

Report To: Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 19 September 2013

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

Report Author: Corporate Improvement Manager

Title: Proposal for Corporate Plan Performance Reporting

1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report is about future arrangements for reporting performance against the Corporate Plan.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 The purpose of this report is to consult with the committee about the proposals contained within this paper.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 It is recommended that the committee support the following proposals:

3.1.1 To reduce the number of in-year Corporate Plan Performance Reports from 4 to 2 per year. In addition to this, the committee would still receive an Annual Performance Report.

3.1.2 To reduce the scale of these in-year reports so that they only focus on exceptions in relation to performance measures and activities (i.e. the things that we have most influence on).

3.1.3 To align the bi-annual reviews of the Corporate Risk Register so that they are considered by the Performance Scrutiny Committee at the same time as the proposed bi-annual Corporate Plan Performance Reports.

4. Report details

4.1 The Corporate Improvement Team Manager (Tony Ward) is leaving his post on 20th September 2013 due to an internal promotion. In response to the current discussions about efficiency savings for 2014-16, the opportunity has been taken to delete the Corporate Improvement Team Manager post and to develop a new way of delivering the core business of the Service. One of the things we feel could be done differently is performance management. We currently have different teams reporting performance against the Corporate Plan and the BIG Plan, but it now makes more sense to bring both tasks together under a single function now that both plans use the same performance management framework.

- 4.2 It has also become clear that an opportunity exists to streamline our processes and reduce the level of performance reporting. We currently present Quarterly Performance Reports to the Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet on the Corporate Plan, but we feel that this level of reporting is not necessary anymore. Since the publication of our Corporate Plan 2012-17, we are clearer than ever about what we want to achieve. More importantly, we understand the reasons why some things remain a “priority for improvement” and we are clear that we have plans in place to address these. It is also true that very little changes from quarter to quarter, and those reports therefore often stimulate similar debates. For these reasons, it is proposed that we reduce our Corporate Plan performance reports from quarterly to bi-annual (**see recommendation 3.1.1**). That would result in a Quarter 2 report in December each year and a Quarter 4 report in June each year. Several other councils in Wales, including Conwy, have always had a bi-annual system for performance reporting, so our proposal is not out of line with what other councils are doing already.
- 4.3 In addition to reducing the frequency of performance reporting, it would also be beneficial to reduce the scale of those reports. Due to the breadth of the Corporate Plan, covering 7 priorities and 14 outcomes, the performance reports take a significant amount of resource to produce and a significant commitment from Members to consider. Most of the Outcome Indicators are annual and don’t change until the end of each financial year. It therefore feels right that a detailed analysis of the Outcome Indicators should only be included in the Annual Performance Report. It is Performance Measures and Activities that are most beneficial to include within the in-year performance reports as these are the elements within our control and updates tend to be available in-year. However, the position for many of these things will often be “excellent” and therefore does not warrant a discussion. It is therefore proposed that the bi-annual Corporate Plan performance reports are developed on an exceptions basis, i.e. they will report on performance measures and activities that are a “priority for improvement” or show some other cause for concern, e.g. they have moved from being “good” to “acceptable” with the potential to become a “priority for improvement” (**see recommendation 3.1.2**).
- 4.4 The Corporate Risk Register is currently presented to the Performance Scrutiny Committee twice a year. We are not proposing to change the frequency, but we are proposing to align this with the bi-annual Performance Reports (**see recommendation 3.1.3**). This will enable the committee to not only have an understanding of the current performance issues relating to the Corporate Plan, but to also consider the things that could impact on our performance at the same time.
- 4.5 The additional benefit of all these proposals would be to free up some time on the committee’s forward work programme.

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

- 5.1 The performance reports and the Corporate Risk Register relate directly to the delivery of the Corporate Plan. Although the proposal is to reduce the frequency and scale of the performance reports, we are confident that the Committee will still be able to effectively carry out its performance management function, and that the council will be able to exercise its duty to improve under these arrangements.

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

- 6.1 There are no additional costs or implications for other services. It will enable the Business Planning & Performance Service to continue to deliver its core functions whilst making significant efficiency savings.

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

- 7.1 Changing the arrangements for performance reporting has no impact on staff or the community, therefore an equality impact assessment is not required.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1 This paper is being presented for the purpose of consulting with the Performance Scrutiny Committee. Discussions have taken place with the Lead Member for Modernisation & Performance; and our local Wales Audit Office representative, both of whom support the proposals.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1 The changes proposed should not weaken performance reporting or wider governance arrangements. The proposals help to secure an efficiency saving proposed for 2014/15.

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

- 10.1 There is a risk that fewer performance reports could lead to reduced scrutiny of performance. However, we are not concerned about the consequences of the proposed changes because we have a strong performance management framework, a robust Service Performance Challenge process and a strong Performance Scrutiny Committee. The proposals are also in line with what many other councils in Wales already do.

11. Power to make the Decision

- 11.1 Performance management and monitoring is a key element of the Wales Programme for Improvement, which is underpinned by the statutory requirements of the Local Government Act 1999 and the Local Government "Wales" Measure 2009.

11.2 Articles 6.1 and 6.3.4(b) of the Council's Constitution

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