on the obligations of members to declare personal/prejudicial interests and the actions that members should take arising from such declarations. Any failure to attend will be reported to the Council's Standards Committee.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Oct. 2013 / Dec. 2013</p>	<p>Following election</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>Constitution Working Group established and met on 11/09. Meetings scheduled fortnightly. Currently drafting comments for consideration of the Group meeting on 30th Sept. Report to be prepared for CMT Policy Meeting before reference to PDM.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>c) Increase the frequency that Members' Declarations of Interest are published to monthly.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>31.5.13</p>	<p>31/05/2013</p>	<p>Ensure system in place</p> <p>Test system</p>	<p>Completed - Procedure note signed off part of the Democratic Services Procedure Manual"</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>

<p>d) A review of the process in place for officers to agree obligations under the Code of Conduct.</p>	<p>Head of HR/S151 Officer</p>	<p>Gareth Hardacre Head of HR</p>	<p>30.6.13</p>		<p>Re-launch of existing code</p> <p>Review process</p> <p>Update officer code of conduct</p> <p>Review induction process for new starters</p>	<p>Due to top management vacancies, this action has been deferred. The new deadline is September 2013. Process reviewed, weaknesses to be addressed by additional guidance (see below 2e2). A timeline has been agreed for distribution of the code (by 30/09) and return of acknowledgement form (by 28/10).</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>e) Review the process for declaring interests of a personal/prejudicial nature for both members and officers.</p>	<p>Head of HR/S151 Officer</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>30.6.13</p>		<p>Review system in place</p> <p>Consider wider practice across Wales</p> <p>Consider further guidance on the matter</p>	<p>Process for declaring interests at meeting for Members (and officers) signed off and introduced with immediate effect. Part of the Democratic Services Procedure Manual.</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>
		<p>Gareth Hardacre Head of HR</p>			<p>Review Officers procedure for declaration of interest during their employment</p>	<p>Part of the Code of Conduct. Procedure reviewed, internal audit issued a draft report. Email sent on 14/08 to HoSS to seek current declarations, followed by reminders. Feedback to CMT on items of interest expected on 3/10. Draft additional procedural note under consultation. Agreement reached with internal Audit to replace third carbon copy (illegible) with scanned copy of the original form. Follow-up: WAO to be asked to benchmark against best practice in Wales</p>	<p>In progress</p>

APPENDIX 1

<p>f) A full training programme on the Officer Code of Conduct must be established for officers.</p>	<p>Head of HR/S151 Officer</p>	<p>Gareth Hardacre Head of HR</p>	<p>30/7/2013 (ppt, proposal of delivery, officers to be trained)</p>	<p>31/10/2013</p>	<p>Review training on Code of conduct and other associated compliance codes</p> <p>Prepare training material in conjunction with other Councils</p> <p>Roll-out a training programme of Code of Conduct</p>	<p>Training plan produced and agreed. Leadership and management network trained, as part of CIPFA Governance Training. 1st to 3rd tier specific training scheduled (sessions to run from 7th to 24th Oct.)</p> <p>All training recorded in Training Module in I-Trent (HR system) for reporting purposes.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>g) A full review of the system for Gifts and Hospitality offered to officers should be undertaken to improve consistency and compliance</p>	<p>Head of HR/S151 Officer</p>	<p>Gareth Hardacre Head of HR</p>	<p>30.7.13</p>	<p>31/07/2013</p>	<p>Review current system for consistency and compliance</p> <p>Re-write system</p> <p>Train senior officers</p> <p>Facilitated training for all officers</p>	<p>Part of the Code of Conduct. Procedure reviewed, internal audit issued a draft report. Email sent on 14/08 to HoSS to seek current declarations, followed by reminders. Feedback to CMT on items of interest expected on 3/10. Draft additional procedural note under consultation. Agreement reached with internal Audit to replace third carbon copy (illegible) with scanned copy of the original form.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>h) The register of Gifts and Hospitality for officers to be reported on a quarterly basis to the Audit Committee (the Members register is already reported to the Standards Committee).</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer/S151 Officer/Head of HR</p>	<p>Gareth Hardacre Head of HR</p>	<p>30.9.13</p>	<p>30/9/2013</p>	<p>Ensure system in place for reporting</p> <p>Test agendas for compliance</p>	<p>Report to Audit Committee to approve the reporting on a quarterly basis presented on 17th Sept. Draft report with recommendation on process will be prepared for the Audit Committee following CMT discussion on 3rd Oct.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>i) Guidelines on the procedure for managing conflicts of interest be included in each committee's Terms of Reference - this should then be incorporated into the Constitution.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>31.5.13</p>	<p>30/9/2013</p>	<p>Update all terms of reference Using best practice examples</p> <p>Update Constitution</p>	<p>Consideration of declarations of officers and members has been completed as part of the review of the Standard Agenda format. Included as a procedure in the Democratic Services Procedure Manual.</p> <p><u>Follow-up</u> part of the review of the Constitution</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>

<p>3. Procedures for New Committees</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>						
<p>a) The Council's Constitution will be reviewed on an annual basis. The Constitution will then be updated, expanded and revised as necessary to include an up to date list of all council committees, its Terms of Reference, any delegated decision-making ability, political balance requirement, size of committee membership and any co-optee membership arrangements.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>30.9.13</p>	<p>30/09/2013</p>	<p>Set up working party on review of constitution to include members, WG officers etc</p> <p>Review and list what needs updating</p> <p>Facilitate buy-in and a more developed understanding of the Constitution from officers</p>	<p>Linked to 2b above. Constitution Working Group established and met 11/09. Meetings scheduled fortnightly. Currently drafting comments for consideration of the Group meeting on 30th Sept. Report to be prepared for CMT Policy Meeting before reference to PDM.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>b) Terms of reference should be agreed at the first meeting of any new committee/panel/ group.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>immediate</p>	<p>immediate</p>	<p>Ensure process in place</p> <p>Test sign off</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>
<p>c) The Monitoring Officer must review the terms of reference for each committee/panel/group on a regular basis and, if necessary, terms of reference should be updated at the Annual General Meeting of full Council to take account of any new legislation, responsibilities or organisational change.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>30.5.13</p>	<p>30/09/2013</p>	<p>Ensure system in place and sign off procedures</p>	<p>Email from Monitoring Officer to update Terms of Reference for all committees sent (19/06/2013). Replied received – under consideration for closing the action and a merger with cell 2b. Also forms part of the review of the constitution</p>	<p>Approaching Completion</p>
<p>d) A Members Training Needs Analysis is undertaken on a voluntary basis every two years. This should be further strengthened with specific training identified and developed to support each council committee/panel/group on a six monthly basis for each Committee.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer with Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>30.6.13</p>	<p>30/06/2013</p>	<p>Review members training programme and completeness of coverage</p> <p>Review system for updating following changes of membership, legislation or refresher training requirements</p>	<p>Analysis and training identification completed.</p> <p>Responsibility of Standard Committee and of each Director to issue every six months.</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>

e)	Training and development needs must be identified for the membership of each council committee/panel/group on an annual basis. The training offered and attendance should be published on the Council's website.	Monitoring Officer with Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services	30.6.13		Ensure system in place	A number of meetings have taken place and a proposed procedure established. A draft report for Members is currently being prepared.	In progress
f)	Member induction training needs must be identified and delivered prior to the first meeting of any new council committee/panel/group.	Monitoring Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	immediate		As above	Completed	Achieved / Completed
4.	Records of Meetings	Head of Legal and Democratic Services						
a)	Forward Work Programmes for Cabinet and full Council will be published quarterly on the Council's website. To ensure that work programmes are accurate, the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer will have responsibility for developing Forward Work Programmes for Cabinet and full Council.	Chief Executive with Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	immediate		Ensure system for FWP development is established at CMT. Test sign off and visibility	Completed	Achieved / Completed

<p>b) The Monitoring Officer will have responsibility for ensuring all reports contained in these forward work programmes are subject to the correct decision making processes.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>immediate</p>		<p>Develop improved decision making process for all reports</p> <p>Document the system</p> <p>Develop training programme for Officers and Members on the decision-making process</p>	<p>A Flow Chart has been circulated to officers which summarises the processes to be followed when drafting and submitting a Report to Scrutiny/Cabinet/Council.</p> <p>In conjunction with the Flow Chart the following information has been provided in order to assist officers in completing this process; a copy of the Rules on Consultation, information in relation to Equalities together with a link to the current Caerphilly standard report template. In addition Gail Williams monitors all reports to Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny (but only when making recommendations to Cabinet/Council) and attends CMT on a fortnightly basis. For decision-making training see 5d below</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>
<p>c) Agendas must be produced for all 'informal' meetings of CMT and Cabinet to record issues discussed.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>immediate</p>		<p>Ensure agendas in place.</p> <p>Consider practice from elsewhere and liaise with WLGA, WG etc to progress</p>	<p>Agendas in place. Completed.</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>
<p>d) Work programmes for scrutiny committees will be further improved by introducing a consistent procedure for their development.</p>	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>30.6.13</p>		<p>Work with Scrutiny officers and Chairs to establish consistent work programmes for scrutiny committees</p> <p>Review the level of ad-hoc and requested reports from emanating from committee sessions</p> <p>Review best practice elsewhere and consider how to adopt to make committees more effective</p>	<p>WAO to discuss.</p> <p>All work programme have been formatted to a consistent layout.</p> <p>The new procedure for development of FWP is included in the report "Scrutiny Action Plan" out for consultation due to full Council on 8th October. Democratic Service Committee will see the report on 3rd October and their views will be fed to full Council.</p> <p>The full implementation will be evidenceable after the 6 weeks cycle for each Committee</p>	<p>In progress</p>

<p>e) In line with the Local Government Measure 2011 scrutiny committee forward work programmes should be subject to consultation with stakeholders and local residents (using electronic means), subject to approval by each committee and published on a regular basis (observing the frequency included in expected Welsh Government statutory guidance).</p>	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>30.6.13 or in line with the Welsh Government Guidance</p>		<p>Review the process to comply with expected guidance from WG</p>	<p>As above 4d, the recommendation is addressed by the "Scrutiny Action Plan Report" out for consultation due to full Council on 8th October.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>f) Chairs of scrutiny committees must meet regularly to discuss their proposed respective work programmes to ensure crosscutting issues are considered by Members, good practice is shared and duplication is avoided.</p>	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>31.7.13</p>		<p>Facilitate Chairs meetings to establish a full work programme that considers cross cutting issues appropriately</p> <p>Review best practice and ensure that it is considered</p> <p>Build on the findings from the WAO study on Scrutiny</p>	<p>Received guidance from Welsh Government.</p> <p>Scrutiny Leadership Group meetings scheduled to 5th August 2014 subject to Scrutiny Action Plan report being approved by full council on 8th October 2013 (see Scrutiny Action Plan as above).</p> <p>Terms of Reference and Procedure to be produced.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>g) Democratic Services must provide the necessary support in the preparation of agendas, collation of reports, minuting meetings etc. and preparation of action sheets as necessary for all formal full Council and committee meetings.</p>	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>immediate</p>		<p>Review the process for minutes and action sheets.</p> <p>Consider the timelines for distribution and whether the process could be improved by using deadlines for actions</p> <p>Additional training be considered for all Committee services and support staff</p>	<p>Achieved and ongoing requirement. Set-up procedure for minuting meetings (template)</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>

<p>h) The electronic voting system available in the Council Chamber must be used for all council meetings held in the Council Chamber</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>30.6.13</p>		<p>Ensure system is in place and operational</p> <p>Provide briefings for members and officers on the operation of the system</p> <p>Test system</p> <p>Update constitution accordingly</p>	<p>Members trained on 15/08, 2/9 and 11/9. Additional session scheduled for 4th October (for those unable to attend). A report to full council was expected on 8th October but due to technical problems experienced outside our control the report is now expected to be considered on 19th November to allow for stabilisation of the system</p> <p>After approval, Constitution will need to be updated consequently</p>	<p>In progress.</p> <p>Requesting an Extension (Nov. 2013)</p>
<p>i) Minutes of council meetings held outside of the Council Chamber must record whether any vote passed is unanimous or by majority decision</p>	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>immediate</p>		<p>Training provided for members and officers</p> <p>Constitution updated accordingly</p>	<p>Achieved - doing it manually both in and outside chamber until electronic voting system in chamber in place.</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>
<p>j) The Council's intention to start webcasting council meetings is welcomed. In preparation for this new innovation Democratic Services should review its style of recording minutes to ensure consistency. Given the increased transparency that webcasting will provide it is acknowledged there maybe a difference in style between meetings that are webcast and those that are not.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>30.9.13</p>		<p>Set up a task and finish group to look at web casting and electronic voting and the outcomes from its introduction</p> <p>Consider best practice from other Councils</p> <p>Develop training programme for Committee services and associated staff</p>	<p>For consistency of styles of recording minutes see above 4g (achieved). Equipment to be installed by Sept. 2013. Procurement Timetable produced with a view to issuing contract award letter mid August followed by estimated 1-6 week installation period. The intention is to involve Dem. Services Committee in the implementation of the system and hopefully take part in demos . This usually will obviate the need to set up a task and finish group.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>k) Following each meeting of full Council, the voting record (listing the way each Member has voted) must be published on the Council's website.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Gail Williams Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>30.6.13</p>	<p>Oct. 2013</p>	<p>Ensure system in place</p> <p>Test system</p>	<p>In the meantime, voting is currently documented in the minutes that are published on the website.</p> <p>Electronic voting</p> <p>This will be further implemented when electronic voting is in place.</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>

<p>5. Clarity and Comprehensiveness of Reports to Committees</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>						
<p>a) Review the reporting template and consistency of reporting and format to include an executive summary and key decisions.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>		<p>30.6.13</p>		<p>Review template</p> <p>Design improved template</p> <p>Ensure system in place for compliance</p> <p>Undertake training on developing and writing reports, particularly the content and processes involved</p>	<p>This will be looked at in conjunction with the requirement for officers training to ensure consistency in the report content detail (see below 5e).</p>	<p>Under consideration</p>
<p>b) A framework will be developed to give greater clarity over delivery of reports with different levels of significance.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>		<p>30.6.13</p>		<p>Develop the framework to give greater clarity to members and officers</p> <p>Train members and officers on the framework</p>	<p>Completed: flowchart produced. Additional improvement of delegated decision making framework will be part of the wider Improving Governance Programme.</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>
<p>c) Both statutory officers must have an opportunity to comment on reports prior to submission, as routine, with a mandatory pre-determined format in the report for comments by both the Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Dan Perkins</p>	<p>immediate</p>		<p>As above in re-designing the template</p>	<p>Achieved via report monitoring. Completed</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>

<p>d) Consideration must be given to all options for strengthening the process for making members aware of key policy decisions and sensitive issues.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>		<p>31.5.13</p>		<p>Ensure appropriate system in place for flagging up policy and sensitive issues</p> <p>Establish mechanisms for raising awareness of all aspects of Council business</p> <p>Develop training material for use through different mediums</p> <p>Consider methods of briefing members from best practice organisations</p>	<p>Chief Executive has held meetings with all political Leaders. Minutes of meetings produced. Dates set out for the remainder of the year.</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>
<p>e) Training for officers and members to ensure consistency on the level of detail required in reports being considered at meetings and the timescales for the democratic process.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>		<p>31.12.13</p>		<p>As above</p>	<p>Being developed</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>f) CMT to monitor the level of late reports.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>		<p>immediate</p>		<p>Ensure process in place</p> <p>Test process</p>	<p>Committee Services are monitoring at CMT and keeping records.</p>	<p>Achieved / Completed</p>
<p>g) Scrutiny members be encouraged to ask questions of both the Cabinet members and officers.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Dan Perkins</p>	<p>immediate</p>		<p>Establish a consistent process for Cabinet members to deliver reports to cabinet and scrutiny over time</p> <p>Training developed</p>	<p>Included in Scrutiny Action Plan report expected to go to full council on 8th October, with views from Democratic Services Committees on 3rd October.</p>	<p>In progress</p>

<p>h) To achieve a balance between some officers attending scrutiny by invitation and leaving once their session is completed and others attending for the whole scrutiny meeting.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>		<p>31.5.13</p>		<p>Development sessions delivered with groups of scrutiny members to look at how members and officers relate through the scrutiny process.</p>	<p>Chief Executive to advise officers on new procedures 19/06/2013. P&R and Audit Committees already addressed, they are included in the Scrutiny Action Plan</p>	<p>Approaching completion</p>
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Improving Governance Programme – Work Breakdown Structure – Work in Progress as of 2013-10-03

