

WALES AUDIT OFFICE REPORT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST – Action Plan and Progress to date – 5<sup>th</sup> August 2013

Recommendations for improvement	Responsible Officer	SRO	Draft/Pilot Date	BAU date	Work programme	Progress	Status
<b>1. Advertisement of Meetings</b>	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 <b>Democratic Procedure Manual</b>  <u>Follow-up</u> Process will be reviewed May 2014.	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>
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 <b>Democratic Procedure Manual</b> . 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.	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>
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 <b>Democratic Procedure Manual</b>  <u>Follow-up</u> Process will be reviewed May 2014.	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>
<b>2. Conflicts of Interest</b>	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	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>

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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 to be established following Council on 11 <sup>th</sup> June. To be included in the review of the Constitution. First report to Council early October and aiming at concluding in December 2013	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"	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>
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	Due to top management vacancies, this action has been deferred. The new deadline is September 2013.	In progress
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. <b>Follow-up:</b> WAO to be asked to benchmark against best practice in Wales	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>
		Gareth Hardacre Head of HR			Review Officers procedure for declaration of interest during their employment	Officers procedure for declaration of interest during their employment currently being reviewed (also part of Officers' Code of Conduct)	In progress
f) A full training programme on the Officer Code of Conduct must be established for officers.	Head of HR/S151 Officer	Gareth Hardacre Head of HR	30/7/2013 (ppt, proposal of delivery, officers to be trained)	31/10/2013	Review training on Code of conduct and other associated compliance codes  Prepare training material in conjunction with other Councils  Roll-out a training programme of Code of Conduct	Training content and plan in preparation.  Consideration is being given as to how training is being reported on a corporate basis.  Leadership and management network officers will be trained as a priority with a view of cascading it to all other officers. Expected end of September	In progress
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	30.7.13	31/07/2013	Review current system for consistency and compliance	Awaiting meeting.	Under consideration

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		Head of HR			Re-write system Train senior officers Facilitated training for all officers	Included in Code of Conduct re-launch.  Due to top management vacancies, this action has been deferred. The new deadline is September 2013.	
<b>h)</b> 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	Format of reporting under consideration	Started
<b>i)</b> 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 refernce 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. <u>Follow-up</u> part of the review of the Constitution	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>
<b>3. Procedures for New Committees</b>	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer						
<b>a)</b> 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	Members nominations for working group to consider and review the constitution received. Draft framework constitution made available prior to first meeting for consideration.	In progress
<b>b)</b> Terms of reference should be agreed at the first meeting of any new committee/panel/ group.	Monitoring Officer	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	immediate	immediate	Ensure process in place  Test sign off	Completed	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>
<b>c)</b> 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	Email from Monitoring Officer to update Terms of Reference for all committees sent (19/06/2013) Also forms part of the review of the constitution	Approaching Completion
<b>d)</b> 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.	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>

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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	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer	30.6.13		Ensure system in place	Analysis and training identification completed. Publication to be included in annual report in June. Projected publication date 31 <sup>st</sup> July (part of the report for each Member, WG legislation). Members are completing forms currently. Year training plan under review	Approaching Completion
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
<b>4. Records of Meetings</b>	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
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	Gail Williams attending CMT. Finalised data flowchart going to CMT for approval 08/08/2013  Additional improvement identified (drop down menus to provide detailed process to be followed for all reports) to be included in wider programme	Approaching completion
c) Agendas must be produced for all 'informal' meetings of CMT and Cabinet to record issues discussed.	Chief Executive		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	WAO to discuss. All work programme have been formatted to a consistent layout DP met with CFT, report with Scrutiny Action Plan circulated to be signed off by CMT on 15/08/2013. PDM will be briefed on 20/08 and Cabinet Members will be briefed within 7 days.	In progress
e) In line with the Local Government Measure 2011 scrutiny committee forward work programmes should be subject to consultation with	Head of Legal and Democratic	Dan Perkins Head of	30.6.13 or in line with the Welsh		Review the process to comply with expected guidance from WG	Considering with other scrutiny offices. Liaised with Communications Manager and Engagement Officer. Action Plan to go out for	In progress

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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).	Services	Legal and Democratic Services	Government Guidance			consideration as above	
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	Under consideration. Awaiting guidance from Welsh Government. Scrutiny Leadership Group to be introduced, agendas to be published on the Council website (see Scrutiny Action Plan as above)	In progress
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)	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>
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 Democratic Services	30.6.13		Ensure system is in place and operational  Provide briefings for members and officers on the operation of the system  Test system  Update constitution accordingly	Committee Services received training on 7 <sup>th</sup> June. Cabinet received a demo on 18 <sup>th</sup> June with CMT. Training dates for members 15 <sup>th</sup> August and 2 <sup>nd</sup> September.  Report to Cabinet in September to update constitution.	In progress.  <b>Requesting an Extension (Sept. 2013)</b>
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.	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>
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	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.	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.	<b>Achieved / Completed</b>

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						Electronic voting This will be further implemented when electronic voting is in place.	
<b>5. Clarity and Comprehensiveness of Reports to Committees</b>	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	Review completed. Draft template produced. Pilot being organised  New format to be included in the review of the constitution and part of the wider Improving Governance Programme	Approaching completion
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
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		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		31.12.13		As above	Being developed	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		immediate		Establish a consistent process for Cabinet members to deliver reports to cabinet and scrutiny over time  Training developed	Being reviewed by DP/JJ to be incorporated into Action Plan/Scrutiny Review. Included in Scrutiny Action Plan.	In progress

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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.	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	Approaching completion

# Improving Governance Programme – Work Breakdown Structure – Work in Progress as of 2013-08-05

