

Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report

Progress Update on the Action Plan

June 2016

The following is a progress report on the action plan agreed by the Council in response to the Annual Improvement Report and Corporate Assessment of the Wales Audit Office published earlier in 2015.

Proposal for Improvement (P1-7) Including overall lead ¹ .	Action Update	RAG Status
<p>P1 The Council should develop and implement a (more) consistent approach to business planning that promotes the ownership by staff of key objectives and targets.</p> <p>Lead: Chief Executive</p>	P1.1 Mapping of current service planning and strategies etc. to show strength and gaps (complete). Further analysis to show intentions to strengthen arrangements (by 10.15) with a full set of operational plans being in place (for 04.16)	G
	P1.2 Plans using the new performance management solution (CAMMS) to be piloted (09.15) with full roll out (04.16)	G
	P1.3 Personal appraisal model is being extended to build in service/ team service plan objectives (from 04.16). Evaluation of the new appraisal model (04.16)	G
<p>P2 The Council should improve the quality of its reports to committees and Cabinet to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where necessary, reports enable councillors to refer easily to relevant policies and previous decisions and discussions • key messages and recommendations are clear and succinct; and • reports to scrutiny committees include recommendations or options that committees might endorse. <p>Lead: Chief Officer (Governance)</p>	P2.1 A review of report format, style and quality of presentation (complete). A pilot of the improved format will be used for Cabinet reports (09.15). The improved format includes use of executive summaries and fuller exploration of risk in assessing options for decisions. Fuller use of hyperlinks are to be made to avoid publishing extensive appendices where this can be avoided. Feedback of the revised approach will be undertaken before applying across the suite of committees.	G
	P1.2 Updated report writing guidelines have been produced and issued. Refresher report writing training is being organised (by 12.15)	G
	P2.3 Quality assurance systems for report approval have been implemented (complete)	G
P3		

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<p>The Council should ensure that, in implementing its revised strategies for People, ICT, Finance and Asset Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their financial implications feed into the medium-term financial plan; and • the links between the strategies are fully considered so that specialist staff are available when required. <p>Lead: Chief Executive</p>	<p>As P1 above noting:-</p> <p>P3.1 A single corporate resourcing plan is being developed (by summer 2016) as part of the suite of key corporate documents. This plan will prioritise the allocation of corporate resources for change projects</p> <p>P3.2 Set of 8 Programme Boards (for officer portfolios where significant change needs to be led, co-ordinated and managed) all now organised; are meeting and settled with good evidence of impact.</p> <p>P3.3 A comprehensive and more usable Medium Term Financial Strategy in a new graphic format has been produced in 2 parts: Part 1 published 06.15; Part 2 to be published 09.15. This is being updated for 2016.</p>	<p>A</p> <p>G</p> <p>G</p>
<p>P4</p> <p>Group Leaders should strongly encourage members to take advantage of the Member Development Scheme.</p> <p>Lead: Chief Officer (Governance)</p>	<p>P4.1 A review of the member development programme is ongoing with the aim of having a broader offer for members in partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association.</p> <p>P4.2 Group Leaders have been requested to take-up training opportunities amongst their respective groups; there'll be follow-up with Group Leaders.</p>	<p>A</p> <p>A</p>
<p>P5</p> <p>The Council should take the opportunity of its review of scrutiny structures to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny committees can add real value to Council decision-making by aligning agendas more explicitly to Council priorities and risks.</p> <p>Lead: Chief Officer (Governance)</p>	<p>P5.1 A Task and Finish Group set up by the Constitution Committee has reviewed the number and terms of reference of Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Group reported to the Annual General Meeting of the Council and the new Overview and Scrutiny Committees are in place (complete).</p> <p>P5.2 Forward work programmes are being developed to include major and higher risk annual budget proposals which require monitoring and assessment of impact, major service reviews included in the budget, and periodic review of the achievement of improvement priorities. Report formats are being reviewed as P2 above to make reports more purposeful.</p> <p>P5.3 More purposeful Forward Work Programmes; reports with 4 typologies (information, assurance, policy development or options consultation) and improved report format; clearer protocol on pre-decision scrutiny for policy development and options consultation type items); purposeful recommendations and more managed chairing and debate of meetings, including precise</p>	<p>G</p> <p>G</p> <p>G</p>

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	<p>summing up, geared toward the report purpose; training and information support programme for scrutiny; periodic committee self-assessments with feedback to chair and reporting officers on areas for improvement. A special meeting of the six new chairs was convened to plan immediately post-AGM (05.15). A Member workshop was held to develop Forward Work Programmes (07.15). Ongoing liaison with Overview and Scrutiny Chairs.</p>	
<p>P6 The Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopt a consistent approach to managing risk, ensuring that all staff involved use a similar approach to record impact, likelihood and mitigating actions; and • apply this approach to its future savings plans <p>Lead: Chief Executive</p>	<p>P6.1 Following an earlier internal review of risk management led by Internal Audit a number of actions are in train to implement the recommendations for the organisation to be more consistent and effective in the identification and reporting of risk at strategic, operational, project and partnership levels. P1 and P3 above will contribute.</p> <p>The most recent Internal Audit review provides a “reasonable” level of assurance (Amber/Green).</p>	G
<p>P7 The Council should ensure a consistent approach to workforce planning and use the results to inform future reductions in staff</p> <p>Lead: Chief Executive</p>	<p>P7.1 The new appraisal model (as P1.3) has been run for all senior managers and is being worked through the rest of the organisation. Intelligence from this renewed appraisal programme will inform the training and development programme, talent recognition, retention and progression. Evaluation of the appraisal model and further development has taken place.</p> <p>P7.2 Workforce planning risks are being assessed in each Chief Officer portfolio area as part of the revised People Strategy.</p>	G A

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