

Report To: Corporate Governance Committee

Date of Meeting: 14 November 2012

Lead Member / Officer: Cllr Barbara Smith / Alan Smith

Report Author: Tony Ward

Title: Denbighshire County Council Improvement Assessment Letter

1. What is the report about?

This report presents the Improvement Assessment Letter for Denbighshire County Council, issued by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) on 17th September 2012. The letter is attached at Appendix I.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

This report provides information regarding one of the key external regulatory reports received by the council each year.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the committee consider the report, and highlight any issues that it feels should be raised with the Performance Scrutiny Committee when the report is discussed there on 29th November 2012.

4. Report details.

The Improvement Assessment is the main mechanism for the WAO to report its assessment of the council's performance and prospects for improvement. The latest Improvement Assessment Letter was issued on 17th September 2012. Although there are no formal recommendations in the letter, Members need to have an opportunity to discuss the letter in order to decide whether there any particular aspects of performance that require further scrutiny.

The next Improvement Assessment Letter is due to be issued by the WAO before the end of November 2012. This letter should be presented to this committee at its meeting on 27th February 2013.

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

The Annual Improvement Letter provides an assessment of the council's performance and also of its prospects for improvement. A key element of the information considered by the WAO when drafting the letter is the council's performance in relation to delivering the priorities in its Corporate Plan. The WAO is required to formally assess the council's Annual Performance Report and its

Corporate Plan. Neither document was available for assessment prior to the publication of this Improvement Assessment Letter, as the draft versions of both documents were discussed (and approved) by Council on 9th October 2012. The WAO will therefore include an evaluation of both documents in its Improvement Assessment Update Letter which is due to be published before the end of November 2012.

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

There are no implications for any particular service areas.

7. What consultations have been carried out and has an Equality Impact Assessment Screening been undertaken?

The WAO undertook a number of interviews with relevant officers and Elected Members before drafting the Improvement Assessment Letter. The draft report was shared with the council, and feedback was requested, prior to publication.

It has not been necessary to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment of this report, as it does not require a decision that will impact on staff or service users. However, an equality impact assessment was undertaken on the council's Corporate Plan 2012-17, and this will be taken into account in the WAO Improvement Assessment Update Letter which is due to be published before the end of November 2012.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement

There are no obvious significant financial implications arising from the report.

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

This report presents no new risks for the council.

10. Power to make the Decision

This report is for information, rather than decision.