



## CABINET – 28TH OCTOBER 2015

**SUBJECT: IMPROVING GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME UPDATE**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND S 151 OFFICER**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet in respect of the progress of the Improving Governance Programme (IGP), which includes the following:
- the action plan resulting from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Public Interest Report on the Chief Officers Pay published in March 2013 and the wider Improving Governance Programme (as presented to and approved by Council on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2014 and Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014) covering also the action plans resulting from the WAO Public Interest Report on Chief Officers Essential Car Users and Annual Leave Allowance published in December 2013 and the Special Inspection Report published in January 2014.
  - the more recent action plan approved by Council on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015 following the Wales Audit Office Report *Follow up of special inspection and reports in the public interest* (January 2015).
- 1.2 To recommend that the IGPB is formally concluded and that the outstanding matters are taken forward by the Corporate Governance Panel

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Following on from the latest report presented to Cabinet on 20th May 2015, this report provides an update on the progress of the Improving Governance Programme (IGP) and subsequent additional action plan approved by Council on 27th January 2015 ensuing from the Wales Audit Office Report *Follow up of Special Inspection and reports in the public interest* (January 2015), as incorporated for monitoring in the IGP.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Good governance is a pre-requisite of the activities of any Local Authority.

### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Following on from the latest report presented to Cabinet on 20th May 2015, the Improving Governance Programme (IGP) has continued the good progress achieved in 2014 and positively noted in the Follow-up CGI Inspection Report by Wales Audit Office (January 2015).
- 4.2 In his Annual Improvement Report 2014-15 issued August 2015 the Auditor General recognised that *“the Council has responded swiftly and effectively to address most of the recommendations made in our Special Inspection Report issued in January 2014. Improvements have been made to the Council’s governance arrangements.”*

- 4.3 The list of the previously outstanding recommendations and relevant actions included in the original Improving Governance Programme (IGP), with information on the latest progress, is provided in **Appendix 1**. The document shows that of the outstanding items:
- Item 1 - Records of meetings (outstanding for in particular the council intention to implement electronic voting) is proposed for closing. This action was not part of the original PIR recommendations, but was instead what the Authority felt desirable. Following the implementation of the new arrangements several failings with the system were discovered which led to a lack of confidence. It also proved impossible to display voting outcomes appropriately and significantly the use of the electronic voting disrupted the free flow of the debate. Consequently it is recommended that the initiative is abandoned and the Constitution duly amended to reflect the reversion back to a "show of hands". To safeguard transparency the vote is recorded "for", "against" and "abstentions" and in addition the Council meetings are webcasted.
  - Item 4 – Performance Management and self-evaluation is now complete.
  - the Business Continuity activity was signed off as addressed by Audit Committee in June 2015 which completed item 6 in the table.
  - Item 7 – Improving Governance Programme Board monitoring of the outstanding actions – is approaching completion and the Board recommends that the IGPB is formally concluded for the reasons described in paragraph 4.6 below.
- 4.4 The more recent action plan approved by Council on 27th January 2015 following the Wales Audit Office Report *Follow up of special inspection and reports in the public interest* (January 2015) is available with the relevant indication of progress in **Appendix 2**.
- 4.5 The document shows that of the outstanding proposals
- Item 2 - Review of scrutiny arrangements is now completed
  - Item 4 - Raising awareness of whistleblowing policy amongst staff – is approaching completion
  - Item 5 - An updated and more relevant HR balance scorecard is now completed
  - Item 6 - Programme of on-going risk management training for Members is now completed
  - Item 7 - Robust action plan to improve Internal Audit is now completed
  - Item 8 - Implementation of a HR Strategy is approaching completion
  - Item 9 - Self-evaluation is now completed
- 4.6 The Improving Governance Programme Board, in view of the small number of items still outstanding, recommends that the IGP is formally concluded and the outstanding actions are transferred to the Corporate Governance Panel. The members of the Corporate Governance Panel are:
- Cllr. Christine Forehead, Cabinet Member for HR and Governance / Business Manager
  - Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services and S. 151 Officer
  - Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
  - Colin Jones, Head of Performance and Property Services
  - Richard Harris, Internal Audit Manager
  - Lynton Jones, Acting Head of ICT and Customer Services
- The membership of the Corporate Governance Panel will guarantee continuity in the monitoring and progress of outstanding actions.
- 4.7 The Corporate Governance Panel will continue to monitor the corporate governance arrangements to ensure that all the actions implemented by the IGPB become embedded and business as usual.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The principles of good governance are directly linked to the Council's Strategic Equality Objectives, stemming from duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. Equalities Implications are a standard part of all committee reports in order to ensure that due consideration has been given to the views of individuals and groups from the communities of Caerphilly county borough, regardless of their backgrounds and circumstances.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report that are not included in current budgetary provision.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None going forward.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 All comments received are contained within the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 To note the positive progress described in the paragraphs above along with the appendices attached in addressing recommendations and proposals for improvements by the Wales Audit Office included in the WAO Public Interest Report on the Chief Officers Pay published in March 2013, the Chief Officers Essential Car Users and Annual Leave Allowance published in December 2013, the Special Inspection Report published in January 2014 and the WAO Report Follow up of special inspection and reports in the public interest (January 2015).
- 9.2 To agree to formally conclude the IGPB transferring the small number of outstanding actions to the Corporate Governance Panel as per paragraph 4.6 above

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To ensure Cabinet is updated on the progress of the Improving Governance Programme in addressing recommendations and proposals for improvements by the Wales Audit Office in respect of the two PIR and the Special Inspection Report published in January 2014 and the WAO Report Follow up of special inspection and reports in the public interest (January 2015).

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services and S. 151 Officer  
Consultees: Cllr Christine Forehead, Cabinet Member for HR and Governance / Business Manager  
Corporate Management Team  
Improving Governance Programme Board:  
- Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services and S. 151 Officer

- Cllr Christine Forehead, Cabinet Member for HR and Governance / Business Manager
- Colin Jones, Head of Performance and Property Services
- Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
- Lynne Donovan, Acting Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
- Lisa Lane, Solicitor
- Alessandra Veronese, Programme Manager

Background Papers:

- Programme Working Documents
- Report to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013 - *Improving Governance Programme Update*
- Report to Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013 - *Improving Governance Programme Update*
- Report to Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013 - *Improving Governance Action Plan*
- Report to Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013 - *Improving Governance Action Plan*
- Report to Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2013 – *Risk Management Strategy and Guidance*
- Report to Council on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2013 – *Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan*
- Report to Cabinet on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2013 – *Corporate Planning and Performance Framework*
- Report to Council on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014 - *Wales Audit Office Report – Public Interest Report on Chief Officers Essential Car User and Annual Leave Allowances*
- Report to Council on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014 - *Wales Audit Office Report – Special Inspection Caerphilly County Borough Council*
- Report presented to the Scrutiny Leadership Group on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2014 - *Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan – Update*
- Report to Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014 - *Improving Governance Programme Update*
- Report to Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2014 – *Corporate planning – self-evaluation*
- Report to Audit Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> March – *CCBC Partnerships and Collaborations.*
- Report to Audit Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> March – *Business Continuity Management*
- Report to Audit Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> March – *Internal Audit Services Annual Audit Plan*
- Report to Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 - *Improving Governance Programme Update*
- Report to Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2014 - *Improving Governance Programme Update*
- Report to Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014 - *Improving Governance Programme Update*
- Report to Council on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015 - *Wales Audit Office Report Follow up of special inspection and reports in the public interest*
- Report to Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015 - *Improving Governance Programme Update*

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – IGP - Outstanding Actions as of 09/10/2015

Appendix 2 – WAO Follow-up CGI Inspection Actions – Progress as of 09/10/2015