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Auditor General for Wales



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## 2014-15 Improvement Plan Feedback

Flintshire County Council

Paul Goodlad – August 2014

## Context and Background

- Until 2014, the Wales Audit Office provided councils with detailed feedback about the extent to which annual Improvement Plans complied with Welsh Government guidance.
- In 2014, the Wales Audit Office revised its feedback arrangements and began issuing brief Certificates of Compliance (rather than detailed feedback) in relation to Improvement Plans (and will also do so for Annual Performance Reports, starting in late 2014).
- After receiving a briefing on the format of the 2014 Certificate of Compliance, members of the Council's Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked the Wales Audit Office to produce a supplementary, more detailed analysis of the 2014-15 Improvement Plan, to help them provide robust challenge and hold officers to account for delivery of the Plan.
- This presentation provides that feedback.

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## Gaining access to, and awareness of, the Improvement Plan and its key messages may be challenging for some stakeholders

- ✓ The 2014-15 Improvement Plan is not easy to find on the Flintshire County Council website.....unless you know where to look. And casual 'surfers' are unlikely to find it by accident.
- ✓ Opportunities to publicise and raise awareness of the 2014-15 Improvement Plan (and the forthcoming 2013-14 Annual Performance Report) have been reduced following the decision to stop doorstep delivery of the *Your Community, Your Council* newsletter to every household in the County.
- ✓ A requirement to subscribe in order to gain online access to the new *Your Council* newsletter is a potential barrier to raising awareness of the 2014-15 Improvement Plan and other newsworthy items, especially for vulnerable citizens.
- ✓ The 2014-15 Improvement Plan makes good use of graphics and is succinct, but the downloadable file is 6.7 MB, which could be a further barrier to accessibility.

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## Proposals for Improvement

- Avoid inconsistency and ambiguity when future Plans are produced:
  - ensure that success measures are capable of demonstrating whether planned outcomes are being met;
  - if future targets are intentionally lower than recent outturn performance, explain why;
  - focus the Improvement Plan on areas where the Council intends to make a 'bigger impact' – and reflect this in the targets; and
  - ensure that aspirations to improve outcomes are reflected in achievement measures which target improved performance.
- Explore cost-effective ways to improve access to, and awareness of, the 2014-15 Improvement Plan (and other key plans) – for all citizens.

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**Questions?**



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