

Governance Improvement Action Plan – Progress Report September 2014

Improvement Area	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress to Date
Significant Governance Issues				
In future, we accept that some services and functions will stop or be transferred to others who may be able to deliver them at lower or no extra cost. We need to review our governance arrangements to take account of this, ensuring that public money is spent wisely and the public continues to receive good services and value for money.	<p>We will be implementing new monitoring arrangements during 2014 to ensure that any third party or arms-length service providers have robust governance arrangements, and will implement scrutiny arrangements to monitor their financial and operational performance.</p> <p>The Head of Internal Audit produced a 'good practice' report in May 2014 that CET will discuss in July 2014 to agree the way forward.</p>	Initial review by Head of Internal Audit, which will lead to further action plan for implementation of new arrangements	Preliminary report by 31 May 2014, with further action plan for implementation of new arrangements to be agreed	<p>In progress</p> <p>'Phase 1' report to CET in July 2014 and Corporate Governance Committee in September 2014.</p> <p>CET commissioned Head of Internal Audit to lead 'phase 2', which is development of framework for DCC by 31 March 2015. This will commence in October 2014.</p>
<p>Our Internal Audit service provided a critical report on the procurement of construction services that highlighted several weaknesses, including that our procurement strategy is out of date. Internal Audit's recent follow up of the improvement action plan shows that, although we have developed a new draft strategy and Contract Procedure Rules, progress with improvement is slow and behind schedule.</p> <p>Also in procurement, we are involved in the development of some key projects but the creation of the National Procurement</p>	There is a separate action plan for dealing with the issues raised in the Internal Audit report.	Head of Finance & Assets	As per action plan	<p>In progress</p> <p>Follow up of IA & WAO Action Plans reported to Corporate Governance Committee in September 2014. Progress reported as slow and behind schedule.</p>
	The Council is fundamentally changing significant elements of its procurement. In May 2014, Cabinet approved the merger of Flintshire and Denbighshire procurement teams to create a larger more robust team. It also approved the move towards category management in conjunction with Flintshire and Gwynedd.		New team in place July 2014. Move to Category Management to take place up to 2016.	<i>No progress update response received</i>

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<p>Service has also added to the complexity of procurement arrangements and led to a loss of staff to the new organisation, with potential further staffing losses.</p> <p>We are aware that we are entering a critical period in relation to strategic procurement and the major changes that we are making; therefore, we will need to keep this area under regular review to ensure that the identified improvements are implemented and that the strategic programmes of change are successfully delivered.</p>	<p>A training programme has begun with relevant finance staff attending first.</p>		<p>Training programme is underway.</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>36 finance staff have undertaken the Introduction to Procurement course in June 2014. The course is being arranged for the schools Business and Finance managers in October 2014.</p>
	<p>The Procurement Strategy is being re-drafted to better link with the Economic Development Strategy. Contract Procedure Rules are overdue but are currently with Legal Services for review.</p>		<p>Strategy due by August 14, as are CPRs</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>Strategy is due for completion by the end of October 2014.</p> <p>The Contract Procedure Rules are being presented to Corporate Governance on 5 November 2014 and County Council on 9 December 2014.</p>
	<p>The E-Sourcing project is due for implementation over the summer, along with Centralised Invoice Registration and improvements to Proactis for purchase order numbers.</p>		<p>Centralised Invoice Registration going live from July 2014.</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>E-sourcing templates to be completed by the end of October 2014 and departmental roll-out complete by the end of Q1 2015</p>
Partnership Governance				
<p>We are aware that not all partnerships use the partnership toolkit, so, as part of a comprehensive review of the partnership landscape, we need to review the guidance to ensure that it is user-friendly and effective. This review will also provide a greater knowledge and understanding of partnership activity and develop a better corporate understanding of the challenges of operational partnerships.</p>	<p>Practice-based review of governance toolkit</p>	<p>Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation</p>	<p>October 2014</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>The review of the toolkit will form part of the Head of Internal Audit's review of third party and arms-length organisations. The deadline for this project is 31 March 2015.</p>

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<p>Our partnership governance toolkit provides guidance on defining each partner's role in the partnership, line management responsibilities for staff supporting the partnership and legal status but does not provide clear guidance on the roles of partnership board members. We have already identified the need to review this guidance, as we are aware that it is not always used by partnerships.</p>	<p>Practice-based review of governance Toolkit</p>	<p>Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation</p>	<p>October 2014</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>The review of the toolkit will form part of the Head of Internal Audit's review of third party and arms-length organisations. The deadline for this project is 31 March 2015.</p>
<p>Constitution</p>				
<p>The Council's main governance guidance is provided in our comprehensive Constitution that clearly sets out respective roles and responsibilities of elected members and officers, particularly relating to governance, although it needs to be updated to take account of changed role titles and elected member portfolios.</p>	<p>A new Model Constitution has been developed for Wales. The Council's current Constitution will be reviewed in light of the new model and updated to reflect changed job titles and portfolios.</p>	<p>Head of Legal & Democratic Services</p>	<p>Constitution working group to meet by September 2014, with further reports to Corporate Governance Committee and Council. New model to be adopted by 31 December 2014</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>The working group will meet in October 2014, with a report to Corporate Governance Committee in December 2014. The new model to be adopted by County Council by no later than March 2015.</p>
<p>Our codes of conduct for elected members and employees form part of induction training, although we need to ensure that we have arrangements in place to ensure that we regularly raise awareness of these codes.</p>	<p>Elected members have been provided with several training sessions on the Code of Conduct and refresher sessions are made available each year. A strategy for maintaining awareness among employees will be developed.</p>	<p>Head of Legal & Democratic Services</p>	<p>Refresher sessions for elected members will be provided before March 2015. An awareness training strategy for employees will be implemented by March 2015</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>Dates are currently being sought for the provision of these sessions, which will be completed within the timescale set out.</p>

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Equalities				
We are continuing our work to improve awareness of equalities issues. But Internal Audit's staff survey found that there is still work to do to improve awareness of corporate equalities arrangements.	The Corporate Equalities Group will discuss the Internal Audit report at its July 2014 meeting. At the same meeting, the Group will consider for approval a new e-learning training module on equalities issues. Following approval, this new module will be rolled out.	Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation	Autumn 2014	<i>No progress update response received</i>
Equality Impact Assessments are now mainstreamed into our decision-making process, but we still need to improve the quality of some of these assessments and will be introducing a quality assurance process during 2014.	The Head of Internal Audit will carry out a quality control review of a sample of Equality Impact Assessments during 2014/15 and feed back to Heads of Service to improve the quality of future Assessments.	Head of Internal Audit	Commencing September 2014	In progress This issue was debated at the Corporate Equalities Group and it is still under discussion as to whether this is the responsibility of Internal Audit. Alternative quality control ideas are being considered.
Policy Framework				
We have an anti-fraud and corruption policy, although we have not reviewed and updated this since 2006.	This policy has been reviewed and a new draft policy will be presented to Corporate Governance Committee.	Head of Legal & Democratic Services	November 2014	In progress The draft amended policy is to be considered by Corporate Governance Committee on 5 November 2014.
Our environmental policy is out of date and we do not have a formal corporate approach to environmental management that would help to demonstrate our values and ethics by committing to ensuring that we help to maintain, enhance and use natural resources sustainably now and in the future.	There are currently no plans to revisit our existing policies; however, sustainability is now a core principle in our community planning and is reflected in Denbighshire's draft Well-being Plan, due for publication in November 2014.	Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation	November 2014	<i>No progress update response received</i>

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Regulations & Standards				
<p>We have an independent and objective internal audit service providing assurance across the whole range of DCC's services, including partnerships. The service has not yet carried out the required self-assessment review to ensure that it complies with the new Public Sector Internal Audit Standards but plans to do this early in 2014/15.</p>	<p>Self-assessment review against Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and report outcome to Corporate Governance Committee.</p>	<p>Head of Internal Audit</p>	<p>Review complete by 30 September 2014 and reported to next available committee meeting</p>	<p>In progress Self-assessment in progress and will be completed within the timescale. Improvement plan to be developed and reported to Corporate Governance Committee for monitoring.</p>
<p>We have made significant improvements in information governance during the year; however, we recognise that we still have a lot of work to do but have identified this in our Information Management Strategy, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop e-learning modules for several areas of training; • improve the policy framework in areas such as email, records management and information security; • digitise catalogues and collections in our archives; • enhance our Publication Scheme and Disclosure Logs; • revise and embed the corporate retention schedule; and • achieve PSN accreditation for 2014. 	<p>We will continue to implement the Information Strategy</p> <p>E-learning on data protection is now in place</p> <p>Other actions on-going</p>	<p>Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation</p>	<p>Roll out to be completed September 2014</p>	<p><i>No progress update response received</i></p>

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Elected Members				
Scrutiny Committees produce annual reports on their work to County Council but the Corporate Governance Committee's self-assessment highlighted that it had not formed part of this performance monitoring arrangement in recent years.	Head of Internal Audit to work with Chair of Corporate Governance Committee to produce report on the Corporate Governance Committee's performance and effectiveness for 2013-14.	Head of Internal Audit/Chair Corporate Governance Committee	Draft report by 31 July 2014	Complete Item for discussion at Corporate Governance Committee in September 2014.
Stakeholder Engagement				
Our latest resident survey highlighted that most people do not feel well-informed about the Council's performance and a range of other issues asked in the survey.	We will continue to publish user-friendly performance information on the Council's website.	Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation	On-going	<i>No progress update response received</i>
	The Council's Corporate Communications Strategy Year 2 Action Plan includes various actions that will improve communication with residents to raise more awareness. This Strategy forms part of the team's service plan for 2014/15.	Various	Various timescales but Strategy to be implemented fully by 31 March 2015	In progress Part of Internal Audit review 2014/15.
The value of effective business engagement is only just being recognised, which means that we have a lot more work to do before we see the benefits that result from recent developments. We need to ensure that effective opportunities exist for businesses to provide feedback on the delivery of the Economic and Community Ambition Strategy / Programme	Leader and Corporate Director for Economic and Community Ambition to undertake annual visits to Business Groups and to the Top 10 businesses in the county to ensure that we are doing all we can to support local businesses and facilitate easy and accessible contact with senior decision makers within the Council.	Leader & Corporate Director for Community Ambition	Annual	<i>No progress update response received</i>

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<p>and identify what we need to do to make engagement with the Council a valuable activity for businesses. In the longer term, as key stakeholders in the delivery of the overall vision for our economy, we need to increase business participation in making decisions about how we plan and invest Council budgets and resources for greatest economic effect.</p>	<p>A project to ensure that we are recognised as business-friendly. This will improve our engagement, both on a one to one business basis and also on a collective basis.</p>	<p>Public Protection Manager</p>	<p>Project timescales within Economic & Community Ambition Strategy</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>A project proposal has been developed by the project manager, approved by the project sponsor and a project team has been set up.</p> <p>The Economic Ambition Board has approved the project and will receive regular reports, since it is one of the projects in the Economic Ambition Strategy</p> <p>Workshops have taken place with representatives of the business sector, including Chamber of Commerce, Federation for Small Businesses and Federation of Master Builders. We now have a set of outcomes, that have been shaped by industry.</p> <p>A business regulation survey and regulatory staff survey will now be undertaken, and task and finish groups set up to progress with other actions.</p>
	<p>Annual survey of businesses. The results of the first survey are currently being collated and will inform how we work with businesses in future.</p>	<p>Economic & Business Development Manager</p>	<p>Annually in June</p>	<p><i>No progress update response received</i></p>

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<p>Our Strategic HR service is working on a major programme to improve its performance since being identified as a significant governance issue in last year's Annual Governance Statement. The service has also reported its progress on implementing improvements arising from an adverse Internal Audit report to the Corporate Governance Committee. There are still concerns over the delivery of the improvement programme.</p>	<p>Internal Audit review to assess progress with improvement. Report to Corporate Governance Committee on outcome of review.</p>	<p>Head of Internal Audit</p>	<p>Review complete by 30 June 2014 and reported to next available committee</p>	<p>Complete Review completed and reported to Corporate Governance Committee in September 2014.</p>