

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 13 MARCH 2013**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUBJECT: **IMPROVEMENT ASSESSMENT LETTER (WAO)**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 To advise Audit Committee of the Council's Improvement Assessment Letter January 2013 from the Auditor General for Wales.
- 1.02 Audit Committee to note the report and agree the Council's Cabinet response.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 The Auditor General is required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) to report any audit and assessment work which informs judgement as to whether a Council has discharged its duties and met the requirements of the Measure.
- 2.02 This is the second letter that the Council has received; The first letter was reported to Cabinet in December 2012 and summarised the Auditor General's views on i) the Council's compliance with requirements to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement, and ii) any relevant issues since the last Auditor General's report. There were no further recommendations or proposals for improvement.
- 2.03 This second letter covers an assessment of both the Council's Improvement Plan and the Annual Performance Report. It also comments on compliance with the Measure.
- 2.04 Reporting on the financial audit was undertaken by receipt of the Annual Audit Letter in November last year and presented to the Audit Committee in December.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The letter summarises the Auditor General's views on:
- whether the Council has discharged its statutory duties in respect of improvement planning;

- whether the Council has discharged its statutory duties in respect of improvement reporting;
- views, and the views of relevant regulators, on the reliability of the Council's self-evaluation; and
- further proposals for improvement.

3.02 The full letter is attached at Appendix 1.

3.03 The Auditor General has made no new statutory recommendations but has proposed four proposals for improvement in the letter. These are as follows:

Improvement Planning

- P1 Within the context of its medium-term corporate planning, the Council should define a set of annual Improvement Objectives that encapsulates its ambitions for the year and communicate them in a form that enables the public to hold the Council to account for its performance.
- P2 Ensure that the Improvement Plan available to the public on the Council's website reflects any changes resulting from reviews during the year, and that any revised Plan includes a record of any such changes.

Improvement Reporting

- P3 Increase the use of relevant data to support the Council's evaluation of outcomes in relation to its Improvement Objectives
- P4 Improve the balance of the narrative supporting each assessment, drawing out the lessons learned from particularly successful work and from work that has not gone as well as intended.

3.04 As good practice, the Council always makes a full response. The response is attached at Appendix 2.

3.05 Both the letter and the Council's response have been reported to Cabinet on 19th February and will be reported to Corporate Resources Overview in March.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 To advise Audit Committee of the Council's Improvement Assessment letter received from the Auditor General for Wales.

4.02 Audit Committee to note the report and agree the Council's Cabinet response.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The letter has no direct implication in relation to finance.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 The letter has no direct implication in relation to poverty.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 The letter has no direct implication in relation to environmental impact.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 The letter has no direct implication in relation to equalities.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 The letter refers to the Council's work on implementing Single Status.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None required.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Senior officers have had input into this report.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 **Appendix 1:** The Auditor General's Improvement Assessment Letter (January 2013)

Appendix 2: The Council's response to the Auditor General's Improvement Assessment Letter (January 2013)

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

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