

Wales Audit Office Improvement Assessment Letter

December 2013

Executive Response

The Wales Audit Office's Improvement Assessment Letter is, overall, a fair summary of the position of the Council. The letter is a positive endorsement of this transitional year for improvement reporting with recognition of the potential for improved public reporting following the introduction of this year's Improvement Plan.

There are no new statutory recommendations or proposals for improvement.

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

Listed below are the principal topics within the letter along with our response.

Issue	Response
<i>In summary the report:</i>	
Presents too much detailed information in a style that is not engaging for citizens	The report needs to be sufficiently detailed to be useful as both an internal performance review 'tool' and a review of annual performance for public consumption. The report can be further improved. The Council has introduced a new reporting model following the publication of the new style Improvement Plan. This provides a basis for a more concise, graphic and readable annual plan with selected performance information in support of the outcomes set for achievement.
Includes, for each improvement objective, information about work that has and has not gone well during 2012-13, but further clarity in summarising this information would help readers to understand how the Council has determined its evaluation of progress and outcomes	The report does identify for each improvement objective the activity which has both succeeded and failed to achieve the targets set. The overall objective evaluation of the supporting evidence is represented in the RAG (red, amber, green) status. An explanatory paragraph will be added for each improvement objective in future reports to assist the reader to more fully understand the evaluation.
Lacks information on the impact of the Council's collaborative activity	Many of the Council's collaborative projects are in planning or implementation stages, so it is premature to assess outcomes. Where collaborative projects are in delivery, examples of improved service delivery have been summarised within the narrative for each relevant improvement objective. The expectations of WAO seem to have changed based on the reporting practices of some other councils which are held up as 'good practice'. The Council will develop its reporting style accordingly noting that this does not mean that its plan is deficient.
Does not promote as well as it might the opportunity for citizens to provide	Feedback opportunities were provided by telephone, post, email and by web. Further opportunities for

feedback by, for example, including a web link for comments.

citizen feedback including an enhanced use of social media are being explored for next year. Public interest in these types of plans is low so promotional activity should be kept in proportion.