

## Mid-Year Performance Report Legal & Democratic Services (Corporate Services)

*REPORT AUTHOR: Head of Legal & Democratic Services*

*REPORT DATE: OCTOBER 2013*

*REPORT PERIOD: APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2013*

### **Introduction**

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The Head of Service report is produced on a half yearly basis and provided to Executive Members for review and assurance and will be available for Overview and Scrutiny Committees as part of their Forward Work Programmes.

The approach is based on exception reporting to summarise key information that the Head of Service feels Members should be aware of, including both good and poor performance. Emerging issues / operational risks should also be highlighted. The report is split into 3 distinct sections: -

**1. Improvement Priorities & Service Plan Monitoring** – this section is used to discuss the progress being made towards the Improvement Priorities which do not have an in year focus and therefore are not included within the quarterly progress report on the Improvement Plan. It is also used to highlight good news and key issues (including operational risks and the actions necessary to control them) arising from monitoring the progress being made towards delivering the service plan.

**2. Internal and External Regulatory Reports** – this section summarises regulatory work reported in the half year and its outcomes and intended actions arising from recommendations.

**3. Corporate Reporting** – this section summaries the performance in relation to corporate issues i.e. Sickness absence, Complaints

**Appendix 1- NSI & Improvement Target Performance Indicators** – summary table of the performance for the NSI and Improvement Targets. Graphs (where appropriate) and commentary are included in section 1 for those indicators shown with a red RAG status.

# 1. Improvement Priorities & Service Plan Monitoring

Report highlights for the half year are as follows: -

Legal and Democratic Services contributes to the improvement priorities by helping to develop and promote understanding of the new business models and ways of working that will be needed to achieve them. For example, advice is provided on the different legal/corporate models that can be used for governance, documentation and instruments that put them into effect, ensuring that members understand and are able to contribute to that development process. This is a key contributor to the proper consideration and success of such projects. The division is working in this way to help create a housing company.

The service also continues to provide advice and guidance that either directly contributes to achieving priorities such as equal pay, or which contributes to ensure the good governance of the Council.

As well as supporting delivery of improvement plan priorities, key priorities within the service plan include:

- a) Legal Services Collaboration – 2 pilots are underway. The lawyers working on prosecutions and adult social are being managed as though they were a single team. Work is therefore being distributed across North Wales based on skills, experience and availability. The aims of the pilots are to increase resilience, reduce waiting times, enable greater specialisation and to identify any overcapacity. The pilots are due to run until March.
- b) Individual Elector Registration – all councils must move from registering electors by household to registering individuals by 2015. The project is being co-ordinated by the Cabinet Office so that every council progresses at the same speed. Over the summer an exercise took place comparing our electoral register with other public records, such as National Insurance details, to check its integrity. Our match rate was 88.6% compared to the average of 78%.

## 2. Internal and External Regulatory Reports

a) Internal Audit reports:

Project Reference	Project Description	Level of Assurance	Recommendations		
			High	Med	Low
LD0180T1	Court Dates	Green	0	2	0
LD0230S1	Commons Register	Green	0	1	0

b) External reports:

- i. In April the Information Commissioner reported on three aspects of the Council's data protection systems:
  - Data Protection Awareness Training
  - Records Management
  - Data Sharing.

The report found that the Council's systems offered "reasonable assurance" around the Council's Data Protection processes and procedures. This is the second best of the four categories of audit opinion. An agreed action plan has been drawn up and is being monitored by CMT.

- ii. In September the Wales Audit Office reported on the Council's governance arrangements as part of its annual assessment of improvement arrangements. It found that the Council has improved its processes for developing its Annual Governance Statement but recognises that there is more to do. The Council has committed itself to the greater involvement of Members in future and is continuing to explore ways of making further improvements in its arrangements for drafting its Annual Governance

### **3. Corporate Reporting**

#### **Complaints / Compliments**

There were no complaints about Legal & Democratic Services.

There was 1 complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales about a councillor which was resolved without the need for investigation.

The Council has introduced a Local Resolution Procedure to handle complaints about county councillors from officers and other members. It has been used successfully to resolve 1 complaint.

#### **Sickness Absence**

For Legal & Democratic Services between April and September the average number of days lost was 2.01/FTE for Q1 and 1.09/FTE for Q2. These figures were merely influenced by a small number of long term sickness.

All sickness absence is managed in accordance with the Council's procedure.

#### **Workforce Turnover**

No changes to workforce numbers.

#### **Equality Monitoring**

Nothing to report.

#### **Welsh Language Monitoring**

Employees have been encouraged to complete the Welsh language skills database on iTrent.

The Welsh Language Scheme Baseline Assessment Tool has been implemented within the Department (ie. bilingual e-mail auto-signatures, voicemail messages, press notices etc). The Department is able to deal with phone queries should callers choose to speak in Welsh. This complies with all the obligations under the language scheme.

#### **Data Protection Training**

Employees whose jobs require mandatory Data Protection training have been identified and all have received training.

Other

#### **Appraisals**

100% of employees have received an appraisal during the last 12 months in Legal and Democratic Services.

## Appendix 1 - NSI & Improvement Target Performance Indicators

### Key

<b>R</b>	<b>Target missed</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Target missed but within an acceptable level</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>Target achieved or exceeded</b>

The RAG status of the indicators for the half year position are summarised as follows:



Graphs and commentary are included in section 1 for those indicators shown with a red RAG status.

Note 1 – NSI = National Statutory Indicator      Imp T = Improvement Target

Note 2 – Change (Improved / Downturned) is based on comparison with the previous quarter. Where it is more appropriate to compare performance with the same period in the previous year this should be stated in the commentary.

The following local performance indicators are being developed for Legal Services:

- Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Achieving turn around times for work:
  - Despatch of first draft of :
    - standard contract (ICE, JCT, etc.)
    - s106 agreement
    - land sale or lease
  - School Admission Appeals:
    - Ensuring all school admission appeal decision letters are sent out within 5 days of decision
  - Highway Orders
- Child Care Cases:
  - Number of cases issued
  - Completing child care proceedings within 26 weeks of instruction
- Prosecutions

These are new indicators and so no previous out turn exists.

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Annual Target 2013/14	2012/13 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q1 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Target	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
Agenda Circulation - Percentage of agendas to be circulated 3 days before the date of the meeting	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	G	Static	Performance remains at optimum level.
Declaration of Interest – Percentage of declarations by Members recorded in minutes of meetings	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	G	Static	Performance remains at optimum level.
Availability of draft minutes (5 days) – Percentage of draft minutes available 5 working days after the meeting	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	G	Static	Performance remains at optimum level.
Availability of Final Minutes – Percentage of final minutes available to the public 15 working days after approval at the subsequent meeting	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	G	Static	Performance remains at optimum level.
Percentage of staff requiring Data Protection training who have received it	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	G	Static	

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Annual Target 2013/14	2012/13 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q1 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Target	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
Percentage of FOI requests responded to within the statutory timescale (Legal & Democratic only)	N/A	85%	95%	100%	100%	85%	<b>G</b>	Static	