

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 13TH JUNE 2013

SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE REVIEW – UPDATE INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT BY: ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Report is provided as a brief update for Members in relation to the progress of the Action Plan prepared to strengthen and improve the Council's governance processes & procedures to address the weakness highlighted by the Wales Audit Office.
- 1.2 The Action Plan was approved by Council at its meeting on the 23rd April, 2013.

2. THE REPORT

- 2.1 Following the approval of the Action Plan by Council on 23rd April, 2013, Officers have established a Programme Board consisting of senior officers, Nicole Scammell, Gill Lewis, Daniel Perkins, Gareth Hardacre and Gail Williams. In addition Alessandra Veronese is undertaking the project management of the implementation of the Action Plan.
- 2.2 This Group is responsible for overseeing the successful implementation of the Action Plan and in addition as the work progresses will identify further work streams in order to further strengthen and improve governance arrangements.
- 2.3 The responsibility for monitoring and challenging the implementation of the Action Plan is within the remit of the Council's Audit Committee. In addition progress is monitored by way of monthly progress reports to the Acting Chief Executive, Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet. Externally the implementation is monitored by the Council's Auditors PWC & Wales Audit Office.
- 2.4 Several projects have been identified and work is currently progressing. In particular the following work streams are currently being undertaken:-
 - (a) the development of a Procedure Manual for the Democratic Services section. This will set out in detail the various processes undertaken by the Democratic Services Team. In addition, the implementation of the electronic voting system is being progressed (demo took place on the 7th June, 2013).
 - (b) Improvements to the Forward Work Planning processes have been made. A new format has been agreed by the Council's Corporate Management Team. Arrangements for publication progressing.
 - (c) A review of the 'MIG' arrangements has been undertaken by the Council's Acting Chief Executive. They have been replaced with Policy Development meetings. Arrangements to publish Agendas and Actions arising from the meetings of Policy and Development have almost been finalised.

- (d) A Constitution Working Party has been established following the Council meeting on the 11th June, 2013. This Group will be responsible for the revision of the Council's Constitution. This will include a review and modernisation of the document in line with the new format referred to at Council on 11th June, 2013 and a refresh of the Terms of Reference of all of the Council's Standing Committees.
- (e) A review of Member training has been undertaken and several 'gaps' have been identified. Arrangements are in hand to provide additional training as a matter of urgency.
- (f) An Officer group is to be established to review and re-launch the Officer Code of Conduct.
- (g) Work is to be commenced shortly on a review of the Council's standard reporting Template.

2.5 Further updates will be provided as the work progresses.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are financial implications arising from the implementation of the Action Plan. However there are no specific financial implications arising from this Report which is for information only.

4. PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None arising from this Report, which is for information only.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None arising from the Report, which is for information only.

6. CONSULTATIONS

6.1 None – this Report is for information only.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That Members note the information provided to Members as an update in this matter.

8. STATUTORY POWERS

8.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2000.

Author: Gail Williams, Monitoring Officer
Consultees: Nigel Barnett, Acting Chief Executive

Background Papers:
Report to Council 23rd April, 2013