

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Progress Report: Wales Audit Office Proposals for Improvement</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Audit Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> July 2017</b>

## 1. PURPOSE

To provide Audit Committee with an update on the authority's progress against the Wales Audit Office (WAO) proposals for improvement up to June 2017.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That members consider the current position of proposals and future actions being taken in response and identify any areas where they feel further action is needed.

## 3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 Each year Wales Audit Office undertake a Performance Audit work programme with the Council. The reports issued by WAO as a result of this work programme are able to make the following interventions for areas that are deemed as requiring improvement:

- proposals for improvement – if proposals are made to the Council WAO would expect Council to do something about them and will follow up what happens;
- formal recommendations for improvement – if a formal recommendation is made, the Council must prepare a response to that recommendation within
- 30 working days;
- conduct a special inspection, and publish a report and make recommendations; and
- recommend to Ministers of the Welsh Government that they intervene in some way.

3.2 The proposals included in the report, appendix 1, are those issued to the Council as a result of the Performance Audit regulatory work conducted by the WAO in the authority. There are no statutory recommendations contained within this update, the update contains lower-priority issues, known as proposals for improvement. Recommendations from the Safeguarding arrangements – Kerbcraft scheme report have been reported separately to Council.

3.3 This update contains proposals received since the Corporate Assessment completed by Wales Audit Office in March 2015 as this is the most recent comprehensive assessment of the council covering: vision and strategy; governance and accountability; use of resources; collaboration and partnerships; managing improvement; and performance and outcomes. The specific WAO reports which have instigated the proposals are referenced in the update.

3.4 An [area on the hub](#) (the Council's Intranet) has been established, for members to view, which contains all of the recent reports issued to the Council by Wales Audit Office as part of their performance audit work programme, this also includes the Council's initial management response to each report.

- 3.5 As well as being made available on the hub reports published by WAO are also presented to Audit Committee, accompanied by the Council's management response, as they are produced. For example during 2016/17 a number of audits have been completed by WAO including: Corporate Assessment follow-on reviews on Performance Management; Governance; Human Resources and Information Technology, all of which have already been reported to Audit Committee.
- 3.6 Recently published audit reviews on "Savings planning" and "Good governance when determining significant service changes" are presented separately on the Audit Committee agenda for the 6<sup>th</sup> July, accompanied by the Council's management response, and are therefore not included within this report.
- 3.7 This update builds on the most recent update provided in December 2016 as part of the six monthly reporting in place. Where progress and evidence for a proposal suggests it has been adequately addressed the proposal has been "closed" and removed from the report, an overview of these is provided in appendix 2. Proposals which require further attention are marked as "open", while some proposals have been combined where the issues covered and/or the action the council is taking to respond to them are strongly linked.
- 3.8 Each proposal update highlights:
- The specific proposal, or more than one proposal if they are closely linked.
  - The progress made up to June 2017 to address the issues identified by the proposal.
  - Whether the status of the proposal is to remain "open" or be "closed" if the evidence of progress suggests it has been sufficiently addressed.
  - Any further actions that will be taken to address the proposal if it remains open.
- 3.9 The proposals made by WAO are grouped into the following areas:
- a. Human Resources
  - b. Performance Management
  - c. Partnership & collaboration
  - d. Governance
  - e. Finance
  - f. Information Technology
- 3.10 WAO also make recommendations that may be relevant to the council in local government national reports. Although these have not been issued directly to the council, like the other proposals, the recommendations from the national reports could be relevant to the Council's services. The reports are published on [www.audit.wales/publications](http://www.audit.wales/publications).
- 3.11 Some of the forward looking actions committed by the authority are likely to be reflected within other council strategic documents such as the Council's Well-being Objectives and Statement, the Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment and the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 3.12 Wales Audit Office also produce an annual report called The Annual Improvement Report (or AIR) summarising the work undertaken in the council during that year and concluding on the council's prospects for improvement. The last AIR published

in August 2016 is available to download on the [Wales Audit Office website](#) and concludes: "Based on, and limited to, the work carried out by the Wales Audit Office and relevant regulators, the Auditor General believes that the council will comply with the requirements of the measure during 2016-17 provided it continues to maintain the current pace of improvement." The Annual Improvement report (AIR) for 2017 is due to be published imminently and will be presented to Audit Committee when available.

3.13 WAO as part of their ongoing annual audit work programme may follow up progress in any of the open or recently closed proposal areas.

#### **4. REASONS**

To ensure the authority responds appropriately to the WAO proposals to secure the improvements required.

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

Finances and any other resource implications of activity related to the proposals will need to be taken into account by the relevant responsibility holders.

#### **6. AUTHORS**

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## Appendix 1 - Open Wales Audit Office Proposals for Improvement

Human Resources proposals					
WAO Proposal	<b>Engage more effectively with staff to ensure the Council's values are clearly evident across the organisation.</b>			Status	Open
Report	Corporate Assessment – November 2015 and Human Resources – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – December 2016				
What progress have we made	<p>MonTalks and MonDelivers talks have been introduced to share insights, information and updates on a variety of aspects of the Council's work.</p> <p>Action has been taken to provide feedback from the last staff conference and staff survey – for example by displaying posters in staff areas, while the People Board continue to live stream question and answer sessions. Directorate level staff conferences will be established to provide more specific staff engagement on issues in their directorate. A follow on staff survey, including further questions on wellbeing, has been completed and the results are being reviewed to inform future planning</p>				
Further action planned	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	
	More engagement with staff on specific issues in their directorate.	Establish directorate level staff conferences	SLT	December 2017	
	Greater understanding of staff feedback to inform future planning.	Complete the review of the staff survey, communicate the results to staff and use the results to inform future planning.	Organisational Development Manger	July 2017	
WAO Proposal	<p><b>Ensure that the planned revisions and changes made to 'Check In Check Out' deliver a clear process of assessing and improving the performance of all staff and that department, team and individual objective setting is in line with the Council's corporate objectives.</b></p> <p><b>Improve oversight and ongoing implementation of the staff appraisal process. In particular:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure staff appraisal completion is uploaded onto the Council's Hub to accurately reflect the numbers of staff in receipt of an annual appraisal; and</li> <li>• increase the appraisal completion rate.</li> </ul>			Status	Open
Report	Corporate Assessment – November 2015 and Human Resources – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – December 2016				
What progress have we made	<p>Based on feedback received, the <i>Check-in, Check-out</i> (CICO) process has been reviewed and rolled out with more robust guidance, video tutorials and supportive training. Work will continue to roll out, increase understanding and maximise completion of the process.</p> <p>It was recognised that CICO completion rates are likely to be higher than previously reported as the system was not capturing all data in the most effective way. Recognising this, work has been completed to develop a longer term more effective recording module that allows managers to record the CICO directly into an employee's record on the human resources system. This allows for all employee data to be stored in one place and enable direct access to reports from the system identifying completion rates, training needs (which would automatically be fed through to the training</p>				

team) and track progress on any actions agreed. Communication and a guidance video have been established and the new system will be launched for managers to use.

While this longer term work continued, a basic interim reporting system was in place to monitor completion rates and ensure accountability for completion. The latest data from December 2016 shows that of completed returns by Managers 70% of staff that require a CICO have completed a one in the required timescales. 20% of those not completed were scheduled for completion.

	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Further action planned	Check-in, Check-out is well understood, consistently employed and informs staff development	Continue to roll out, increase understanding and maximise completion of the check-in, check-out process	Head of People and Information Governance	March 2018

WAO Proposal	<b>Develop the Council's workforce planning arrangements by including accurate data and key management information around workforce issues and statistics, reporting regularly to Senior Leadership and Management Teams to enable effective monitoring of progress and management of these issues on an ongoing basis.</b>	Status	Open
	<b>Develop further workforce data to include staff establishment, contract status, vacancies, agency use, age, gender, and grade/pay distribution, to better inform future workforce planning activity.</b>		

Report	Corporate Assessment – November 2015 and Human Resources – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – December 2016
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What progress have we made	<p>A process has been developed to enable service leaders to effectively focus on succession and workforce planning and directorates to develop plans for their workforce. The combination of the workflow and the training and development pathways will help leaders foster the behaviours and skills needed to take a proactive and forward thinking approach to maintaining their teams and services and also provide colleagues with clear channels of training to progress in their careers.</p> <p>People Services data dashboards covering key workforce information continue to be available on the council's intranet. To further improve the analysis and reporting of this information scorecards are being implemented which cover a range of workforce data including staff establishment, age, gender etc. These will enable Managers to interrogate data and identify specific workforce issues. The data will be near real time as they are directly linked to the HR system and will therefore provide more timely information. They will be available to be used by department management teams and senior leadership team in order to drive effective decision making based on workforce information and will be supplemented by bi-annual, or more frequent if required, HR business reports.</p> <p>Future Monmouthshire will identify shifts and changes needed in Monmouthshire and position the council as the key enabler in bringing them about. It will inform the development of a new business model for the organisation in order to equip it to meet its goals amidst increasing change and uncertainty and will facilitate work on articulating future workforce requirements</p>
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	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Further action planned	Workforce statistics are available at team level in a timely manner	Implement new workforce data dashboards	Head of People	June 2017
	Effective monitoring of workforce issues	To continue to produce a People Services Annual Report and implement biannual HR reports to DMTs and SLT	Head of People	Ongoing
	A sustainable business model is in place	Develop the future business model for the authority	Chief Executive	To be informed by Future

				Monmouth-shire
	Clarity on the future shape of the workforce	Use this business model to articulate the future workforce requirements of the authority including numbers of staff and skills needed	Head of Resources	To be informed by Future Monmouth-shire

<b>WAO Proposal</b>	<b>Improve the evaluation of HR improvement actions to better measure the impact and outcomes.</b>			<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Report</b>	Human Resources – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – December 2016				
<b>What progress have we made</b>	<p>To provide clarity of purpose and direction a People and Organisational Strategy was developed, underpinned by an ambitious delivery work programme. Progress against the strategy in 2015/16 has been reported. The last People Services annual report was completed in June 2016, which provides a summary of activity against areas for improvement during the year.</p> <p>This annual report will act as a base line for completion of the 2016/17 annual monitoring report. Which will bring together the different elements of People Services to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the service.</p>				
<b>Further action planned</b>	<b>Desired Result</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	
	Assurance that the Council is implementing its planned improvements to HR management	Complete the second (2016/17) annual monitoring report of People Services	July 2017	Head of People	

<b>Performance Management proposals</b>					
<b>WAO Proposal</b>	<b>Improve performance management arrangements by:</b>			<b>Status</b>	Open
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring planned improvements are tangible;</li> <li>• improving target setting to better reflect desired improvement and ensuring resources are allocated to deliver Council priorities through the Medium Term Financial Plan;</li> <li>• developing arrangements to identify intended outcomes, targets and data collection arrangements when services are being delivered through alternative models;</li> </ul>				
<b>Report</b>	Corporate Assessment – November 2015				
<b>What progress have we made</b>	<p>The Stage 1 Improvement Plan 2016-17 was published in consideration of the areas for improvement identified by Wales Audit Office and the public consultation. Clear and robust targets that articulate the ambition of the council were included in the plan. Wales Audit Office issued a certificate of compliance following their audit of the plan.</p> <p>A training session on performance measurement, incorporating target setting, is being made available through TalentLab.</p> <p>It is recognised that there is a particular difficulty in developing performance data, measures and targets and risks to data quality when setting up new policies, initiatives or arrangements. These areas will be particularly targeted for policy and performance team support.</p>				
	<b>Desired Result</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	

Further action planned	Stretching, realistic and robust targets	Strengthen target setting arrangements and ensure availability of up-to-date target setting guidance and training via Talent Lab	Policy and Performance Manager	July 2017
	Clarity of outcomes and arrangements when services are being transformed	Implement a more robust approach to policy development to ensure services are based on clear design principles and data.	Policy and Performance Manager	October 2017

WAO Proposal	<b>Improve strategic planning by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring clear links between strategies and agreed priorities; and</li> <li>• developing cohesive strategies to underpin and support robust decision making.</li> </ul>	Status	Open
	<b>Demonstrate clearly the links between the Council's strategies and service plans to show how actions will deliver its strategic targets and outcomes.</b>		

Report	Corporate Assessment – November 2015 and Performance Management – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – July 2016
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What progress have we made	<p>In May 2016 Cabinet commissioned a strategic programme of whole-authority work called 'Future Monmouthshire'. The programme has commenced with two inter-related pieces of work.</p> <p>The short-term focus has involved work across the whole authority to identify potential cost-reductions to ensure that the organisation can balance its budget across the next medium term financial plan without taking action that will hamper our ability to contribute to the well-being of future generations. The longer term focus is about re-imagining what public services could look like in the future and understanding some of the problems we need to address. This work is now incorporating the findings of the well-being assessment.</p> <p>Future Monmouthshire will identify shifts and changes needed in Monmouthshire and position the council as the key enabler in bringing them about. It will inform the development of a new business model for the council in order to equip it to meet its goals amidst increasing change and uncertainty.</p> <p>This work on the future shape of the organisation will facilitate a review of the council's key delivery strategies, which include the MTFP, People Strategy, Asset Management Plan and iCounty, and service planning arrangements to ensure they all align to the business model.</p> <p>The service improvement planning principles for 2017/18 have been updated to reflect the latest position with the Council's strategies and new requirements from legislative and policy changes to ensure all services consider and align to these in their plans. The principles are based around five key themes – Evaluate, Link, Actions, Data and Risk.</p>
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	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Further action planned	A sustainable business model is in place	Develop the future business model for the authority	Chief Executive	To be informed by Future Monmouthshire
	Key strategies are mutually supportive and aligned to the business model	Ensure the council's key delivery strategies (these include MTFP, People Strategy, Asset Management Plan and iCounty) and service plans all align to the business model.	SLT	To be informed by Future Monmouthshire

WAO Proposal	<b>Improve performance management arrangements by:</b> <b>• improving data quality arrangements to ensure that performance reporting is accurate and that decisions are made based on robust information.</b>			Status	Open
Report	<b>Ensure accurate data collection and reporting.</b> Corporate Assessment – November 2015 & Performance Management – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – July 2016				
What progress have we made	<p>The data quality process continues to be strengthened and was amended in 2017 to take account of previous audit feedback and allocate Internal Audit time on the data system producing the data as well as the data outputs.</p> <p>Internal guidance notes on completing national and local performance indicators are produced setting clear requirements for data compilers, these were updated and used to inform the submission of national performance data for 2016/17. There is continued support from the Policy and Performance team with a specific and clearly defined role for Internal Audit to quality assure data. In 2016 the audit of nationally and locally set indicators was given an internal audit control rating of “Considerable Assurance”. In April 2017, Wales Audit Office conducted a follow up review of 2015-16 published data which concluded “Data quality arrangements continue to improve and arrangements could be strengthened further by correctly applying the national PI definitions”.</p> <p>There is a continued focus to improve the council’s use of data to inform decision making. A data network has been established to bring together people with responsibility for data to work together to ensure the organisation makes the best possible use of the information it holds. The purpose of the MCC data Nnetwork is to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the authority’s data assets, share experiences about good practice, identify future opportunities and help our colleagues turn data into actionable knowledge</p> <p>It is recognised that there is particular risk to data quality, including target setting, when developing performance data measures for new policies or initiatives that may not have been subject to data quality processes previously. These areas will be particularly targeted for policy and performance team support.</p>				
Further action planned	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	
	Accurate performance data	Continue to strengthen the data quality process using external and internal audit feedback and liaise with Internal Audit to allocate their time to identified risks in data quality arrangements	Policy and Performance Manager	March 2018	

WAO Proposal	<b>Review the Council’s risk management arrangements to assure itself it manages risks consistently across directorates and identifies, escalates, and addresses risks in a timely and appropriate way.</b>			Status	Open
Report	Information Technology – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – October 2016				
What progress have we made	<p>The Council’s risk management policy was last reviewed in March 2015. The strategic risk assessment covers high and medium level risks. Lower level strategic and operational risks are managed through service improvement plans or projects specific risk registers.</p> <p>Risk management arrangements will be reviewed to ensure they are in line with requirements in the well-being of future generations act. This will also be informed by the findings of a recent internal audit review of the Council’s risk management arrangements, carried out at the start of 2017, to ensure any recommendations from the review are holistically addressed.</p>				
	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	

Further action planned	Better recognition and management of information technology risks as part of the wider corporate risk management arrangements.	Risk management arrangements will be reviewed to ensure they are in line with requirements in the Well-being of Future Generations Act and findings from Internal Audit.	Policy and Performance Manager	August 2017
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### Partnership and collaborative working proposals

WAO Proposal	<b>Adopt a more planned, risk-assessed approach to partnership and collaborative working to make better use of resources.</b>			Status	Open
Report	Corporate Assessment – November 2015				
What progress have we made	<p>A community governance review is currently being completed, the aim of the review was to improve community engagement, this is important because we know that more cohesive communities are important to the council being able to deliver its priorities. The outcomes of the review will provide clarity as to when, where and how local people can engage in discussions and influence decisions. It will provide explicit clarification as to the responsibility for decision making in certain arenas and the accountability that flows from those decisions.</p> <p>Council agreed in March 2017 that the ongoing review of community governance and whole place is finalised as early as possible to allow the new Council to reach agreement as to the shape and structure of community engagement; and that the community governance structure designed as a part of member working group is piloted in the Bryn Y Cwm area.</p>				
Further action planned	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	
	Structures clarified and processes aligned to delivery frameworks to support community governance.	Pilot the Community Governance structure in the Bryn Y Cwm area and finalise the Community Governance review and agree through Council	Head of Economy and Innovation	March 2018	

WAO Proposal	<b>Further develop and embed performance management arrangements to allow the Council to hold partners to account and to support the Local Service Board to deliver its plans.</b>			Status	Open
	<b>Ensure new Public Service Board (PSB) delivery plans clearly set out relevant actions and resources needed to deliver shared priorities so that each partner, including the Council, is clear what is expected of them.</b>			Status	Open
Report	Corporate Assessment – November 2015 and Performance Management – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – July 2016				
What progress have we made	<p>The LSB has been transitioned to a Public Service Board (PSB) as part of the implementation of the Future Generations Act. A PSB select committee has been established and has scrutinised the formation of the PSB and membership, resourcing of PSB support and development of the well-being assessment. Training has been held for committee members on their responsibilities and the PSB select committee members on their specific responsibilities in relation to the PSB.</p> <p>The PSB is using the evidence in the well-being assessment to develop its wellbeing plan by March 2018, this will require the board to allocate and prioritise resources to meet their wellbeing objectives and establish clear plans to achieve this. The PSB select committee will have a role in scrutinising the development of the plan. The performance framework and accountability arrangements for the partnerships will be reviewed to deliver the well-being plan, key issues in the well-being assessment and continued delivery of statutory responsibilities.</p>				

Currently the partnerships are more focussed on emerging issues and key issues identified in the well-being assessment and responding to them collectively as a partnership, as well as fulfilling statutory duties. Progress is reviewed at each partnership meeting to check on progress against the actions and agree any further action, if required. Issues that can't be resolved at the partnership level will continue to be escalated to programme board, which consists of representative from partners which sit on the PSB. The Strategic Partnership Team will continue to work with partners to strengthen the clarity of plans and monitoring of progress. The PSB has adopted childhood obesity as a priority and is developing its delivery framework to tackle it.

	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Further action planned	Clear PSB wellbeing objectives allowing the PSB to allocate and prioritise resources to meet the objectives and establish delivery plans to achieve this.	Develop the PSB's wellbeing plan	PSB Development Manager	March 2018

### Governance proposals

WAO Proposal	<b>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.</b>			Status	Open
Report	Governance – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – June 2016				
What progress have we made	<p>The Scrutiny Manager continues to work with department management teams, as required to improve the quality of reports. This remains an area for continued focus for the newly formed select committees following the council elections in May 2017 where further improvements to the report writing process are being considered.</p> <p>The Modern Gov system has been further developed to utilise functionality that allows officers to access the system to create and upload reports directly to the system for meetings. This will be accessible on the council's intranet where sections for officers and members are also being established to provide a range of information and guidance on the council's meeting process to support officers writing reports and members to receive information they need. The latest development of the system will be presented to SLT for approval before beginning implementation.</p>				
	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	
Further action planned	Better informed members leading to more robust challenge and decision making.	Continue to work with and train report writers to ensure the content of reports and presentations is clear and pitched correctly	Scrutiny Manager & Policy and Performance Team	March 2018	
	Better informed members leading to more robust challenge and decision making	Implement improvements to the report writing process and ensure that Senior officers are held accountable for ensuring the reports relating to their service area meet the required standard before reports are published and decisions made.	Chief Officer Enterprise	March 2018	
	More efficient processes and timely and clear reports for members	Implement the latest development of Modern Gov and members and officers advice and guidance areas on the intranet.	Local Democracy Manager	December 2017	

WAO Proposal	<b>Strengthen scrutiny's impact, status and effectiveness including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>formally recording Cabinet responses to scrutiny recommendations and observations; and</b></li> <li>• <b>better co-ordination of Cabinet and select committee forward work programmes.</b></li> </ul>	Status	Open
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Report	Governance – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – June 2016		
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What progress have we made	<p>Formalised reporting of scrutiny recommendations to Cabinet Members has been established through the drafting of chairs' letters. Development is underway working with scrutiny chairs and cabinet members to ensure that cabinet members draft formal responses to chairs' letters, to be formally reported at Select Committee meetings under agreement of the work programme. This will ensure that responses made to scrutiny's recommendations can be evidenced, ensuring accountability and transparency.</p> <p>The Scrutiny manager is working closely with Democratic Services to ensure chairs' summaries are captured in Select Committee minutes and a record of scrutiny's conclusions and recommendations are now formalised in a regular report to Cabinet.</p> <p>The implementation of further functionality of modern Gov system also allows officers to populate forward planner items directly into the system. The planner has been amended to request further information that needs to be included on the plan, for example details on the "type of decision" required. This will automatically generate individual forward planners for meetings as well as a whole council forward plan that shows all meetings the report will be sent to. These will be available to officers, members and the public on the website and intranet. The latest development of the system will be presented to SLT for approval before beginning implementation.</p> <p>Democratic services officers and the Scrutiny Manager continue to attend meetings of Senior Leadership Team and departmental management teams as necessary to discuss the cabinet and select committee forward work planner.</p>		
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	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Further action planned	Better scrutiny as part of the decision-making process	To assist chairs in identifying topics for pre-decision scrutiny and prioritising their work more effectively.	Scrutiny Manager	March 2018
	More efficient processes and timely and clear reports for members	Implement the latest development of Modern Gov and members and officers advice and guidance areas on the intranet.	Local Democracy Manager	December 2017

WAO Proposal	<b>Ensure that information on the Council's website is accurate, complete and up to date.</b>	Status	Open
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Report	Governance – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – June 2016		
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What progress have we made	<p>The Modern Gov system has been used since September 2015, further functionality of the system has continued to be implemented including the documentation of agendas, reports, minutes and decision logs on the Council's website making these more easily accessible for the public.</p> <p>The scrutiny webpage continues to be updated to provide easy access to scrutiny information to Members and the public. In spring 2016 the website underwent a content and design review to improve user experience. Content continues to be reviewed to ensure it is up to date and user friendly. The implementation of further functionality of the Modern Gov system has further improved usability of the meeting, minutes and agendas function of the website.</p>		
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	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale
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Further action planned	Clear, easily accessible and up to date information on the scrutiny function.	Continue to develop the scrutiny website to provide an online scrutiny resource.	Scrutiny Manager	September 2017
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### Information Technology proposals

WAO Proposal	<b>Review and revise the iCounty Business Plan for 2016-2019 by setting out clear and measurable actions to enable senior managers and members to effectively monitor and manage progress of its implementation.</b>	Status	Open
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Report	Information Technology – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – October 2016		
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What progress have we made	<p>In December 2017 cabinet approved the establishment of a Digital Programme Office with responsibility for developing a digitally mature organisation. A revised business plan for the Digital Programme Office has been established. The plan has identified a method of recording performance against a set of digital maturity measures.</p> <p>The iCounty strategy has been established for two years. The Digital Programme Office was established after a review of the ‘internal delivery’ pillar of iCounty. Further reviews of the strategy will be undertaken to ensure it remains relevant and up to date based on latest evidence and information. This will also be informed by the work of Future Monmouthshire which will facilitate a review of the council’s key delivery strategies (which include the MTFP, People Strategy, Asset Management Plan and iCounty) and service planning arrangements.</p>			
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	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Further action planned	Clarity around what the Council seeks to achieve through information technology against which performance can be measured, managed and monitored.	Further develop the data and indicators used support the monitoring of progress for the digital plan.	Head of Digital	Ongoing
	Key strategies are mutually supportive and aligned to the business model	Ensure the council’s key delivery strategies (these include MTFP, People Strategy, Asset Management Plan and iCounty) and service plans all align to the business model.	SLT	To be informed by Future Monmouthshire

WAO Proposal	<b>Negotiate and agree commercial grade Service Level Agreements with SRS in advance of new organisations joining the partnership to support sound governance, and to enable the Council to measure service delivery, and assure itself that its IT needs continue to be met.</b>	Status	Open
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Report	Information Technology – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – October 2016		
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What progress have we made	A commercial grade Service Level Agreement with SRS is being developed and will need to be agreed with all partners.			
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	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Further action planned	A clear agreement on the IT services provided to the Council	A commercial grade Service Level Agreement with SRS is being developed and will need to be agreed with all partners.	Chief Operating Officer SRS	To be confirmed by the SRS Chief Operating Officer

## Finance proposals

WAO Proposal	<p><b>The Council should ensure that all budget mandates are costed and are sufficiently detailed.</b> <i>All budget mandates should be fully costed and supported by information showing how each saving area will be achieved with an evaluation of its impact. This information should be produced on a timely basis to inform the agreement of the mandates by Members.</i></p>			Status	Open
	<p><b>Ensure central specialist functions, such as finance and procurement, work more closely with individual service areas in identifying potential savings, the scope of savings achievable and the potential to use pooled budgets with partners.</b></p>			Status	Open
Report	Corporate Assessment – November 2015 and Financial Resilience Assessment – February 2016				
What progress have we made	<p>The budget setting process for 2017-18 was revised, recognising the largely successful approach of the mandates in recent years but at the same time with the continuing challenges faced recognising the process may not be sustainable going forward.</p> <p>A report to cabinet outlined the work proposed on Future Monmouthshire. This recognises that the challenges faced by the county and council are not limited to financial pressures, but these should be seen in the round with other significant challenges.</p> <p>The Future Monmouthshire work is making progress and establishing key themes to work on. The budget process for 2017/18 had a one year approach within the context of the MTFP, with the expectation that a more medium term approach can be adopted next year once the Future Monmouthshire work is further progressed. A set of principles have been developed to ensure that any work and decisions that need to be made in the short term can be consistent with ongoing work to establish the medium and long term picture.</p> <p>Progress includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All services were tasked to provide 5% and 10% budget proposals considering the issues in line with the Future Monmouthshire principles, including capturing cross cutting issues that may deliver savings across the whole authority</li> <li>• Identification of pressures, including an assessment of any ongoing pressures in the current year's budget. These will be rigorously reviewed and challenged.</li> <li>• External and internal challenge processes from specialist functions to ensure robustness of proposals and achievability for 2017/18.</li> <li>• Budget proposals adopted that met this criteria, with some proposals identified as requiring further work to possibly inform future years of the MTFP.</li> </ul> <p>Planning for the Medium Term budget is already underway and the approach the Council will take to identify the savings required developed.</p>				
Further action planned	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	
	Fully costed and robust budget proposals for member scrutiny.	Establish a clear Medium Term Financial Plan and proposals	Head of Finance	March 2018	

## Appendix 2 - Closed Wales Audit Office Proposal for Improvement

## Human Resources proposals

WAO Proposal	<b>Further develop HR ICT systems to better support operational managers and improve recording of sickness and disciplinary matters.</b>	Status	Close
Report	Human Resources – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – December 2016		
What progress have we made	<p>A significant amount of work has been and will continue to be undertaken to make mandatory as well as developmental changes and upgrades to Human Resources ICT systems, including the current system in place for reporting sickness which continues to be a focus for development. It is planned that these will increase usability for officers and managers.</p> <p>As well as developing ICT systems, which includes providing clear links between policy, procedure and workflow documents within the recording system, an equal focus has been placed on assisting managers to complete their responsibilities in recording of sickness and disciplinary matters as efficiently as possible to improve recording. This includes managing attendance training which has been attended by over 50 managers and timelier reporting of information for managers to review.</p> <p>Regular meetings between HR advisors and operational managers are being further supported by a newly developed HR report template to enable the more frequent review and progress of HR issues, including sickness and disciplinary matters, to strengthen their management.</p>		

## Performance Management Proposals

WAO Proposal	<b>Develop a high-level, strategic approach linking the Council's sustainable development principle duties under the Act to its strategic vision, overall direction of travel and the developing local well-being plan under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.</b>	Status	Close
Report	Performance Management – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – July 2016		
What progress have we made	<p>Two substantial assessments of need and well-being within the county the well-being assessment and population needs assessment have been completed as a consequence of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and the Social Services and Well-being Act. This provides a much deeper evidence base of wellbeing in the County and has been used to inform the publication of the Council's well-being objectives and statement 2017 that were approved by Council in March 2017 and form an integral part of the council's improvement framework. The Council has also adopted a new Sustainable Development Policy and incorporated this into its policy framework, which will ensure greater alignment of future programmes to the Well-being of Future Generations Act.</p>		

WAO Proposal	<b>Set out clearly the financial implications of the Council's service changes within its service improvement plans.</b>	Status	Close
Report	Performance Management – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – July 2016		
What progress have we made	<p>The service improvement planning principles for 2017/18 have been updated to reflect the latest position with the Council's strategies and new requirements from legislative and policy changes to ensure all services consider and align to these in their plans. The principles are based around five key themes – Evaluate, Link, Actions, Data and Risk and specify the need to identify funding allocated to actions. Service plans have a column to indicate where costs will be met from. These plans are not used by elected members to make decisions and more detailed cost information would need to be provided prior to a decision of Cabinet or Council.</p>		

## Governance proposals

WAO Proposal	Status	<p><b>Strengthen the governance and challenge arrangements by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ensuring that minutes of meetings are signed at the next suitable meeting in accordance with the Council’s Constitution to improve timeliness and transparency of public reporting; and</b></li> <li>• <b>reconsider the Council’s policy of not formally minuting Cabinet meetings</b></li> </ul>	<p>Closed</p> <p>Closed</p>
Report	Corporate Assessment – November 2015		
What progress have we made	<p>The Modern Gov system has been implemented since September 2015 which is speeding up the process and increasing Democratic Service officer’s capacity to process minutes for sign off within required timescales.</p> <p>All cabinet meetings are live streamed, all reports are available on the council’s website and a decision-log is published on the website following each cabinet meeting detailing the decisions that have been made which include any amendments made to the proposed decision. Not publishing minutes for Cabinet has been a longstanding practice of the council which has raised no issues of transparency and openness in the decision making process and the council does not have any plans to change this process for recording decisions at cabinet.</p>		

WAO Proposal	Status	<p><b>Ensure that decisions are clearly and consistently recorded to provide a reliable, transparent and easily accessible decision-making trail.</b></p>	<p>Close</p>
Report	Governance – Corporate Assessment Follow-on Review – June 2016		
What progress have we made	<p>The Modern Gov system has been used since September 2015, further functionality of the system has continued to be implemented including the documentation of agendas, reports, minutes and decision logs on the Council’s website making these more easily accessible for the public and providing a clear and consistent record of decision- making.</p> <p>The implementation of further functionality of the Modern Gov system will include a work flow for all reports available on the website. This will provide a record of the meetings the report has been sent to through the decision making cycle and the outcome of the meeting without the need to access each individual meeting. The latest development of the system will be presented to SLT for approval. before beginning implementation</p>		