

**1. Annual Performance Appraisal of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) 2012/13** - Local report to Gwynedd published October 2013

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Ensure corporate support for looked after children, in particular in the education planning field.

Progress against improvement proposals

The Gwynedd Council Corporate Parenting Strategy was accepted at a meeting of the Corporate Parent Panel on 23 October 2017. The members of the Panel include the Council Leader, the Chief Executive, Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families and the Statutory Director. Agreement was reached on which specific fields will receive the panel's attention over the next period with education being one of the priorities.

Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that the improvement proposal is noted as "completed", and that the proposal will not be discussed by this Committee again.

**2. Good Scrutiny? Good Question** - National Report by the Wales Audit Office published May 2014

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Explain the roles of executive members and senior officers when contributing to the scrutiny process.
2. Ensure that scrutiny members, specifically scrutiny chairs, receive training and assistance in order to ensure that they possess all skills required to conduct effective scrutiny work.
3. Develop scrutiny forward planning processes further in order to:
  - Provide clear logic for selecting subjects
  - Focus more on outcomes
  - Ensure that the most suitable scrutiny method for the subject field and the desired outcome is used.
4. Reconcile scrutiny programmes and performance management, self-evaluation and Council improvement arrangements.

5. Ensure that the impact of scrutiny can be appraised appropriately and that it is implemented in order to improve the function's effectiveness; including conducting follow-up work on proposed actions and auditing results.
6. Carry out regular self-evaluations of scrutiny arrangements by using the 'effective outcomes and features of effective overview and scrutiny arrangements for local government' developed by the Wales Scrutiny Officers Network.

### Progress against improvement proposals

Following the publishing of the above-mentioned report we commenced a comprehensive process of self-evaluating our scrutiny arrangements, and learnt from others. This work resulted in several models of new scrutiny structures for the Council to consider. The amended scrutiny arrangements were adopted at its meeting on 2 March 2017, and would come into force after the election of the new Council in May.

A series of training courses were held in February 2017 and again in September for members of all Scrutiny Committees (including the Audit and Governance Committee) on chairing skills and questioning skills in order to scrutinise effectively. Two meetings of the Scrutiny Forum have been held since the new procedure was adopted with the Scrutiny Forum exercising its main role of ensuring that the correct matters are scrutinised and investigated across the Council. A part of the Scrutiny Forum's annual work programme will be to conduct continuous self-review of scrutiny arrangements and the process of prioritising matters to be scrutinised. In 2016/17 a pilot commenced where two members of the Scrutiny Committee sit in on internal performance review meetings where the Cabinet Members challenge the performance of the service they are responsible for. This process has now been formalised since May 2017. This has strengthened the relationship between the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committees and has led to identifying matters to be included on the 'Scrutiny *Gwyntyllu* Procedure Log' (which in turn could be matters being officially scrutinised).

### Conclusion

We propose that processes are in place to respond to each of the above-mentioned recommendations; however, it is premature to measure their impact at the moment. Wales Audit Office, as part of a national audit, are coming here in November to attempt to assess the success and progress made with scrutiny in Gwynedd.

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that each improvement proposal is noted as being "in progress".

**3. Annual Performance Appraisal of the Care and Social Services  
Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) 2013/14 - Local report to Gwynedd  
published October 2014**

Improvement Proposals arising from the report -

1. There is a need to improve the percentage of initial assessments being completed in seven days' time; in 2013/14 the Council managed to complete 67% of initial assessments in seven working days, compared to an average percentage of 72% in Wales.
2. A reduction was seen in the percentage of children being re-referred from 39% in 2011/12 to 26.6% in 2013/14; however, this percentage remains higher than the average percentage in Wales and it is a field where continuous improvement is required.
3. The national review of LAC identified the need to develop opportunities for looked after children to take advantage of basic health services and moving on accommodation. As part of their corporate parenting responsibilities, the Council should ensure that it is possible for the children in its care to use basic health care.  
The performance for registering with a GP within 10 days was seen to reduce from 92.5% in 2012/13 to 78.4% in 2013/14. Although the percentage of the health assessments of looked after children has improved from 15% to 46%, it continues to be much lower than the average percentage for Wales, namely 81%.
4. The Council has reduced the number of looked after children from 203 in 2012/13 to 185 in 2013/14. It has secured substantial improvement in its performance in terms of the timeliness of conducting reviews of LAC care plans, with 94.3% being carried out within statutory time-scales, compared with 75.4% in 2012/13. However, this continues to be lower than the average percentage in Wales (95.9%).
5. Quality assurance - Adults, Health and Well-being Department:  
The Council's ability to report on performance in a detailed manner has continued to improve. The risk assessment arrangements in the service have improved by regularly utilising a risk register and updating it. The Council has not established a corporate quality assurance system. It intends to do this in 2014-15. The need to improve quality assurance arrangements was highlighted by the CSSIW in the annual appraisal report of last year. In addition, it is a field to be improved in the national surveys recently held and in the adoption inspection report. The Council will introduce a cross-cutting safeguarding children and adults quality assurance team.
6. Quality assurance - Children and Supporting Families Department:  
The Council's ability to report on performance in a detailed manner has continued to improve. The risk assessment arrangements in the service have improved by regularly utilising a risk register and updating it. The Council has not

established a corporate quality assurance system. It intends to do this in 2014-15. The need to improve quality assurance arrangements was highlighted by the CSSIW in the annual appraisal report of last year. In addition, it is a field to be improved in the national reviews recently held and in the adoption inspection report. The Council will introduce a cross-cutting safeguarding children and adults quality assurance team.

7. The Council has taken positive steps in terms of its corporate parenting arrangements; however these now need to be developed further. The corporate parenting panel worked with looked after children during 2014/15 to provide an outline of the action steps that the Council will have to take in order to assist looked after children. Members will need to provide more assistance to ensure that the strategic aims are owned in an effective manner and translated into actions across the Council's services and partner agencies; and ensure appropriate health care, more educational assistance and temporary employment in the Council for looked after children.

#### Progress against improvement proposals

In order to respond to improvement proposal 1 above, the Department has appointed one additional Social Worker post in the Referrals Team. Now, a senior worker approves the assessments in order to improve the 7 day performance, and regular reports are created to remind the manager of cases that need to be closed. Since the establishment of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014) that became a statutory requirement in April 2016, this requirement/measure does not exist and initial assessments do not exist. Consequently, the indicator has been removed from the national suite.

The Children and Supporting People Department is monitoring the situation described in improvement proposal 2 closely in order to ensure and maintain the continuous improvement. The Children and Supporting People Department's systems now differentiate between referrals and notices - this was not the case in the past. This performance measure was deleted in 16/17 and therefore we do not collect the data due to other priorities.

The Children and Supporting People Department is monitoring the situation described in improvement proposal 3 closely. Discussions are continuing with BCUHB to ensure that health assessment implementation arrangements are reviewed in a timely manner. The development of work in this field is reported upon regularly to the Corporate Parenting Panel. We are continuing to discuss with the Health Board in an attempt to ensure that there is continuous improvement in the health assessments carried out in a timely manner for looked after children. The performance of 16/17 was 68% compared with 60% in 15/16 and 50% in 14/15. The service continues to hold discussions in order to increase the percentage. 86% of looked after children are registered with a GP within 10 working days, which is progress against the historical performance.

The Children and Supporting People Department is monitoring the situation described in improvement proposal 4 closely. The Children and Families Service to receive reasons from the Independent Review Child Protection Coordinator for each late conference and act as appropriate.

Substantial progress has been made over a period of years in the number of reviews being carried out - from 459 in 11/12 to 674 in 16/17. The unit's resources have continued on the same level despite the increase, nevertheless, the performance in respect of the timeliness of statutory reviews is 91%. We capture information on the reasons why some reviews are held late and we report on this during the performance management cycle.

### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that improvement proposals 1 and 2 are noted as "completed", and improvement proposals 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 as "in progress".

#### **4. Gwynedd Council Local Authorities Safeguarding Children Arrangements** - Local report for Gwynedd from the Wales Audit Office published in October 2014

#### Improvement Proposals arising from the report -

1. Review the requirements under the Children Act 2004 for the Local Authorities' Designated Child Protection Officer in order to ensure that the Council complies in full with the legislation.

#### Progress against improvement proposal

In response to the improvement proposal the Children and Supporting Families Department submitted a proposal to the Cabinet on 16 December 2016 and the report was discussed with the relevant officers to seek to identify potential actions. The proposal was then submitted to the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Strategic Panel (29 September 2015) in order to see whether any other action in was required. There was an issue in terms of the vagueness of the recommendation and the Department contacted the Wales Audit Office to discuss what exactly they had in mind.

The Wales Audit Office's response to the enquiry was received on 4 July 2016. In accordance with the concern raised by us, the Wales Audit Office acknowledged that their use of 'LADO' was incorrect and misleading as it referred to England rather than Wales. They acknowledged that Gwynedd's use of 'designated officer' in departments also made the corporate result of 68% difficult to guarantee and this coincided with the intentions of their enquiry about the LADO officer. The Wales Audit Office confirmed that they wished to ensure that staff knew whom they should

approach to report child abuse as 32% of the staff suggested that they did not know who to approach at the time.

After the Council invested resources in promoting and training to provide guidance to staff on their safeguarding and referral responsibilities, the situation saw considerable improvement. By 2016, WAO did not require a response from the Department, but wished to leave the matter for their attention. The Department is of the opinion that the recent work coincides with the original enquiry of the Wales Audit Office.

### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that the improvement proposal is noted as "completed".

## **5. Delivering with Less - the impact on environmental health services and citizens - National Report by the Wales Audit Office published October 2014**

### Improvement Proposals arising from the report -

1. Amend the best practice standards in order to:
  - reconcile work in the environmental health field,
  - note the more extensive contribution of environmental health towards achieving the strategic priorities of Welsh Government,
  - note the benefits and impacts of environmental health services in terms of safeguarding citizens.
  
2. Engage better with local residents regarding plans to cut budgets and change services by:
  - consulting with residents on the proposed changes in services and use the findings to drive decisions;
  - outline which services will be cut and how these cuts will affect residents, and
  - note plans to increase payments to change service standards.
  
3. Improve efficiency and value for money by:
  - Noting the statutory and non-statutory duties of Councils' environmental health services
  - Agreeing on environmental health priorities for the future and the role of councils when delivering these
  - Determining an 'acceptable standard of performance' for environmental health services (maximum and minimum) and publicise them amongst citizens
  - Improving efficiency and maintaining performance on the agreed level by doing the following

- Collaborating and/or integrate with others in order to reduce costs and/or improve quality
  - Awarding services on external contracts where they can be provided in a more cost-effective way in accordance with the standards agreed upon
  - Introducing and/or increasing payments and focusing on activities that generate income
  - Using grants in a strategic way in order to ensure the greatest impact and profit
  - Reducing activities in order to focus on core statutory and strategic priorities.
4. Improve strategic planning work by:
- noting, gathering and analysing financial data, data on performance and data on demand/need in relation to environmental health services;
  - analysing the data gathered in order to drive and understand the relationship between 'cost:benefit:impact' and use this information as grounds to decisions on Councils' health services in the future;
  - agreeing how digital information can be used to plan and develop environmental health services in the future.

#### Progress against improvement proposals

In order to respond to improvement proposal 1 above, the Department notes that it aims to achieve the basic practice standards, although this is not easy due to financial constraints.

The Environment Department has shared information with citizens and elected Members as part of the Gwynedd Challenge process. Reviews are currently being carried out on the Service's Units and have been completed for the licensing element, but there will still be a need to complete several tasks to act following the review. The review has also included seeking residents' opinion of the Service, and the Review will take time to be implemented across the Service.

The department also notes that a review of the Service's structure has been undertaken to respond to the practical impact of losing two front-line jobs as part of the cutbacks. The review of 2017/18 fees is currently ongoing and further opportunities have been identified to charge fees for service by recovering costs for offering advice, with a view to being operational in April 2018. A further review of taxi licensing fees will happen in 2018/19.

For proposal 3, all relevant fees associated with the services offered are reviewed so that services can move towards recovering costs. Potential options of integrating or working more closely with other services within the Council have been considered to discover whether or not it would be possible to further increase efficiency and reduce costs. To this end, there has already been a reduction in non-statutory activity. The relevant policies are reviewed so that the public is clear in terms of what is expected

as a service. The Department is also moving towards providing more information on-line and to increase the capacity of self service.

Local performance measures of the Environment Department are being reviewed to be certain of our ability to measure the demand for services effectively, and that the public receive a quality and timely service. The measures will be used to plan if there is a need to review how the service unit resources are divided.

### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that improvement proposals 1, 2, 3 and 4 are noted as "in progress".

## **6. Managing early retirements in various Welsh public bodies - National Report by the Wales Audit Office published February 2015**

### Improvement Proposals arising from the report -

1. Public bodies should give appropriate consideration to the impact of every arrangement for early retirement in terms of equality, in particular if the public body is implementing a specific scheme where many people could retire.
2. Public bodies should monitor the expected and secured savings as a result of early retirements and they should provide a report on them as part of their internal governance arrangements. This will be of assistance when plans are made to reduce costs in the future.

### Progress against improvement proposals

A report was submitted to the Council's Corporate Scrutiny Committee which referred to some elements relating to early retirements. We do not have recent examples where approval has had to be sought from councillors for more costly packages. The internal audit unit had programmed an audit of this field for 2016/17; however, in light of lack of resources, a decision was made that conducting an audit of controls in this field was not a priority.

This Council keeps detailed records regarding decisions relating to early retirement, including the associated costs. The fact that the Internal Audit Unit does not consider this to be a priority for further audit is one sign that appropriate arrangements are in place.

### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that improvement proposal 1 is noted as "completed", and improvement proposal 2 as being "in progress".

**7. Annual Improvement Report of the Wales Audit Office 2014/15 - Local report to Gwynedd published July 2015**

Improvement Proposals arising from the report -

1. Having a greater role in Welsh Government's Waste and Resources Plan in order to validate and/or improve waste recycling plans and reduce costs.

Progress against improvement proposals

The 'Toolkit Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) exercise, one of Welsh Government's programmes, has been completed. The 'Kerbside Analysis Tool' review has been completed; however, WRAP have also been commissioned to carry out additional work such as reviewing recycling centres and our commercial waste service. As WRAP is a long-term plan, this work will continue into the future.

Conclusion

Based on what it noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that the improvement proposal is noted as being "completed".

**8. Annual Performance Appraisal of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) 2014/15 - Local report to Gwynedd published October 2015**

Improvement Proposals arising from the report -

1. Safeguarding is a priority for the Council, and it has put corporate arrangements into action to improve safeguarding practices. There is now a need for it to put changes into action in its adults safeguarding processes.  
During the year, 178 POVA referrals were received, six fewer than in the previous year. Of these referrals, 100% of them were completed with the risk being managed. The Council contributed towards a Review of Adult Services Practice, which noted that improvements were required in the Council's POVA practices. When operational, these would increase the involvement of care providers and make the investigation and its outcome clearer. Adult safeguarding will be a field where CSSIW will take follow-up steps in 2015-2016.
2. The Council has started to develop a mental health commissioning strategy, and mental health services will be a field where CSSIW will take follow-up steps in 2015-2016.
3. Assistance for Carers -

The Council assessed or reviewed the needs of 241 adult carers in 2014-2015, which is a reduction from the 298 carers assessed in the previous year. This is cause for concern as the number of those caring for adults who receive an assessment of their own needs has increased over the past four years in Wales, despite the fact that the number has been dropping continuously in Gwynedd. The number of adult carers assessed or re-assessed in their own right during the year where a service was provided for them during the year was 132.

#### 4. Timeliness of Child Protection Conferences -

The Council's performance in terms of holding initial child protection conferences has improved slightly, but it is lower than the average in Wales (85% compared with 93%). Also, a drop was seen in the Council's performance in terms of holding statutory reviews and child protection review conferences. The loss of the child protection coordinator and staff sickness contributed to the drop in performance in these fields. The timeliness of child protection conferences remains to be a field that requires improvement. Also, the Council needs to maintain and improve the timeliness of LAC reviews, which are currently managed by the safeguarding and quality unit.

#### 5. Timeliness of looked after children reviews -

The Council's performance in terms of holding initial child protection conferences has improved slightly, but it is lower than the average in Wales (85% compared with 93%). Also, a drop was seen in the Council's performance in terms of holding statutory reviews and child protection review conferences. The loss of the child protection coordinator and staff sickness contributed to the drop in performance in these fields. The timeliness of child protection conferences remains to be a field that requires improvement. Also, the Council needs to maintain and improve the timeliness of LAC reviews, which are currently managed by the safeguarding and quality unit.

#### 6. Timeliness of health assessments for looked after children -

The Council only made small improvements in terms of the percentage of looked after children receiving a health assessment during the year, and this remains substantially lower than the Wales average (51% compared with 81%).

#### Progress against improvement proposals

In order to respond to proposal 1 above, the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit has been established in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department to be responsible for the POVA work. By now, almost every post has been filled and a work programme has been approved. The Department has re-directed capacity to

create two additional temporary posts in order to raise the momentum of the initial work and set a firm foundation over the next two years.

In order to respond to proposal 2 above, the Mental Health Service is now the responsibility of the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Manager. Therefore, we are taking the opportunity to take a step back to plan suitable governance arrangements for today and for the future. Positive initial discussions have been held with the Health Board and the Department is now much more confident that an effective service can be established jointly which will meet the needs of our residents. If the evidence shows an unmet need, additional resources will need to be considered to facilitate and achieve the work.

In order to respond to proposal 3 above, we are collaborating with our third sector and health partners to develop a Gwynedd and Anglesey Carers Partnership Strategy. The information coming from the carers needs assessment has been inputted in the plan. The Carers Emergency Card scheme has been welcomed by carers in Meirionnydd and the intention is to promote its use in other areas.

As a response to proposal 4 above, in 2016/17, the performance was 88% which is progress from previous performance. The service retains a detailed record of the reasons why some conferences are late and report on this in the performance management cycle. During 2016/17, 147 conferences were held.

As a response to proposal 5 above, in 2016/17, the performance was 92% in terms of holding child protection review conferences on time. This is an improvement on previous performance and compared favourably with the Wales average.

As a response to proposal 6 above, the Health Board is responsible for carrying out health assessments for looked after children, despite the fact that the Council is responsible for the measure. The service is continuing discussions with the Health Board to ensure continuous improvement and some improvement has been seen, although this remains lower than the Wales average (see above comment).

### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that each improvement proposal is noted as being "in progress".

## **9. Helping People to Live Independently: "Do Councils Do Enough?" - National Report by the Wales Audit Office published October 2015**

### Improvement Proposals arising from the report -

1. Improve the strategic planning work and better coordinate activities for older people.

2. Improve the engagement and information for older people and the arrangements for disseminating that information.
3. Ensure effective management of the performance of the range of services assisting older people to live independently.

#### Progress against improvement proposals

As a response to proposal 1 and 3 above, the 'Age Well in Gwynedd Plan' was adopted by the Cabinet on 17 January 2017, which included an Action Plan of relevance to many Council departments. The Plan is monitored by the Well-being Manager, and she will be reporting back to the Cabinet on the progress made. Discussions are ongoing as Gwynedd Council draws up a new Business Plan to be operational from April 2018, regarding including a high level measure in the well-being field and assisting older people to live independently specifically. The intention will be to impose such a measure under the Sustainable Communities heading and bind this measure with the Future Generations Act. The Council, the Health Authority and all other stakeholders serve on the Local Services Board and as they complete their Well-being Assessments, it is anticipated that this agenda will feature high up in their work programme and that they will determine appropriate measures to measure progress across all services.

As a response to proposals 2 and 3 above, the Well-being Manager is the point of contact with a number of external organisations that contribute towards realising the Plan such as Age Cymru Gwynedd a Môn, Housing Associations, the Alzheimer's Society, Bangor University's Dementia Services Development Centre. Gwynedd Older People Council has been central as an engagement body relating to this agenda and they have played a part in saying what priorities they would like to see in the Plan.

#### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that each improvement proposal is noted as being "in progress".

### **10. National review of care and assistance to people with learning disabilities (Joint-review carried out by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales and the Health Care Inspectorate) - Local report to Gwynedd published June 2016**

#### Improvement Proposals arising from the report -

1. Strategic planning is needed with health colleagues in order to develop long-term aspirations and plans. A joint commissioning strategy should be developed between health and social services based on an analysis of needs.

2. The local authority should continue to develop and improve its communication with service providers, and include them in the work of drawing up a statement of the market's position and in discussions about a joint commissioning strategy with the health sector.
3. The Local Authority should review its arrangements for safeguarding adults, ensuring that there is clarity in terms of the quality assurance functions and responsibilities.
4. The local authority should review the way it safeguards people's rights where they are deprived of their liberty (DoLS) to ensure that human rights are supported and properly protected.

#### Progress against improvement proposals

The Council, the Health Authority and all other stakeholders serve on the Local Services Board and as they complete their Well-being Assessments, it is anticipated that this is where the work of strategic planning in this field will take place. It is anticipated that the care and support needs of people with learning disabilities will feature highly on their work programme and that they will determine appropriate measures to measure progress across all public services. However, there is some confusion regarding the question as to whether the Public Services Board or the Regional Board, established under the Social Services and Well-being Act, is the correct forum for this to be carried out. This confusion needs to be resolved in order to be in a position to move forward.

The Transformation Group, within the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, is driving the work programme in terms of the future commissioning strategy. The needs assessment has been drawn up and is going through its final steps in the co-production of the document with specific stakeholders. The intention is to complete this document in November 2017. It is then intended to begin setting principles and create a commissioning strategy based on the evidence from this document. Every Transformation project now includes key providers, namely the Health Board and the families/adults we support as needed. We hold regular engagement sessions.

The Adults, Health and Well-being Department has established a Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit, and a Senior Manager is responsible for the Unit. Consequently, our arrangements are much tighter, and there is clarity in terms of where the responsibilities lie. The DoLS Coordinator and Best Value Assessor now work within this unit. There is one more post to fill, but otherwise, the new arrangements are operational.

We propose that processes are in place that will ultimately lead us to the delivery of the improvement proposals. This field of work is also within the remit of the Care Scrutiny Committee.

### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that each improvement proposal is noted as being "in progress".

## **11. Financial resilience of local authorities in Wales 2015-16 - National Report** by the Wales Audit Office published August 2016

### Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Local authorities should strengthen their financial planning arrangements by: developing clearer links between the Medium Term Financial Plan and their corporate priorities and service plans; aligning other key strategies such as workforce and asset management plans with the Medium Term Financial Plan; developing fully-costed comprehensive multi-year savings schemes that provide the foundation to the Medium Term Financial Plan and encompass the Plan period, not just the next annual budget; categorising savings proposals so that the switch from traditional types of savings into transformational savings over the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan can be monitored; and ensuring that time-scales for delivering specific savings proposals are realistic and that the accountability for their delivery has been apportioned appropriately.
2. Local Authorities should develop corporate income generating and fee charging policies.
3. Local authorities should ensure that they have a comprehensive reserve funds strategy which outlines the specific purpose of disposable reserve funds gathered and the impact and use of these in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
4. Local Authorities should develop Key Performance Indicators to monitor the Medium Term Financial Plan.
5. Local authorities should ensure that savings plans are detailed enough to ensure that members are clear about what the plans intend to provide and that the provision of those plans can be scrutinised appropriately throughout the year.
6. Local authorities should ensure that they have capacity and corporate ability on a level which is able to effectively support the provision of savings schemes in the Medium Term Financial Plan at the required pace.

### Progress against improvement proposals

As a response to proposal 1 above, reports were submitted to a meeting of the Council on 2 March 2017, and the report and minutes of the decision, namely item 11 on the agenda, can be seen [here](#). Item 7 on the agenda of the Cabinet meeting on 18 July 2017 is also relevant, and the link to the report and minutes are [here](#).

As a response to proposal 2 above, a report was submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on 13 July 2017, and the report and minutes of the decision, namely item 8 on the agenda, can be seen [here](#).

As a response to proposal 3 above, a report was submitted to the Audit Committee on 15 June 2015, and the report and minute of the decision, namely item 13 on the agenda, can be seen [here](#).

As a response to proposal 4 above, the performance indicators can be seen in the performance reports of the Cabinet Member for Finance being submitted regularly to Cabinet meetings.

As a response to proposals 5 and 6 above, we as a Council respond to the most recent report from the Wales Audit Office, *Savings Schemes - Gwynedd Council* published in March 2017. Further details regarding our response can be seen under heading 20 below, but the work to realise the above initial proposal has been completed.

### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that improvement proposals 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are noted as "completed", and improvement proposal 2 as being "in progress".

## **12. Asset Management [Land and Buildings] - Local report to Gwynedd published October 2016**

### Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. The Council should lead the way by reopening discussions with local and regional partners regarding the development of a systematic way of joint asset planning, including opportunities to: agree on joint performance management systems, and use them; establish joint property services provision bodies; establish joint asset retention bodies.

### Progress against improvement proposals

After receiving this recommendation, the Public Services Board (Gwynedd and Anglesey) established a Property Asset work-stream and asked the Fire Service to lead on the work. This work has been in progress and the Council is of course contributing towards it. No major progress has been made or clear conclusions reached from the work thus far.

### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that the improvement proposal above is noted as being "in progress".

## **13. Information Technology Review** - Local report to Gwynedd published October 2016

### Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Review the terms of reference and membership of the IT Governance Group to ensure that it is effective in terms of reaching agreement on priorities and making recommendations to senior managers and Members. In addition, the group needs to ensure consistency in terms of: the IT project prioritisation model; preparing business cases for each IT project; reviewing each IT project after its implementation; using the project management method adopted by the Council for each major IT project.
2. Raise the profile of the IT Governance Group to ensure that it meets regularly and that it publishes its agendas, its minutes and its actions / recommendations.
3. Ensure that there is increased awareness of the new IT Strategy across the Council.
4. Improve ownership and responsibility for the IT Strategy across the ICT Service by ensuring that there are clear links between service plans and individual evaluations and the strategy.
5. Prepare regular updates on the journey of the IT Strategy to senior managers and Members.
6. Draw up a comprehensive ICT Service Plan which is in line with the new IT Strategy.

### Progress against improvement proposals

Over the past year, the terms of reference and membership of the IT Governance Group have been reviewed. A work programme has been agreed and the responses to the proposals are in progress. The process of raising the group's profile is

increasing through the Cabinet and the Programme Management Unit; however, the arrangements for the task are in place.

The IT Account Managers are raising awareness of the Strategy at departmental management meetings across the Council and feedback the responses to the IT Team (proposal 3 above).

Providing regular reports on the Strategy is an increasing process by means of performance measuring meetings and the Cabinet Member's performance report. An update on individual items is shared at the Senior Managers' Group.

The procedure of producing and updating work programmes for the ICT service has been introduced at the development unit, and we are reporting on it at performance management meetings.

### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that improvement proposal 2 is noted as "completed", and improvement proposals 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 as being "in progress".

## **14. Community Safety in Wales - National Report by the Wales Audit Office published October 2014**

### Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Improve strategic plans in order to better co-ordinate community safety by establishing a national strategy supported by regional and local plans that focus on achieving community safety priorities agreed on a national level, instead of the existing planning framework.
2. Improve strategic work with partners by formally creating effective safety community boards instead of the existing community safety structures, that formalise and unify the work of Welsh Government, the Police, the local authorities, the health boards, the fire and rescue authorities, WACSO and other key stakeholders.
3. Ensure that community safety performance is effectively managed by: setting appropriate measures on every level in order to enable members, officers and the public to judge the progress in terms of completing actions for community safety services; ensure that the information on performance includes the work of all relevant agencies; establish measures to judge the inputs, outputs and the impact in order to be able to understand the effect of investment decisions and to support the scrutiny and overview work.

4. Review the systems for managing community safety risks and present monitoring and revision arrangements that focus on assuring the public that the money spent on community safety achieves better outcomes for people in Wales.
5. Improve the engagement and communication work with citizens through the public services board by: developing plans and priorities for community safety; agree on priorities for implementation; and report on performance and evaluating the impact.

#### Progress against improvement proposals

We are awaiting further guidance from Welsh Government and the Home Office regarding a national strategy. In the meantime, a regional and local plan is in place.

To respond to proposal 2 above, the Regional Board is in place. The local statutory Partnerships are in place but we cannot move forwards until we receive further guidance from Welsh Government and the Home Office, and until the results of the review commissioned by Welsh Government are received.

In order to ensure effective performance management (3 above), a Regional Plan is in place with relevant measures, but this work is again dependent on Welsh Government's review results.

A Risk Assessment (4 above) relevant to Anglesey was submitted to the Partnership on 18 October and, in turn, it will be passed on to Anglesey County Council.

The public consultation was held (5 above), with the deadline on 27 October. We are awaiting an analysis of the results, and once they arrive, we will then plan to incorporate any lessons to be learnt by 2018/19.

#### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that improvement proposal 4 is noted as "completed", and improvement proposals 1, 2, 3, and 5 as being "in progress".

### **15. People Strategy** - Local report to Gwynedd published November 2016

#### Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Ensure full ownership from the Members as they scrutinise the People Strategy and formally approve it.

2. Update all people management policies and the guidance for managers to reflect the new People Strategy.
3. Put a comprehensive corporate workforce plan in place.
4. Introduce the new evaluation process to all staff.

#### Progress against improvement proposals

The "People Plan" was formally adopted by the Cabinet on 1 November 2016. The progress of the prioritised work streams within the Plan was reported to the performance challenge meetings of the Cabinet Member (where two members of the Audit and Governance Committee were present).

Following the adoption of the Plan, a Project Group was set up under the leadership of the Human Resources Advisory Service Manager in order to review the content of each element and the current local working conditions. One of the Human Resources Advisors works as a Project Manager, with the Senior Manager and the Head of Department acting as Senior Users.

The Human Resources Advisory Services Manager leads on submitting the comprehensive workforce planning arrangements to the Council. Alongside this, the Research and Analytics Team work together closely in order to provide key information about the nature of the current workforce.

Alternative appraisal arrangements were introduced to staff (based on continuous appraisal, rather than an annual event) across the Council. A review is currently being undertaken in order to identify the progress made, and we will incorporate any changes needed.

#### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that the four improvement proposals are noted as being "in progress".

### **16. Local authority arrangements to charge a fee for services and generate income** - National Report by the Wales Audit Office published November 2014

#### Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Develop strategic frameworks to submit and review payments, creating a firm connection between them and the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Corporate Plan.

2. Review the costs per unit and the total cost of providing optional services in order to clearly note any shortcomings and, where required, set targets to improve the current implementation situation.
3. Always use the checklist to assess impact when considering changing payments.
4. Find opportunities to procure companies from the private sector to collect payments in order to improve efficiency and economy when collecting income.
5. Improve the arrangements for performance, governance and accountability management by: reporting any changes to payments to the scrutiny committee(s); improve monitoring work in order to have a better understanding of the impact of requested changes to fees and payments, and on objective achievement; benchmark and compare performance with others more thoroughly; and provide more comprehensive information to elected members so that it is possible to make firm decisions.
6. Improve the arrangements in order to anticipate an income of payments by planning scenarios and sensitivity analysis.

#### Progress against improvement proposals

By looking at proposals 1, 2 and 6 above, we are of the opinion that they are national matters, and that this discussion is needed on a national level if the current arrangements will change. Saying that, arrangements are already in place within Gwynedd Council which meets these requirements.

Work is ongoing on proposals 3, 4 and 5 but our response varies according to the circumstances. We will use Impact Assessments when there is a significant change in payments (3), whilst at the time, we will consider all options when considering whether the companies from the private sector would be most effective when collecting income (4).

Performance management arrangements (5) have already changed within the Council, and two members from scrutiny committees sit in on the Cabinet Members' performance challenge meeting. Ultimately, the scrutiny agenda is managed by the scrutiny committees, and this committee has a role to do so within the field of finance.

#### Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that improvement proposals 1, 2 and 6 are noted as "completed", and improvement proposals 3, 4, 5 as "in progress".

**17. Risk Management - An assessment that is based on the risk of the Council's corporate arrangements** - Local report to Gwynedd published January 2016

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

The Council's risk management arrangements would benefit from: developing a risk tracking or summary document as part of its Corporate Risk Register; deliver more consistency in terms of determining and managing risks in papers and reports submitted to the Members; give more prominent attention to the concept of 'willingness to face risk' in its work of managing risk; submit a Risk Strategy and Operations Handbook to comply with the Council's amended arrangements; train the officers and the Member about risk management as part of the wider initiative to raise awareness.

Progress against improvement proposals

It was reported to the Audit Committee on 9 February 2017:

- The Governing Group will review our arrangements;
- Evolve the risk management culture so that it is not a "tick box exercise";
- Review the training for officers.

Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that the improvement proposal above is noted as being "in progress".

**18. Good governance when determining significant service changes** - Local report to Gwynedd published March 2017

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Provide an opportunity for the scrutiny committees to review and challenge business cases for changes to services in a timely manner before the Cabinet makes a final decision.

Progress against improvement proposals

Since the new scrutiny model was adopted in May 2017, the emphasis is now on promoting the forward scrutiny of the proposed changes to services/policies, etc. Good examples of this have already been seen, e.g. changes to the Leisure Service.

Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that the improvement proposal above is noted as being "in progress".

**19. Savings Schemes** - Local report to Gwynedd published June 2016

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Strengthen the financial planning arrangements by ensuring the delivery timetables in business cases are robust
2. Strengthen the financial planning arrangements by establishing a more corporate method of determining income opportunities

Progress against improvement proposals

It is intended to make every effort to ensure that delivery timetables in business cases are robust. This will be more practical with cuts, but substantial efficiency savings plans will become increasingly challenging and the timetable will be subject to several complex factors (e.g. Leisure project).

The Chief Executive has already consulted informally with the Cabinet and we will deal with / consider the key income streams corporately by identifying new savings against 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Conclusion

Based on what is noted above, the Audit and Governance Committee is asked to agree that the two improvement proposals are noted as being "in progress".