

Report To: Corporate Governance Committee

Date of Meeting: 5 November 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 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?

The update on the Governance Improvement Plan to Corporate Governance Committee on 29 September 2014 had some gaps where the Head of Internal Audit had not received a response from key officers. The Committee requested an update on those outstanding items at its next meeting.

3. What are the Recommendations?

The Committee reviews and comments on the progress report.

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.

The first update to the Corporate Governance Committee on 29 September 2014 was incomplete, as responses had not been provided to enable the Head of Internal Audit to update the entire Plan. These responses have now been received and are included in Appendix 1.

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.