

Report To: Corporate Governance Committee

Date of Meeting: 2 July 2014

Lead Member / Officer: Barbara Smith, Lead Member for Modernising & Performance

Report Author: Ivan Butler, Head of Internal Audit

Title: Governance Improvement Plan

1. What is the report about?

This report provides the Committee with the improvement plan resulting from the review of the Council's governance framework for 2013/14.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

Corporate Governance Committee will monitor the Governance Improvement Plan on a regular basis as part of the Council's overall governance arrangements to make sure that the Council implements the necessary improvements effectively.

3. What are the Recommendations?

Committee considers and comments on the Governance Improvement Plan, requesting any additional assurance it feels necessary on any of the actions within the Plan.

4. Report details

- 4.1 The Council's Corporate Governance Framework includes an annual assessment of the Council's governance arrangements and an 'annual governance statement' that highlights any governance weaknesses.
- 4.2 The Council's Governance Group manages the Corporate Governance Framework process and development of the 'annual governance statement' on an on-going basis during the financial year. This Group consists of:
 - Chair of Corporate Governance Committee
 - Vice-chair of Corporate Governance Committee
 - Head of Legal & Democratic Services
 - Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation
 - Head of Finance & Assets
 - Head of Internal Audit
- 4.3 Appendix 1 shows the Governance Improvement Plan arising from the review of the Council's governance arrangements for 2013/14. At the time of writing this report, some of the proposed improvement actions, responsibilities and

timescales had not been finalised. A verbal update will be provided to the committee on these areas at the committee meeting, as the Plan will have been finalised by that time.

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

There is no decision required for this report. While the Governance Improvement Plan does not directly contribute to Corporate Priorities, good governance plays a significant role in the Council and its arrangements for delivering corporate objectives. The Corporate Governance Framework includes an assessment of the Council's operational and financial performance, governance arrangements, community engagement etc. that are all directed towards delivering the Corporate Priorities.

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

There are no costs attached to this report and the only impact on services is where the Plan identifies improvement areas; however, services will already be aware of these and should be building this into their service planning.

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.

This report does not require a decision or proposal for change, so there is no impact on people who share protected characteristics.

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

The Governance Improvement Plan forms part of the 'Delivering good governance and continuous improvement' document that was discussed at:

- Corporate Executive Team on 17 March 2014
- Corporate Governance Committee on 15 April 2014
- Council Briefing on 28 April 2014
- Senior Leadership Team on 1 May 2014
- Corporate Governance Committee on 21 May 2014

It was also distributed to Cabinet members and the Wales Audit Office for comment.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

There are no financial implications attached to this report.

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

The main risk attached to this report is non-delivery of the Governance Improvement Plan or specific improvements included within it. This would mean that weaknesses in the Council's governance arrangements are not improved, which could lead to external regulator criticism and impact on the Council's reputation as a well-governed organisation.

11. Power to make the Decision

There is no decision required for this report but there is a requirement under the local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 for the 'audit committee' to oversee the Council's corporate governance arrangements.