

Report To: Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 29 November 2012

Lead Member / Officer: Lead Member for Modernising and Performance/
Head of Business Planning and Performance

Report Author: Corporate Improvement Team Manager

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?

To provide information regarding one of the key external regulatory reports received by the Council each year, and to enable the Performance Scrutiny Committee to carry out its performance management function.

3. What are the Recommendations?

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 3.1 consider the report, and identify any areas of performance that require further scrutiny and should therefore be planned into the Committee's Forward Work Programme; and
- 3.2 agree to add the next WAO Improvement Assessment Letter to its agenda on 10th January 2013.

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 are 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. The Committee should consider whether it is able to accommodate this letter on the agenda for its meeting of 10th January 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, but does seek the Committee to consider whether it wishes to consider specific areas of performance for inclusion in its forward work programme.

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