

Governance Improvement Action Plan – Progress Report March 2015

Improvement Area	Action	Responsibility	Original 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 – new target date 30/06/15</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. Due to changes in Internal Audit, this work will now be carried out by 30 June 2015.</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procurement of construction services that highlighted several weaknesses, including that our procurement strategy is out of date.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 Service has also added to the</p>	<p>There is a separate action plan for dealing with the issues raised in the Internal Audit report.</p>	Head of Finance & Assets (service now under the Head of Communication, Marketing & Leisure)	As per action plan	<p>In progress – new target date May 2015</p> <p>Follow up of IA & WAO Action Plans reported to Corporate Governance Committee on three occasions and is behind schedule. The Committee requested a further update in May 2015.</p>
	<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.</p>			<p>New team in place July 2014. Move to Category Management to take place up to 2016.</p>

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<p>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>Training provided for finance staff and school finance managers. Members of staff undertaking procurement activities have been identified and contacted regarding a wide range of procurement training courses being held between February and May 2015.</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 - new target date March 2015</p> <p>A draft strategy has been developed and issued to services for consultation. The agreed draft will be presented to Corporate Governance Committee in March 2015 for consideration. In the meantime, the Council continues to use the current strategy.</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 - new target date 31/03/15</p> <p>Due to delays, roll-out will now be by 31 March 2015. Highways has expressed an interest in being a pilot to undergo training on the system as a 'first adopter'. This will be followed by Social Care.</p>

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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 – new target date 30/06/15</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.</p>
<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 – new target date 30/06/15</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.</p>

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Constitution				
<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, HR & 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 Head of Legal, HR & Democratic Services to provide a progress report to Corporate Governance Committee on 25 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, HR & 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 Code of Conduct refresher training was provided to elected members on 3 February 2015. The awareness raising strategy for employees has not yet been progressed.</p>

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Equalities				
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation</p>	<p>Autumn 2014</p>	<p>In progress CEG considered the E-learning module in October 2014. It should be rolled out corporately. In response to the Internal Audit report, CEG anticipates that the e-learning will increase awareness of equalities issues across the Council. SLT will provide details of members of staff who are required to complete the e-learning - particularly those members of staff who are deemed as front facing or likely to directly interact with people from/with protected characteristics</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Head of Internal Audit</p>	<p>Commencing September 2014</p>	<p>In progress This issue was debated at the Corporate Equalities Group. Alternative quality control ideas are being considered. Performance Scrutiny Committee has been asked to incorporate QA of the equality impact assessments as part of its standing agenda. This is to be confirmed.</p>
Policy Framework				
<p>We have an anti-fraud and corruption policy, although we have not reviewed and updated this since 2006.</p>	<p>This policy has been reviewed and a new draft policy will be presented to Corporate Governance Committee.</p>	<p>Head of Legal & Democratic Services</p>	<p>November 2014</p>	<p>In progress The draft amended policy was considered by Corporate Governance Committee on 5 November 2014 but is still to be finalised.</p>

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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	We have no plans to update the current policy. No further action is planned.
Regulations & Standards				
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.	Self-assessment review against Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and report outcome to Corporate Governance Committee.	Head of Internal Audit	Review complete by 30 September 2014 and reported to next available committee meeting	In progress Self-assessment completed and an improvement plan developed. This will be included in the Internal Audit Annual Report 2014/15 and reported to Corporate Governance Committee for monitoring.

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<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>In progress</p> <p>Corporate Information Manager to provide a separate progress report to Corporate Governance Committee on 25 March 2015.</p>
Elected Members				
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Head of Internal Audit/Chair Corporate Governance Committee</p>	<p>Draft report by 31 July 2014</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Item for discussion at Corporate Governance Committee in September 2014.</p>

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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	No further action is planned
	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	Complete Part of Internal Audit review 2014/15 - no issues raised

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<p>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 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>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.</p>	<p>Leader & Corporate Director for Community Ambition</p>	<p>Annual</p>	<p>Outstanding</p> <p>Visits to top 10 businesses have not progressed yet. Priority has been given to supporting the Freedoms and Flexibilities process and reviewing the Economic & Business Development (EBD) team.</p> <p>The review of the EBD team includes creating three roles to allow specific focus on business engagement - one generic role to support business networking and advice signposting, and two lead officer roles focusing respectively on high growth and lower growth potential key businesses.</p> <p>The Economic & Community Ambition Board has requested this to be a priority for 2015, with a plan to be presented to the Board in March 2015. The Board has suggested one business visit per month.</p> <p>One visit was carried out in January 2015, which proved to be very useful, allowing facilitation of contact with relevant council services to allow the business to discuss its plans for growth.</p> <p>The Council also received feedback from a study undertaken by a research fellow on its behalf in which he spoke with eight key businesses, which the Council will now be able to follow up.</p>

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	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.	Public Protection Manager	Project timescales within Economic & Community Ambition Strategy	<p>In progress</p> <p>This action now forms a project (Better Business For All) within the Economic & Community Ambition Strategy and is monitored as a project on Verto and by the Economic Ambition Board.</p> <p>It will therefore no longer be reported as part of the action plan to avoid duplication.</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.	Economic & Business Development Manager	Annually in June	<p>Complete</p> <p>Survey complete and results being analysed for reporting to and discussion at the Economic Ambition Programme Board.</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.	Internal Audit review to assess progress with improvement. Report to Corporate Governance Committee on outcome of review.	Head of Internal Audit	Review complete by 30 June 2014 and reported to next available committee	<p>Complete</p> <p>Review completed and reported to Corporate Governance Committee in September 2014.</p>