

## **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**DATE:** **27 MARCH 2012**

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

**SUBJECT:** **ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2011 BY THE  
AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.01** To advise Members of the Council's Annual Improvement Report 2011 published by the Auditor General for Wales.
- 1.02** Members to note the report and receive the Council's response.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

- 2.01** The Auditor General is required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure to undertake an Annual Improvement Assessment and to publish an Annual Improvement Report for each authority in Wales. This covers local councils, national parks and fire and rescue authorities.
- 2.02** This is the second Annual Improvement Report for Flintshire and it also contains the Appointed Auditor's Annual Audit Letter as previously reported to Audit Committee in December 2011 .

### **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 attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.03** The report builds on the findings of the Improvement Assessment undertaken by the WAO, plus a retrospective assessment of whether the Council has achieved its planned improvements and a summary on the Council's self assessment of performance as reported in the Council's Annual Performance Report 2010/11. The overall finding is "Despite progress in many service areas, certain corporate

weaknesses continue to hinder current performance and future prospects."

Other key statements within the report are:

- The Council has a strong commitment to partnership working to support improvement; however progress in achieving the Council's objectives is being held back by weaknesses in priority setting, governance, financial planning and people management.
- There is good progress in some priority areas but elsewhere progress is mixed and some services are not yet delivering provision at the expected levels.
- The Council is continuing to develop its performance monitoring arrangements but weaknesses remain in outcome measures, reliability of information and in some aspects of reporting and evaluation.

**3.04** The Auditor General has made two formal recommendations which are:

- R1 - The Council should report more fully and regularly to the Executive Board on progress in delivering the Human Resources (HR) Strategy and *Single Status Agreement* and ensure capacity and capability are available to achieve intended outcomes and timetables.
- R2 - The Council needs to complete its work in quantifying the financial benefits of its programme of efficiencies and organisational change by mid 2012/13, to determine the remaining funding gap (shortfall or surplus) and then establish clear plans to identify further savings and/or redirect resources to priorities.

**3.05** The Council is required to make a formal public response to these recommendations within 30 days of receipt of the report. This response, including a response to an additional four proposals for improvement is included at Appendix 2. The Annual Improvement Report was received and this response endorsed at Executive on 21 February meeting the required timescale.

**3.06** This Annual Improvement Report has been developed and improved with significant input from senior officers at the Council to ensure accuracy, fairness and validity. Broad agreement has been reached on the contents and it should be noted that the formal recommendations and proposals for improvement have been identified by senior officers and are already being responded to.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 To advise Members of the Council's Annual Improvement Report 2011 published by the Auditor General for Wales.

4.02 Members to note the report and receive the Council's response.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 This report refers to the financial resourcing of the council's priorities.

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

6.01 This report refers to how the council is helping to reduce poverty.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 This report refers to how the council is improving the environment.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 Safe and supportive communities are referred to within the report.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 The People Strategy is referred to in the report.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None required at this stage.

#### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

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

#### **12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1: The Auditor General's Annual Improvement Report 2011  
Appendix 2: WAO Annual Improvement Report response to recommendations.

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

None

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