

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday 12 June 2017
Report Subject	External Regulation Assurance
Report Author	Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council receives reports from various external regulators and inspectors in the normal course of events. It is part of the Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee to ensure that effective processes are in place for setting and monitoring actions arising from these reports.

This summary report provides assurance to the Audit Committee that the reports have been discussed and considered in the appropriate member committees and action taken in response to the recommendations received.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note how reports by external auditors, other regulators and inspectors have been dealt with during 2016/17.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE EXTERNAL REGULATORS AND INSPECTIONS REPORT
1.01	The Local Government (Wales) Measure contains various provisions relating to the work of audit committees. Statutory guidance made under Section 85 of the Measure was issued in June 2012. That guidance advised that audit committees should receive and consider reports from external auditors, other regulators and inspectors.

1.02	Since 2014 arrangements have been made that all reports issued by external auditors, regulators and inspectors are tracked and reported to the Audit Committee once a year. This is to assure the Committee that such reports have been considered appropriately by the relevant officers and Scrutiny Committees.
1.03	Where a report by an external auditor, other regulator or inspector contains recommendations, it is important that those recommendations receive proper consideration by both officers and members and are responded to. The responses will, on occasion, require an action plan to implement changes and appropriate procedures need to be in place to oversee the implementation of such action plans.
1.04	It is part of the Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee to ensure that effective processes are in place for setting and monitoring such action plans. Whilst the Audit Committee has the responsibility for ensuring all audit reports issued by the external auditor are implemented, for other reports the Committee's Terms of Reference make clear it is sufficient that it is satisfied that there are effective processes in place. These processes may, for example, include the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
1.05	Appendix 1 shows all the reports received from external regulators during 2016/17, the summary findings and response from the Council, where they were reported and the current status of any actions.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no direct resource implications related to this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	External reports are considered by Chief Officers and senior managers to determine the actions needed. Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny committees review the findings of reports and the Council's responses.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The work of the external regulators, and the actions in response to their reports provide assurance to the Council that adequate and effective controls are in place to mitigate risks.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: External Audit Report Summary

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None</p> <p>Contact Officer: Karen Armstrong, Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer Telephone: 01352 702740 E-mail: Karen.armstrong@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Wales Audit Office: works to support the Auditor General as the public sector watchdog for Wales. They aim to ensure that the people of Wales know whether public money is being managed wisely and that public bodies in Wales understand how to improve outcomes.</p> <p>Improvement Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW): The powers and functions of CSSIW are enabled through legislation. CSSIW has the powers to review Local Authority social services at a local and national level, to inform the public whether services are up to standard, to promote improvement of services and to help safeguard the interests of vulnerable people who use services and their carers. They provide professional advice to Welsh Ministers and policy makers.</p> <p>Estyn: Estyn is the education and training inspectorate for Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting primary and secondary schools and nursery schools maintained by, or receiving funding from, local authorities.</p>