Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2011

Response to the Recommendations

A: Formal Recommendations

Ref	Recommendation	Response
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	The Executive has recently received a full review of the People Strategy (note correct title), has re-set the priorities within it and has reviewed the resourcing of the Strategy. Quarterly review reports will be made to the Executive; the progress of the key work-streams within the Strategy will continue to be reported to Overview and Scrutiny within the quarterly performance reports for the HR and OD Division as is current practice The Singles Status project plan, objectives, timelines and decision-making steps and requirements will be reported to both Executive and Overview and Scrutiny in March. The newly elected Council will then be recommended to allocate significant time to building member knowledge, understanding and commitment to reach an Agreement by October 2012 through both formal and informal meetings and briefings
R2	The Council needs to complete its work in quantifying the financial benefits of its programme for 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 or re-direct resources to priorities	This work is in progress through (1) the on-going development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy Plan and (2) the 'stock-take' review of the Flintshire Futures programme for organisational development and change. An interim report will be presented on both in April and the new Council will be invited to review/re-set strategy from June. For priorities see P1 (below) This work under-pins and is reflected in the strategy and the detail of the draft 2012-13 Council Fund Revenue and Capital budgets

B: Proposals for Improvement

Ref	Recommendation	Response
P1	Complete the work in progress to set clear success measures for all improvement objectives and ensure regular, clear reporting	This work is in progress through the review of the Improvement Priorities/Objectives. This review will both meet the recommendation for the current Objectives and grow our capability for performance setting and management for future years. The new Council will need to understand the importance of the work and

		invest in skills and systems to maintain it. Importantly the new Council will need to develop consensus on the priorities and their investment needs
P2	Develop and agree a detailed business plan for improving customer access showing how success measures will be achieved and offer value for money	The Customer Services Strategy is adopted and is in the process of implementation. Success and efficiency measures are being developed for each work-stream of the Strategy as they are adopted and implemented (e.g. channel shift, Flintshire Connects). This is an ambitious Strategy and the Council is calculating risks and benefits for each work-stream as they develop. We must take care not to become 'risk averse' and be prepared to take some calculated risks to improve the organisation for customer benefit and to achieve efficiencies
P3	Ensure its Annual Performance Report is published by 31 October in line with statutory requirements and more fully reflects Welsh Government guidance	The first part (publication) is a technical recommendation on process which will be met provided that all information required by the Council to permit a timely publication is available; the second part (more fully meeting the guidance) will be met through the response to P1 (above) although it should be noted that national guidance and support is under development and is awaited (e.g. self-assessment support)
P4	Improve quality assurance arrangements to ensure that data used to support performance management and monitoring is accurate and robust	This is a technical recommendation to improve further our internal arrangements which are currently sound and functioning