

Report To: Corporate Governance Committee

Date of Meeting: 29 September 2014

**Lead Member / Officer: Barbara Smith – Lead Member for Modernising & Performance
Ivan Butler – Head of Internal Audit**

Report Author: Ivan Butler – Head of Internal Audit

Title: Governance Improvement Plan

1. What is the report about?

This report provides an update on the Council's Governance Improvement Plan arising from the Council's 2013/14 'annual governance statement' - *'Delivering good governance and continuous improvement'*.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

This report provides information to the Committee on progress being made with implementation of the various actions included in the Governance Improvement Plan to ensure that the Council has robust and effective governance arrangements in place.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- The Committee reviews and comments on the progress report, deciding whether it needs any further information.
- As not all officers have provided responses to the Head of Internal Audit's request for progress updates, the Committee should decide what action is needed to provide updates as soon as possible and to ensure that they are promptly received for future updates.

4. Report details.

The Council's latest 'annual governance statement' was entitled *'Delivering good governance and continuous improvement'*. This document provided a transparent and balanced self-assessment of the Council's governance arrangements, highlighting any significant governance weaknesses and other areas for improvement.

The improvement areas were included in a Governance Improvement Plan that also provided proposed actions to address the weaknesses, officers responsible for the actions, and timescales. This report provides the first update on progress with the Governance Improvement Plan included as Appendix 1.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing this report, not all officers had provided a progress update, therefore the Plan is not fully complete. Where responses were received, actions are either complete or in progress. In some cases, the Committee has received separate update reports, e.g. on Strategic HR, arms-length organisations, and strategic procurement.

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

While the 'annual governance statement' self-assessment does not directly contribute to Corporate Priorities, it provides an assessment and assurance on the delivery of the Corporate Plan, 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 report 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?

This is an information report only. The only consultation has been with the officers with responsibility for implementing the actions identified within the Governance Improvement Plan.

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?

If the Governance Improvement Plan is not implemented, weaknesses will remain in the Council's governance arrangements, which could lead to:

- adverse regulatory reports;
- poor use of public money;
- failure to improve key corporate and service areas;
- loss of stakeholder confidence; and
- an adverse impact on the Council's reputation.

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.