

Cabinet

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 26 th September 2017
Report Subject	Wales Audit Office Study Reports
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wales Audit Office (WAO) have recently completed three reviews of the Council as part of their performance audit work:

- Corporate Assessment follow-up;
- Good Governance when determining service changes; and
- Effectiveness of the Council's efficiency savings programme.

The outcomes of the reviews are a fair reflection of the Council's practices and arrangements.

None of the reviews make any new statutory recommendations.

There are four new voluntary proposals for improvement.

An executive response to the reviews is set out.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To endorse the executive response to the reviews of the Wales Audit Office.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE REVIEWS
1.01	<p>During 2016-17 the Wales Audit Office undertook work on three different topics and presented their findings to the Council. The Good Governance review was held across all 22 councils. The other two reviews were local to Flintshire and complemented earlier work.</p>
1.02	<p>The Corporate Assessment follow-up reviewed progress against the seven Proposals for Improvement issued in the 2015 Corporate Assessment report. It concentrated on actions which were incomplete at an earlier follow-up in 2016. These latter actions included the Council's approach to business planning, progress with Corporate strategies (People, ICT, and Asset Management strategies), consistency of risk management approaches and workforce planning.</p> <p>The overall conclusion was:</p> <p><i>"The Council continues to make progress in addressing the 2015 corporate assessment proposals for improvement."</i></p> <p>No further proposals for improvement were included. The final report is attached at Appendix 1 and the executive response is set out at Appendix 4.</p>
1.03	<p>The Good Governance review covered governance arrangements in circumstances where there have been significant service changes. The overall conclusion was:</p> <p><i>"The Council's governance arrangements for determining significant service change are generally effective, with some opportunities to further strengthen its approach."</i></p> <p>WAO identified three proposals for improvement:</p> <p>P1. Clearly defining the arrangements for scrutinising the impact of individual service changes;</p> <p>P2. Ensuring that Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) that are produced are of a consistently high quality; and</p> <p>P3. Reviewing, and where necessary improving, the effectiveness of its decision-making arrangements explicitly in relation to service change.</p> <p>The final report is attached at Appendix 2 and the executive response is set out at Appendix 4.</p>
1.04	<p>The review of the Council's effectiveness of the efficiency savings programme complements an earlier Financial Resilience review. The overall conclusion was:</p> <p><i>"Arrangements for planning and monitoring efficiency savings are effective, but arrangements for evaluating non-financial impact and for sharing post-</i></p>

	<p><i>project learning are under-developed.”</i> WAO identified one proposal for improvement:</p> <p><i>“Introduce a more robust and systematic approach to post-project evaluation, suitable for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>evaluating the non-financial impact of efficiency / change initiatives; and</i> • <i>capturing, sharing and promoting learning and good practice.”</i> <p>The final report along with the Council’s response is attached at Appendix 3 and the executive response is set out at Appendix 4.</p>
1.05	Proposals for improvement, where agreed with the Wales Audit Office reviews, are actioned and monitored.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no specific resource implications.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Wales Audit Office consult internally in the course of producing their reports.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	There are no new risks raised in the reviews.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – Corporate Assessment follow-up (July 2017)</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Good Governance when determining significant service changes (June 2017)</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Review of the effectiveness of the Council’s efficiency savings programme (August 2017)</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Council Executive response.</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Wales Audit Office: Annual Improvement Report incorporating the Corporate Assessment report (March 2015)</p> <p>Contact Officer: Karen Armstrong, Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer Telephone: 01352 702740</p>

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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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7.01	Wales Audit Office (WAO) - Works to support the Auditor General as the public sector watchdog for Wales. They aim to ensure that the people of Wales know whether public money is being managed wisely and that public bodies in Wales understand how to improve outcomes.
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