

WALES AUDIT OFFICE REPORT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Recommendations for improvement	Responsible Officer	Date	Progress	Status	Evidence
<p>1. Advertisement of Meetings</p>	<p>Dan Perkins Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic Services with Democratic Services Manager</p>	<p>30.4.13</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>Head of Democratic Services</p>	<p>30.4.13</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>30.4.13</p>			

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2. Conflicts of Interest	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a matter of urgency, but not later than 30th April 2013, all Members must complete training in the Code of Conduct. 	Monitoring Officer	30.4.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	Following election			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the frequency that Members' Declarations of Interest are published to monthly. 	Monitoring Officer	31.5.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of the process in place for officers to agree obligations under the Code of Conduct. 	Head of HR/S151 Officer	30.6.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the process for declaring interests of a personal/prejudicial nature for both members and officers. 	Head of HR/S151 Officer	30.6.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A full training programme on the Officer Code of Conduct must be established for officers. 	Head of HR/S151 Officer	30.6.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	30.7.13			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	30.9.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	31.5.13			
3. Procedures for New Committees	Gail Williams Monitoring Officer				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	30.9.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of reference should be agreed at the first meeting of any new committee/panel/group. 	Monitoring Officer	immediate			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	30.5.13			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	30.6.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	30.6.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member induction training needs must be identified and delivered prior to the first meeting of any new council committee/panel/group. 	Monitoring Officer	immediate			
<p>4. Records of Meetings</p>	Head of Legal and Democratic Services				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	immediate			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	immediate			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agendas must be produced for all 'informal' meetings of CMT and Cabinet to record issues discussed. 	Chief Executive	immediate			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work programmes for scrutiny committees will be further improved by introducing a consistent procedure for their development. 	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	30.6.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	30.6.13 or in line with the Welsh Government Guidance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	31.7.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	immediate			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The electronic voting system available in the Council Chamber must be used for all council meetings held in the Council Chamber 	Chief Executive	30.6.13			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	immediate			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	30.9.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	30.6.13			
<p>5. Clarity and Comprehensiveness of Reports to Committees</p>	Chief Executive				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the reporting template and consistency of reporting and format to include an executive summary and key decisions. 	Chief Executive	30.6.13			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A framework will be developed to give greater clarity over delivery of reports with different levels of significance. 	Chief Executive	30.6.13			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMT to monitor the level of late reports. 	Chief Executive	immediate			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny members be encouraged to ask questions of both the Cabinet members and officers. 	Chief Executive	immediate			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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			