



CABINET – 20TH MAY 2015

SUBJECT: IMPROVING GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME UPDATE

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND S151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet in respect of the progress of the Improving Governance Programme, 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 28th January 2014 and Cabinet on 19th 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 27th January 2015 following the Wales Audit Office Report *Follow up of special inspection and reports in the public interest* (January 2015).

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Following on from the latest report presented to Cabinet on 2nd October 2014 and subsequent one to Council on 27th January 2015, this report provides an account 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 2nd October 2014, 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 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 since the last report to Cabinet (October 2014), a further 4 recommendations/improvements have been addressed, namely:

- Clarity and comprehensiveness of reports to committees
- Electronic Council (webcasting and committee documents system)
- Strengthening risk management processes
- clarification of roles and responsibilities for whistleblowing procedures

4.3 Furthermore actions relevant to 1 of 2 WAO outstanding governance improvements were also completed (Partnerships and Collaborations) and 2 recommendations (Scrutiny and HR Strategy) were closed here because they are included and will be monitored as part of the Follow-up CGI Inspection Action Plan as detailed in paragraph 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 below.

4.4 The original IGP recommendations that are outstanding and therefore are the focus of the current activities are:

- Records of meetings, in particular the council intention to implement electronic voting
- Performance Management and self-evaluation
- Business Continuity
- The IGP Board monitoring of the outstanding actions

4.5 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**.

4.6 The document shows that the single recommendation included in this latest WAO report (R1 – The Council should take a lawful decision on the annual leave and essential car user allowances) was addressed at the Full Council meeting on 27th January 2015.

4.7 Also, while 1 proposal for improvement was completed (Decision sheet), the remaining other 7 listed below are well in progress:

- Review of scrutiny arrangements (see report and detail action plan in **Appendix 3**)
- Raising awareness of whistleblowing policy amongst staff
- An updated and more relevant HR balance scorecard
- Programme of on-going risk management training for Members
- Robust action plan to improve Internal Audit (see detailed action plan and progress in **Appendix 4**)
- Implementation of a HR Strategy
- Self-evaluation

4.8 The Improving Governance Programme Board, following the recommendation of Cabinet, is continuing to meet regularly and to monitor the progress of the above outstanding actions. The next report to Cabinet is scheduled for October 2015 when it is anticipated that the majority, if not all, of the outstanding actions will be complete.

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 progress described in the paragraphs above and appendices of the Improving Governance Programme 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 WAO Public Interest Report on 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).

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 included in the WAO Public Interest Report on the Chief Officers Pay published in March 2013, the WAO Public Interest Report on 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).

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 Monitoring Officer
- Gareth Hardacre, Head of People Management and Development
- Lisa Lane, Solicitor
- Alessandra Veronese, Programme Manager

Background Papers:

- Programme Working Documents
- Report to Cabinet on 13th November 2013 - *Improving Governance Programme Update*
- Report to Cabinet on 16th October 2013 - *Improving Governance Programme Update*
- Report to Cabinet on 18th September 2013 - *Improving Governance Action Plan*
- Report to Cabinet on 11th December 2013 - *Improving Governance Action Plan*
- Report to Cabinet on 2nd October 2013 – *Risk Management Strategy and Guidance*

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – IGP - Outstanding Actions as of 14/04/2015

Appendix 2 – WAO Follow-up CGI Inspection Actions – Progress as of 14/04/2015

Appendix 3 – Report to Committee Services “Scrutiny Developments” dated 17/03/2015 (Includes Scrutiny Action Plan)

Appendix 4 – WAO CGI and Follow-up Inspection Audit Action Plan – Progress as of 14/04/2015