



AUDIT COMMITTEE – 10 DECEMBER 2014

SUBJECT: REGULATOR PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT PROGRESS UPDATE

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES & S151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on progress against the proposals made by all regulators since the last Audit Committee update that was provided on the 11th June 2014.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The previous report detailed all the outstanding proposals as at June 2014. Since that time a number of proposals have now been addressed and new ones have come onto the list from recently received regulator reports. At this time we have 45 proposals. This is made up of 26 outstanding proposals and 6 new proposals and 13 proposals that have been addressed and that we believe should now be closed. Closing the 13 proposals that are now addressed would leave 19 outstanding.

2.2 We have received 6 new proposals for improvement following a Safeguarding Review by Wales Audit Office in September, with the report finalised in October. These are not statutory recommendations rather suggestions for improvement.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 Both the Corporate Assessment and the Annual Improvement Report (WAO) are designed to assess and report on the Council's compliance with the Local Government Measure 2009. In addition it encapsulates other regulatory and inspection outcomes.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 In May 2014 the progress reported against individual categories were as follows:

AIR 2013	Customer Services Review	Asset Management	Evaluation of Social Services contribution to MTFP	Information Management Review	Review of Management Arrangements following a Homicide Report	Data Quality Review	NEW - Nov Service based budget review	NEW Dec Improvement letter 2	Total
2	10	7	3	4	6	0	2	4	38

4.2 At the end of **October 2014** reporting against the individual categories is as follows:

AIR 2013	Customer Services Review	Asset Management	Evaluation of Social Services contribution to MTFP	Information Management Review	Review of Management Arrangements following a Homicide Report	Data Quality Review	Service based budget review	Dec Improvement letter 2	Total
0	8	6	1	3	6	Finished	Finished	2	26

4.3 As of **October 2014** the following figures are reported as outstanding

Outstanding	New proposals added from Safeguarding Review	Sub total outstanding	Recommend closure as of October 14	Total Outstanding	Total outstanding last time reported
39	6	45	13	32	38

4.4 These figures as of October 2014 represent good progress as the outstanding proposals have reduced by 13 since the last report and the overall outstanding figure has cleared 6 more proposals despite the newer safeguarding proposals recently added. Members will see progress made in evaluation of social services contribution to the MTFP as most of the processes are now part of every day business. The same is suggested for the proposals from the two reviews and these are recommended for closure.

4.5 Customer Services proposals have not reduced in as much as hoped in total (although progress has been made) because the outstanding proposals in the WAO Customer Services report relate to developing a customer service strategy. This has been on hold due to uncertainty relating to the Medium Term Financial Plan. However, the MTFP requirements are now clear and the development of a strategy and other related activities that address issues in the WAO review are now underway. A Customer Services Project Group is being established to coordinate the implementation of the strategy. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services will be part of that project group and will receive detailed reports on the implementation of the strategy, including performance information. As part of the strategy the corporate customer service standards will be reviewed and a set of performance indicators will be developed and incorporated in to existing corporate performance management arrangements. The Project Group will be in place by the end of Jan 2015, the strategy should be in place by mid 2015 along with updated service standards and performance reporting.

4.6 The Review of Management Arrangements following a Homicide Report remains static in reducing proposal numbers and no update has been provided.

4.7 Asset Management has completed one proposal since previously reported and a report went to P&R Scrutiny in September 2014 to advise on progress of all the proposals with 2 complete, 2 partially complete and one incomplete. (Note the number of proposals does not always add up to appendix as the WAO often make a number of suggestions under 1 proposal).

4.8 Wales Audit Office has stated that the decision on whether a proposal is completed is an internal matter and is for the organisation to decide, (although it is within their remit to make more proposals if they do not believe it has been addressed). We will forward the register onto the Wales Audit Office for their information and update once seen and agreed by Audit Committee.

4.9 We recommend 13 proposals be closed down as they have been completed and encourage members to view the specific proposals attached within Appendix A and judge if they concur that these proposals are now completed. For future reporting, once proposals are closed we will move these out of the 'live' list and into a closed register for ease of management. This

means gaining CMT and Audit Committee agreement where proposal owners recommend that a proposal be closed, having been satisfactorily completed.

4.10 This report does not include an update against the Improving Governance Programme, as this will be reported separately.

4.11 When monitoring progress against the proposals, members are advised to consider what value the proposals are making and what difference the activity in addressing them has made for our citizens in creating more efficient, customer focused services.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No specific Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken on this report, however the Local Government Measure 2009 cites fairness and accessibility as part of a definition of what 'Improvement' means.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report although it is worth noting that External Audit fees could be reduced, if regulators are assured and place reliance on the organisation's own ability to monitor and challenge itself to improve.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 There have been no consultations that have not been included in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that Audit Committee note the contents of this report, monitor the progress against the attached action plan and give agreement on closing the proposals that are noted closed within the Appendix.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To ensure members are aware of progress the Council's action plan and have an opportunity to monitor and challenge its content.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Measure (Wales) 2009.

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Appendices:

Appendix: Update of proposal register October 2014.