

WALES AUDIT OFFICE REPORT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST – Action Plan and Progress to date – 19th November 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
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.	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services	30.4.13	May 2013	Ensure system in place and documented 'Meetings control record' and a separation of duties established	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
2. Conflicts of Interest	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer						
a) As a matter of urgency, but not later than 30th April 2013, all Members must complete training in the Code of Conduct.	Monitoring Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	30.4.13		Members to attend training on Code of Conduct Training reviewed for content and forward programme developed Refresher training for small groups of members On-line training developed where appropriate	Completed	Achieved / Completed

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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.	Monitoring Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	Oct. 2013 / Dec. 2013	Following election	As above	Constitution Working Group established and met on 11/09. Meetings scheduled fortnightly. There will be a Report on the Constitution presented to Council on 28th January, this will refresh the current version of the document and ensure that it is up to date. The adoption of the new framework document will be reported to the AGM, several aspects of the new document are out to consultation. <i>Linked to 3a, 3e and 3c</i>	In progress
c) Increase the frequency that Members' Declarations of Interest are published to monthly.	Monitoring Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	31.5.13	31/05/2013	Ensure system in place Test system	Completed - Procedure note signed off part of the Democratic Services Procedure Manual"	Achieved / Completed
d) A review of the process in place for officers to agree obligations under the Code of Conduct.	Head of HR/S151 Officer	Gareth Hardacre Head of HR	30.6.13		Re-launch of existing code Review process Update officer code of conduct Review induction process for new starters	#1 is complete: code has been relaunched to all employees. Letters issued and acknowledgement returns being returned to HR. <u>Follow-up: Monitoring of returns, which is above 75% at present.</u> #2 is approaching completion : process reviewed, weaknesses addressed by additional guidance (see below 2e2) issued to HOS, and amended guidance for employees drafted. #3 is in progress: New All Wales Code to be consulted upon with TU's for adoption in April, in line with new Constitution. TU's have been issued with draft Wales Code at CE JCC 6 th November, for review at JCC on 9 th December. #4 is approaching completion: Induction arrangements are currently being reviewed.	Approaching Completion
e) Review the process for declaring interests of a personal/prejudicial nature for both members and officers.	Head of HR/S151 Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	30.6.13		Review system in place Consider wider practice across Wales Consider further guidance on the matter	Process for declaring interests at meeting for Members (and officers) signed off and introduced with immediate effect. Part of the Democratic Services Procedure Manual.	Achieved / Completed
		Gareth Hardacre Head of HR			Review Officers procedure for declaration of interest during their employment	Part of the code of conduct. Procedure reviewed. CMT approved interpretation of small gifts from service users, and guidance has been modified. Follow-up: WAO to be asked to benchmark against best practice in Wales Process to be reviewed when All Wales Code of Conduct is adopted.	Achieved / Completed
f) A full training programme on the Officer Code of Conduct must be established for officers.	Head of HR/S151	Gareth Hardacre	30/7/2013 (ppt, proposal of	31/10/2013	Review training on Code of conduct and other associated compliance codes	Training plan produced and agreed. Leadership and management network trained, as part of	Achieved / Completed

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	Officer	Head of HR	delivery, officers to be trained)		Prepare training material in conjunction with other Councils Roll-out a training programme of Code of Conduct	CIPFA Governance Training. 1st to 3rd tier specific training scheduled on Code of Conduct delivered by HR (sessions to run from 7th to 24th Oct.) Mop up session being arranged for those not yet able to attend. All training recorded in Training Module in I-Trent (HR system) for reporting purposes. Follow-up: Consideration will need to be given to training of managers and front line supervisors. To be reviewed post Management Network sessions and when All Wales Code of Conduct is adopted.	
g) A full review of the system for Gifts and Hospitality offered to officers should be undertaken to improve consistency and compliance	Head of HR/S151 Officer	Gareth Hardacre Head of HR	30.7.13	31/07/2013	Review current system for consistency and compliance Re-write system Train senior officers Facilitated training for all officers	Part of the code of conduct. Procedure reviewed. CMT approved interpretation of small gifts from service users, and guidance has been modified. Follow up: Process to be reviewed when All Wales Code of Conduct is adopted.	Achieved / Completed
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).	Monitoring Officer/S151 Officer/Head of HR	Gareth Hardacre Head of HR	30.9.13	30/9/2013	Ensure system in place for reporting Test agendas for compliance	Report scheduled for Audit Committee on 6th November. Follow up: process to be reviewed by June 2014 (report to Audit Committee)	Achieved / Completed
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.	Monitoring Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	31.5.13	30/9/2013	Update all terms of reference Using best practice examples Update Constitution	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. Follow-up part of the review of the Constitution	Achieved / Completed
3. Procedures for New Committees	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer						
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.	Monitoring Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	30.9.13	30/09/2013	Set up working party on review of constitution to include members, WG officers etc Review and list what needs updating Facilitate buy-in and a more developed understanding of the Constitution from officers	Linked to 2b above. Constitution Working Group established and met on 11/09. Meetings scheduled fortnightly. There will be a Report on the Constitution presented to Council on 28th January, this will refresh the current version of the document and ensure that it is up to date. The adoption of the new framework document will be reported to the AGM, several aspects of the new document are out to consultation.	In progress
b) Terms of reference should be agreed at the first meeting of any new committee/panel/ group.	Monitoring Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring	immediate	immediate	Ensure process in place Test sign off	Completed	Achieved / Completed

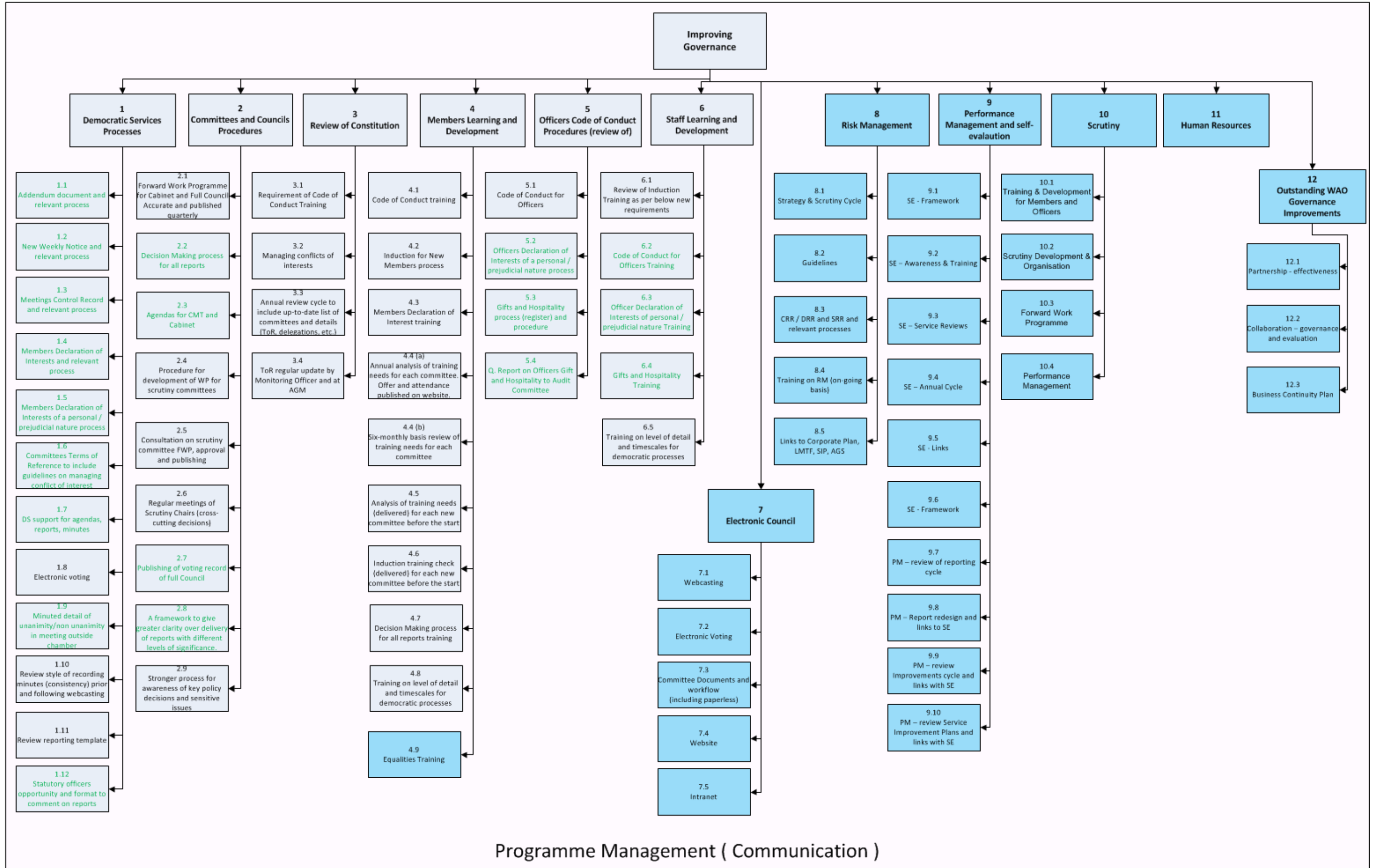
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		Officer					
c) The Monitoring Officer must review the terms of reference for each committee/panel/group on a regular basis and, if necessary, terms of reference should be updated at the Annual General Meeting of full Council to take account of any new legislation, responsibilities or organisational change.	Monitoring Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	30.5.13	30/09/2013	Ensure system in place and sign off procedures	Linked to 2b above. Constitution Working Group established and met on 11/09. Meetings scheduled fortnightly. There will be a Report on the Constitution presented to Council on 28th January, this will refresh the current version of the document and ensure that it is up to date. The adoption of the new framework document will be reported to the AGM, several aspects of the new document are out to consultation.	Approaching Completion
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.	Monitoring Officer with Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	30.6.13	30/06/2013	Review members training programme and completeness of coverage Review system for updating following changes of membership, legislation or refresher training requirements	Analysis and training identification completed. Responsibility of Standard Committee and of each Director to issue every six months.	Achieved / Completed
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 draft report with the proposed procedure is out for consultation and will be considered by CMT in the next weeks.	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	Chief Executive	immediate		Ensure system for FWP development is established at CMT. Test sign off and visibility	Draft report and associated Procedure Note being prepared. Directors currently updating the FWP	In progress
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.	Monitoring Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	immediate		Develop improved decision making process for all reports Document the system Develop training programme for Officers and Members on the decision-making process	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. 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,	Achieved / Completed

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						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	
c) Agendas must be produced for all 'informal' meetings of CMT and Cabinet to record issues discussed.	Chief Executive	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services	immediate		Ensure agendas in place. Consider practice from elsewhere and liaise with WLGA, WG etc to progress	Agendas in place. Completed.	Achieved / Completed
d) Work programmes for scrutiny committees will be further improved by introducing a consistent procedure for their development.	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services	30.6.13		Work with Scrutiny officers and Chairs to establish consistent work programmes for scrutiny committees Review the level of ad-hoc and requested reports from emanating from committee sessions Review best practice elsewhere and consider how to adopt to make committees more effective	Procedure approved by full Council on 8 October 2013. New webpages drafted for council website, one per scrutiny committee – to be agreed by each scrutiny chair. Public FWP layout drafted. Directors currently updating the FWP The full implementation will be evidenceable after the 6 weeks cycle for each Committee	In progress
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).	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services	30.6.13 or in line with the Welsh Government Guidance		Review the process to comply with expected guidance from WG	Procedure approved by full Council on 8 October 2013. Public engagement webpage drafted, public engagement form drafted, (linked in to action above 4d).	In progress
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.	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services	31.7.13		Facilitate Chairs meetings to establish a full work programme that considers cross cutting issues appropriately Review best practice and ensure that it is considered Build on the findings from the WAO study on Scrutiny	Scrutiny leadership terms of reference agreed by full Council 8 October 2013. Meeting cycle arranged and circulated to Scrutiny Leadership Group. Chairing Skills training organised for SLG on 26 th November and training on role and responsibilities of SLG to be held on 17/12/13. To be reviewed by 31 Dec 2014 – expected external peer review of the changes	Achieved / Completed
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.	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services	immediate		Review the process for minutes and action sheets. Consider the timelines for distribution and whether the process could be improved by using deadlines for actions Additional training be considered for all Committee services and support staff	Achieved and ongoing requirement. Set-up procedure for minuting meetings (template)	Achieved / Completed
h) The electronic voting system available in the Council Chamber must be used for all council meetings held in the Council Chamber	Chief Executive	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and	30.6.13		Ensure system is in place and operational Provide briefings for members and officers	Members trained on 15/08, 2/9, 11/9 and 4/10. Six members have yet to receive training. The electronic voting system experienced	In progress. Requesting an

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		Democratic Services			on the operation of the system Test system Update constitution accordingly	technical failure following a power surge. The processor has been repaired and was installed on 28th October but there are still concerns on reliability. A paper outlining problems with current electronic voting system is under discussion between Head of Legal and Chief Executive to inform the next steps Follow up: After approval, Constitution will need to be updated consequently	Extension (Nov. 2013)
i) Minutes of council meetings held outside of the Council Chamber must record whether any vote passed is unanimous or by majority decision	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services	immediate		Training provided for members and officers Constitution updated accordingly	Achieved - doing it manually both in and outside chamber until electronic voting system in chamber in place.	Achieved / Completed
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.	Chief Executive	Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services	30.9.13		Set up a task and finish group to look at web casting and electronic voting and the outcomes from its introduction Consider best practice from other Councils Develop training programme for Committee services and associated staff	For consistency of styles of recording minutes see above 4g (achieved). The procurement process has been slowed so that the electronic voting system can be repaired and tested. The contract will be awarded as soon as the testing of the electronic voting system is complete.	In progress
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.	Monitoring Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	30.6.13	Oct. 2013	Ensure system in place Test system	In the meantime, voting is currently documented in the minutes that are published on the website. Electronic voting This will be further implemented when electronic voting is in place.	Achieved / Completed
5. Clarity and Comprehensiveness of Reports to Committees	Chief Executive						
a) Review the reporting template and consistency of reporting and format to include an executive summary and key decisions.	Chief Executive		30.6.13		Review template Design improved template Ensure system in place for compliance Undertake training on developing and writing reports, particularly the content and processes involved	The C Exec has determined not to review the reporting template or format at this stage This could be reviewed after actions in 5e) is addressed.	On hold
b) A framework will be developed to give greater clarity over delivery of reports with different levels of significance.	Chief Executive		30.6.13		Develop the framework to give greater clarity to members and officers Train members and officers on the framework	Completed: flowchart produced. Additional improvement of delegated decision making framework will be part of the wider Improving Governance Programme.	Achieved / Completed

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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.	Chief Executive	Dan Perkins	immediate		As above in re-designing the template	Achieved via report monitoring. Completed	Achieved / Completed
d) Consideration must be given to all options for strengthening the process for making members aware of key policy decisions and sensitive issues.	Chief Executive		31.5.13		Ensure appropriate system in place for flagging up policy and sensitive issues Establish mechanisms for raising awareness of all aspects of Council business Develop training material for use through different mediums Consider methods of briefing members from best practice organisations	Chief Executive has held meetings with all political Leaders. Minutes of meetings produced. Dates set out for the remainder of the year.	Achieved / Completed
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.	Chief Executive	Nicole Scammell – Acting Director of Corporate Services and S. 151 Officer	31.12.13		As above	GH has consulted on a suggested session and the IGP Board has had a presentation by the supplier. Options for training plan to be discussed at CMT week commencing 2/12/2013.	In progress
f) CMT to monitor the level of late reports.	Chief Executive		immediate		Ensure process in place Test process	Committee Services are monitoring at CMT and keeping records.	Achieved / Completed
g) Scrutiny members be encouraged to ask questions of both the Cabinet members and officers.	Chief Executive	Dan Perkins	immediate		Establish a consistent process for Cabinet members to deliver reports to cabinet and scrutiny over time Training developed	Council approved scrutiny improvement action plan on 8 October 2013. Agreed that consideration will be given to how Cabinet member role can be developed in scrutiny committee – recommendation to be drafted by 31 December 2013. A series of training for members is being developed to include questioning and listening, chairing and premeetings.	In progress
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.	Chief Executive		31.5.13		Development sessions delivered with groups of scrutiny members to look at how members and officers relate through the scrutiny process.	New layout agreed by full Council 8 October 2013. Implemented at first scrutiny committee held following full Council. To be reviewed by 31 Dec 2014 – expected external peer review of the changes	Achieved / Completed

Improving Governance Programme – Work Breakdown Structure – Work in Progress as of 2013-11-19



Key
WAO Public Interest Report Additional Areas