

**Wales Audit Office**  
**Good Governance report**  
**July 2017**  
**Executive Response**

The Auditor General for Wales undertook a review of the Council's Governance arrangements specifically about how the Council determines significant service change.

The report is generally positive with three Proposals for Improvement

There are no new statutory recommendations.

In our response we set out how we will make improvements to ensure full compliance with the spirit and detail of the report.

Listed below are the Proposals for Improvement along with our response and current status of progress.

<b>Proposal for Improvement</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Progress Status</b>
The Council's governance arrangements could be strengthened by:		
P1. Clearly defining the arrangements for scrutinising the impact of individual service changes	<p><b>Pre-implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrated impact assessment 'tool' developed and being used by portfolios</li> <li>- Tool provides end to end process of defining service change, impact of service change, risks and mitigation, and transition planning and evaluation.</li> <li>- Gateway approval processes built into Integrated Impact Assessment for all service changes prior to consideration by members.</li> </ul> <p><b>Post-implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Efficiency monitoring (monthly)</li> <li>- Quarterly report as narrative of all significant service changes to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>- Include selective reviews in Overview and Scrutiny forward work programmes</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A</p>

P2. Ensuring that Equality Impact Assessments (EIS) that are produced are of a consistently high quality	Integrated Impact Assessment tool and Gateway approval processes specifically including Equality Impact Assessments will improve consistency and quality of all impact assessments and their interdependencies.	A
P3. Reviewing, and where necessary improving, the effectiveness of its decision-making arrangements explicitly in relation to service change.	<p>Further refining to improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consistently high quality business cases</li> <li>- Incorporation of evaluation post implementation within business planning methodology</li> <li>- Evaluation of key changes post implementation considered by Programme Boards, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny</li> <li>- Annual review of the quality of the budget-led service change decision-making process</li> </ul>	G

**Wales Audit Office**  
**Corporate Assessment Follow-up**  
**July 2017**  
**Executive Response**

The Auditor General for Wales undertook a second follow-up of the Council's Corporate Assessment completed in 2015. This review focused on Business planning, Corporate strategies, risk management and workforce planning.

The report is positive with no further proposals for improvement.

There are no new statutory recommendations.

Listed below are the original Proposals for Improvement of the Corporate Assessment along with our response and current status of progress.

<b>Proposal for Improvement (P1-7) Including overall lead<sup>1</sup>.</b>	<b>Action Update</b>	<b>RAG Status</b>
<p><b>P1</b> The Council should develop and implement a (more) consistent approach to <b>business planning</b> that promotes the ownership by staff of key objectives and targets.</p> <p>Lead: Chief Executive</p>	<p>P1.1 Mapping of current service planning and strategies etc. to show strength and gaps (complete). Further analysis to show intentions to strengthen arrangements (complete) with a full set of operational plans being in place (for mid-2017/18)</p> <p>P1.2 Plans using the new performance management solution (CAMMS) to be piloted (09.15) with full roll out (04.18)</p> <p>P1.3 Personal appraisal model is being extended to build in service/ team service plan objectives (from 04.16). Evaluation and implementation of the new appraisal model (ongoing)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>G</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>G</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>G</b></p>
<p><b>P2</b> The Council should improve the <b>quality of its reports</b> to committees and Cabinet to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where necessary, reports enable councillors to refer easily to relevant policies and previous decisions and discussions</li> <li>• key messages and</li> </ul>	<p>P2.1 A review of report format, style and quality of presentation (complete). Improved format used for Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny reports (complete). The improved format includes use of executive summaries and fuller exploration of risk in assessing options for decisions. Fuller use of hyperlinks are made avoiding publishing extensive appendices where this can be avoided.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>G</b></p>

<p>recommendations are clear and succinct; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reports to scrutiny committees include recommendations or options that committees might endorse.</li> </ul> <p>Lead: Chief Officer (Governance)</p>	<p>P2.2 Updated report writing guidelines have been produced and issued. Refresher report writing training is being organised (<b>complete</b>)</p> <p>P2.3 Quality assurance systems for report approval have been implemented (complete and being monitored)</p>	<p><b>G</b></p> <p><b>G</b></p>
<p><b>P3</b></p> <p>The Council should ensure that, in implementing its revised <b>strategies</b> for People, ICT, Finance and Asset Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>their financial implications feed into the medium-term financial plan; and</li> <li>the links between the strategies are fully considered so that specialist staff are available when required.</li> </ul> <p>Lead: Chief Executive</p>	<p>As P1 above noting:-</p> <p>P3.1 A single corporate resourcing plan is being developed (by summer 2016) as part of the suite of key corporate documents. This plan will prioritise the allocation of corporate resources for change projects (replaced by changes to corporate business planning arrangements and review of core strategies).</p> <p>P3.2 Set of 7 Programme Boards (for officer portfolios where significant change needs to be led, co-ordinated and managed) all now meeting and settled with good evidence of impact. (<b>complete</b>).</p> <p>P3.3 A comprehensive and more usable Medium Term Financial Strategy in a new graphic format has been published for 2015 and 2016 in 2 parts. (<b>complete</b>) This is being updated for 2017.</p>	<p><b>G</b></p> <p><b>G</b></p> <p><b>G</b></p>
<p><b>P4</b></p> <p>Group Leaders should strongly encourage members to take advantage of the <b>Member Development Scheme</b>.</p> <p>Lead: Chief Officer (Governance)</p>	<p>P4.1 A review of the member development programme is ongoing with the aim of having a broader offer for members in partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association. (<b>ongoing</b>)</p> <p>P4.2 Group Leaders have been requested to take-up training opportunities amongst their respective groups (ongoing)</p>	<p><b>G</b></p> <p><b>A</b></p>
<p><b>P5</b></p> <p>The Council should take the opportunity of its review of scrutiny structures to ensure that <b>Overview and Scrutiny committees</b> can add real value to Council decision-making by aligning agendas more explicitly to Council priorities and risks.</p> <p>Lead: Chief Officer (Governance)</p>	<p>P5.1 A Task and Finish Group set up by the Constitution Committee has reviewed the number and terms of reference of Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Group reported to the Annual General Meeting of the Council and the new Overview and Scrutiny Committees are in place (complete).</p> <p>P5.2 Forward work programmes are being developed to include major and higher risk annual budget proposals which require monitoring and assessment of impact, major service reviews included in the budget, and periodic review of the achievement of improvement priorities. Report formats are being reviewed as P2 above to make</p>	<p><b>G</b></p> <p><b>G</b></p>

	<p>reports more purposeful (ongoing)</p> <p>P5.3 More purposeful Forward Work Programmes; reports with 4 typologies (information, assurance, policy development or options consultation) and improved report format; clearer protocol on pre-decision scrutiny for policy development and options consultation type items); purposeful recommendations and more managed chairing and debate of meetings, including precise summing up, geared toward the report purpose; training and information support programme for scrutiny; periodic committee self-assessments with feedback to chair and reporting officers on areas for improvement. A special meeting of the six new chairs was convened to plan immediately post-AGM (05.15). A Member workshop was held to develop Forward Work Programmes (07.15). Ongoing liaison with Overview and Scrutiny Chairs (ongoing)</p>	<b>G</b>
<p><b>P6</b></p> <p>The Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adopt a consistent approach to managing <b>risk</b>, ensuring that all staff involved use a similar approach to record impact, likelihood and mitigating actions; and</li> <li>• apply this approach to its future savings plans</li> </ul> <p>Lead: Chief Executive</p>	<p>P6.1 Following an earlier internal review of risk management led by Internal Audit a number of actions are in train to implement the recommendations for the organisation to be more consistent and effective in the identification and reporting of risk at strategic, operational, project and partnership levels. P1 and P3 above will contribute. The most recent Internal Audit review provides a “reasonable” level of assurance (ongoing).</p>	<b>G</b>
<p><b>P7</b></p> <p>The Council should ensure a consistent approach to <b>workforce planning</b> and use the results to inform future reductions in staff</p> <p>Lead: Chief Executive</p>	<p>P7.1 The new appraisal model (as P1.3) has been run for all senior managers and has worked through the rest of the organisation. Intelligence from this renewed appraisal programme will inform the training and development programme, talent recognition, retention and progression. Evaluation of the appraisal model and further development has taken place (ongoing).</p> <p>P7.2 Workforce planning risks have been assessed in each Chief Officer portfolio area as part of the revised People Strategy (ongoing)</p>	<b>G</b>

**Wales Audit Office**

**Council's effectiveness of the efficiency savings programme**

**August 2017**

**Executive Response**

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The report is generally positive one new Proposals for Improvement.

There are no new statutory recommendations.

In our response we set out how we will make improvements to ensure full compliance with the spirit and detail of the report.

Listed below is the Proposal for Improvement along with our response and current status of progress.

<b>Proposal for Improvement</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Progress Status</b>
Introduce a more robust and systematic approach to post-project evaluation, suitable for:		
- evaluating the non-financial impact of efficiency / change initiatives	- Integrated impact assessment tool developed and being used by portfolios	G
	- Tool provides end to end process of defining service change, impact of service change, risks and mitigation plus transition plans and evaluation.	G
	- Gateway approval processes built into Integrated Impact Assessment for all service changes prior to consideration by members.	G
- capturing, sharing and promoting learning and good practice.	Further refining to improve:	
	- Consistently high quality business cases	A
	- Incorporation of evaluation post implementation within business planning methodology	A
	- Evaluation of proposals post implementation considered by Programme Boards and Cabinet	A
	- Overall effectiveness of decision-making reviewed by Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	A

