

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:**           **CABINET**

**DATE:**                 **TUESDAY, 21 MAY 2013**

**REPORT BY:**         **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**SUBJECT:**           **WALES AUDIT OFFICE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT  
REPORT**

**1.00**   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01    To update Members on the Council's Annual Improvement Report 2012 which will be published by the Auditor General for Wales and to agree the Council's response.

**2.00**   **BACKGROUND**

2.01    The Auditor General is required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure to report on how well Welsh Councils, fire and rescue services and national parks are planning for improvement and delivering their services.

2.02    This will be the third Annual Improvement Report for Flintshire which will also contain the Appointed Auditor's Annual Audit Letter as previously reported to Audit Committee in March 2013.

**3.00**   **CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01    The Annual Improvement Report is publicised by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales. It brings together, with the co-ordination of other inspectorates such as Estyn and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) a picture of what the Council is trying to achieve and how it is going about it.

3.02    The full report is expected on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2013 although a draft report has been shared with the Council informally. (The full report will be circulated to Cabinet members prior to the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> May.)

3.03    The report builds on the work of the relevant Welsh inspectorates, as well as work undertaken by the Wales Audit Office over the last year. The report is in three main sections, which cover the Council's delivery and evaluation of services in relation to 2011/12, and it's planning of improvement for 2012/13.

- 3.04 The Auditor General is making no formal recommendations or proposals for improvement.
- 3.05 The Council, as is practice, makes a formal public response to any findings within the report. The Council's response to the draft Annual Improvement Report (AIR), which has been shared with the Council informally, is included at Appendix 2.
- 3.06 The Annual Improvement Report is developed and improved with input from senior officers at the Council to ensure accuracy, fairness and validity.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 Members are asked to receive and note the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report and agree the Council's response.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 This report will refer to the financial resourcing of the council's priorities.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

- 6.01 This report will refer to how the council is helping to reduce poverty.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.01 This report will refer to how the council is improving the environment.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.01 Safe and supportive communities will be referred to within the report.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.01 The People Strategy will be referred to in the report.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

- 10.01 None required at this stage.

#### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

- 11.01 Senior officers will have an input into the report. The Annual Audit Letter was presented to the council's Audit Committee in December 2011.

## **12.00 APPENDICES**

- 12.01 Appendix 1: WAO Annual Improvement Report 2012 – Council’s Executive response.

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

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## APPENDIX 1

### Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2012 Executive Response

This Annual Improvement Report (AIR) is broadly a fair, evidenced and agreeable summary of the position of the Council. The report is a further positive endorsement of another year of achieving continuous improvement in Flintshire.

There are no new statutory recommendations or proposals for Improvement. Listed below are the principal topics within the AIR. The number in brackets refers to the paragraph in the AIR where the issue can be found

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response</b>
Carbon Reduction (11)	Performance	Greater organisational commitment and action on energy usage reduction required
Domestic Waste (15)	Performance	Organisation confident of meeting collection and recycling targets post service changes
Vulnerable Residents (17)	Performance	Council has a full action plan in response to CSSIW recommendations
Education (21)	Performance	Council has a full action plan in response to 2011 Estyn inspection and 2013 monitoring visit
Housing (31)	Achieving the Wales Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)	Council has a revised and updated Housing Business Plan showing achievement of the WHQS by 2022. Negotiations are advanced with the Welsh Housing Task Force on options to achieve WHQS by 2020
Housing Benefits (38)	Performance	The Housing Benefits Services is a priority service for continued local improvement
Economy (41)	Strategic impact	Economic Development continues to be a top Council priority
Performance Systems and Information (46, 64 and 70)	Further improving and simplifying performance systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report formats and contents have been reviewed to improve the impact of the documents</li> <li>• The reviewed and streamlined outcome-based Council Priorities/Improvement Objectives are to be reported in June with a new style Improvement Plan to be published in June 2013</li> <li>• The Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges will be incorporated in the Improvement Plan</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation is improving the consistency of its self-evaluation methods</li> </ul>
Governance (63)	Improving Governance systems	The Council has strengthened its arrangements for reviewing and reporting on Governance. A recent Wales Audit Office national study has made positive conclusions on the arrangements in Flintshire
Information Management (66)	Performance	The Council has an adopted ICT and Customer Services Strategy and is reviewing the structure and priorities of the ICT Division
Single Status (80)	Achieving a Single Status Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All work-streams in the 'recovery plan' from 2009 have been completed</li> <li>A provisional agreement on Part 3 Terms and Conditions has been agreed</li> <li>Final options on a future Pay and Grading Model are being reviewed against affordability</li> <li>There is a parallel strategy to settle against potential Equal Pay liabilities</li> </ul>
Flintshire Futures (81)	Clear planning for and achievement of efficiency targets through organisational change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The governance and management of the Flintshire Futures five work-streams has been improved</li> <li>Overall achievement of efficiency targets runs at around 85%</li> <li>Further efficiency target planning is running as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Council Priorities review</li> </ul>
Human Resources Strategy (82)	Progress with the Strategy	The strategy has been reprioritised and performance of the strategy and the individual work-streams are reported regularly to both Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny
Financial Planning (84)	Publication of the second Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The second MTFP will be published in June 2013 alongside the Improvement Plan</li> <li>The MTFP will be far more advanced in planning the costs of Council Priorities and investments and in setting new efficiency targets for the period to 2018</li> <li>The changing financial national picture and its impact on Council financial planning is important context</li> </ul>

Welsh Language (91)	Performance	The Council has an adopted Welsh Language Plan which is under continuous review
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