



Briefing note

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Audited body: Carmarthenshire County Council

Topic: Follow-up of WAO Proposals for Improvement

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Wales Audit Office Briefing Note

For Audit Committee Friday 6 January 2017

Introduction

In the Wales Audit Office's annual Audit Plan, the Auditor General sets out his programme of financial and performance audit work for the year. The current plan includes the following:

Performance audit

The components of my performance audit work are shown below and have been designed in order to help deliver the high-level objectives set out in our 2013-2016 corporate strategy

(www.audit.wales/publication/wales-audit-office-corporate-strategy-2013-2016)



As can be seen, part of the programme includes follow up activity. We undertake this to ensure that the Council is taking steps to address any recommendation or proposals for improvement that we have made in any of our reports (National Reports, Local Government Studies and Carmarthenshire County Council specific reports).

We do not follow up all recommendations and proposals for improvement through direct audit activity. We generally choose a sample to look at in detail and discuss others through our regular meetings with officers.

Proposals for Improvement 2015-16

In 2015-16 the WAO issued the following two reports:

- Annual Improvement Report 2015/16 (Published March 2016)
- Corporate Assessment Report (Published January 2016)

No new recommendations appeared in the first report. However, we did make a number of proposals for improvement in the **Corporate Assessment report**. We included these in our current years audit plan and have been monitoring them during 2016-17.

The proposals for improvement were as follows

Governance:

- Develop a forward work programmes to ensure that all appropriate committees have a published up to date programme owned by committee Members.
- Publish a register of delegated decisions.
- Develop and deliver training to help Members understand their roles and responsibilities and refresh this training delivery as Members move between roles.
- Review the remit of Audit Committee to make sure it is delivering what is expected of it.

An update on these will be included in the report arising from our all-Wales Thematic Study 'Good Governance when determining service changes' and our Annual Improvement Report both due to be issued in March 2017.

Use of Resources – People:

- Finalise and implement the revised structure for People Management and Performance (PMP) Division.
- Ensure all staff have an annual individual performance appraisal.
- Simplify communication mechanisms both within PMP and those used for communicating people management initiatives to the wider workforce.

- Review the ICT systems and equipment used within PMP and drive developments to deliver as a minimum:
 - a single personnel record;
 - effective self-service;
 - agile working for PMP officers;
 - a clear business requirement for ICT communicated to the ICT Strategy Group; and
 - more effective use of the Insight reporting system.

Fieldwork on these proposals is expected to take place in January 2017. An update on these will be included our Annual Improvement Report due to be issued in March 2017.

Use of Resources – Assets:

- Strengthen the service level asset management plans and improve links between these plans and the overarching corporate asset management plan.
- Report progress against the corporate asset management plan and the office accommodation strategy to Members quarterly.

Fieldwork on these proposals is expected to take place in January 2017. An update on these will be included our Annual Improvement Report due to be issued in March 2017.

Use of Resources – ICT and Information Management:

- Ensure that the ICT work streams resolve the apparent disconnect between the business and the ICT service and take appropriate account of business needs

We have been working on this for several months, monitoring the changes taking places. A formal update on progress will be included in our Annual Improvement Report due to be issued in March 2017.

Improvement Planning:

- Provide clearer direction and professional level challenge on all performance management issues to ensure consistent application of the Council's performance management framework and sharing of good practice.

Site work is expected to take place in January 2017. An update on these will be included our Annual Improvement Report due to be issued in March 2017.