

**Report To:** Corporate Governance Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2014

**Lead Member / Officer:** Barbara Smith, Lead Member for Modernisation

**Report Author:** Alan Smith, Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation

**Title:** 2013-14 Annual Improvement Report

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**1. What is the report about?**

The report concerns the annual assessment of the Council's prospects for improvement, undertaken by the Wales Audit Office.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To provide information to Members on the Council's Annual Improvement Report (AIR). See Appendix 1.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

That the Corporate Governance Committee note the contents of the attached report and the proposals for improvement within it.

**4. Report details.**

Under the Local Government Measure, the Wales Audit Office annually reviews the Council's progress towards meeting its objectives and its prospects for continuing to improve in the year ahead.

For the year 2013-14, the WAO has concluded that:

- Denbighshire made good progress in delivering improvements in all its priority objectives for 2012-13 but further improvements are required in a few key areas;
- The Council's service challenge reviews and other measures to self-evaluate its performance are robust;
- The Council's planning for improvement and its arrangements to support improvement are good;
- The Council is likely to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2014-15.

If the WAO have significant concerns about the progress made by the Council or the direction it is taking, it will make formal recommendations for change. Denbighshire's report does not have any formal recommendations this year (we have never had any in fact) reflecting the WAO's positive view of the Council's progress.

This is not to say that we are getting everything right though, inevitably, some things need more work and both last year's and this year's Annual Reports made some 'proposals for improvement'. We have made good progress with all the proposals made in the 20012/13 report and this year the Inspectors have made two further proposals which they feel will help the Council continue to progress. These are:

- P1 - *In order to achieve its objective to modernise services the Council should continue to address weaknesses in its Corporate Human Resource Service.*
- P2 - *The Council should ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear for the achievement of the affordable housing objective.*

The Council accepts both these proposals and is already taking action to address them. In terms of the proposal relating to the HR service, we are continuing to work through an action plan to address the identified shortfalls. In relation to the affordable housing issue, a task group of key members and Officers is being established to review our objectives in this important area.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

No decision is required, but the WAO's review of the Council's progress is an important part of understanding our progress towards delivering our Corporate Priorities.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

There are no financial implications.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

Not applicable.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

Officers have reviewed the report for accuracy prior to publication. It will be presented to Corporate Governance in July.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

Not required.

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

There would be risk to the Council if the proposals for improvement made by the WAO were not acted on.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

No decision is required.