

**SUBJECT: Wales Audit Office Governance Report**

**MEETING: Democratic Services Committee**

**DATE: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All**

## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide Democratic Services Committee with the Wales Audit Office review on Governance.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Audit Committee receive the Wales Audit Office review on Governance.
- 2.2 That Audit Committee consider the current position and future actions committed in response to the proposals.

## **3. KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 This report has already been considered by Audit Committee who have overall responsibility for the performance management arrangements. However there are issues that will be of particular interest to the Democratic Services Committee and so it is pertinent to bring these issues before members
- 3.2 This review was completed by WAO as a follow-up to the Corporate Assessment that was published in November 2015.
- 3.3 The detailed findings of the review are contained in the report attached at appendix 1, which concludes *“The Council has made progress in improving its governance arrangements although more work is needed to strengthen the transparency of decision making and recording.”*
- 3.4 The issues of particular relevance to this committee highlighted in the report include:
- YouTube streaming of meetings increase the transparency of meetings.
  - Cabinet meetings are not minuted, this is compliant with in accordance with its Constitution and the Local Government Act 1972. However WAO considers a written record of proceedings to be good governance and practice.
  - poor use of the microphones the chamber results in parts of the records being inaudible

- The report stressed the importance of minutes being signed at the next suitable meeting in accordance with the Council's Constitution
- There are positive examples of scrutiny holding Cabinet to account. However the report also includes an example that suggests scrutiny is not always able to effectively fulfil its role
- The relationship between Cabinet and select committees is generally positive.
- Select committees follow an agreed work programme and 'call in' decisions made by Cabinet as appropriate.

3.5 The four new proposals for improvement made within the report are:

- Further improve the clarity of reports that members receive to ensure they have access to appropriate and timely information in a format that is easy to read and understand.
- Ensure that decisions are clearly and consistently recorded to provide a reliable, transparent and easily accessible decision-making trail.
- Strengthen scrutiny's impact, status and effectiveness including: formally recording Cabinet responses to scrutiny recommendations and observations and better co-ordination of Cabinet and select committee forward work programmes.
- Ensure that information on the Council's website is accurate, complete and up to date.

3.5 Audit Committee tracks progress with a proposals for improvement as part of its overview of improvement arrangements. The most recent report can be viewed [here](#).

#### **4. REASONS**

4.1 To ensure the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

None

#### **6. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)**

There are no implications from the report

#### **5. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None

#### **6. REPORT AUTHOR**

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