

Report

Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 15 November 2017

Subject **Progress update on the action plan to address the Wales Audit Office recommendations and proposals for improvement.**

Purpose To present Cabinet with the progress made in addressing the recommendations and proposals for improvement made by the Wales Audit Office in their Review of progress in addressing the Corporate Assessment and Corporate Assessment Follow-up recommendations 2015/16.

Author Chief Executive

Ward All

Summary

- This update provides Cabinet Members with oversight of the council's progress against Recommendations and Proposals for improvement made by the Wales Audit Office during the Corporate Assessment review cycle which began in 2014/15.
- In their latest corporate assessment review, the WAO reduced the number of recommendations from 7 to 4, this shows that the council has improved despite continuing financial and legislative pressures.
- The council compiled an action plan to address the WAO' recommendations and proposals for improvement which was also presented to Cabinet in October 2016.
- This report is a quarterly update of progress made against the actions outlined in the council's action plan and actions planned for the next quarter. This enables Cabinet Members to consider whether actions remain appropriate to meet the recommendations and proposals for improvement, and to evaluate whether actions have been completed in a timely manner.
- New scrutiny arrangements are now in place and a number of the actions against the recommendations have now been completed.
- The council has made great progress in completing the planned actions reducing the number of outstanding actions from 17 to 5 in this quarter this is a result of new processes being developed and embedded.

Proposal Cabinet are requested to:

- Note the progress made towards meeting the recommendations and proposals for improvement and query any areas where progress has been delayed.
- Receive further quarterly monitoring reports on the progress towards meeting recommendations and proposals for improvement.

Action by Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Heads of Service

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Chair of Cabinet
- Chief Executive
- Strategic Directors
- Heads of Service

Signed

Background

Corporate Assessment

The Wales Audit Office carried out a full Corporate Assessment of the Council in 2013.

The full 2013 Corporate Assessment examined the council's capability to deliver its priorities and improved outcomes for citizen and identified 7 recommendations and a number of Proposals for Improvement.

Corporate Assessment Review

During 2014/15 the Wales Audit Office reviewed the progress the council had made against the 2013 recommendations and proposals for improvement.

Review of progress in addressing the Corporate Assessment and Corporate Assessment Follow-up recommendations

During February 2016 the WAO completed fieldwork and a document review to assess the progress made against the recommendations made in the original 2013 Corporate Assessment as well as the 2014/15 review. As a result of the review the seven original recommendations were reduced to four.

The 4 recommendations are summarised below, the outstanding actions are expected to decrease significantly following the agreed changes to the council's scrutiny arrangements.

Recommendations (Note: reference numbers do not coincide due to recommendations closed by the WAO e.g. recommendation 3 has been closed)		Number of actions identified in initial action plan	Number of actions completed	Number of Outstanding actions
Recommendation 1	The Council should ensure that Members are routinely and transparently considering robust information at the earliest opportunity to enable them to inform, take, and challenge choices and decisions effectively, and ensure that decisions are recorded and reported transparently.	3	2	1
Recommendation 2	The Council should address with more urgency the weaknesses in its governance arrangements that underpin its decision making to support improvement. This would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthening committee work programming arrangements to ensure they are timely, meaningful, informative, transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up; reviewing and updating the Council's constitution ensuring that roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear, and that all Members understand and apply their respective roles in relation to each other without compromising independence; empowering Members to be more proactive and accountable for their roles and responsibilities; strengthening scrutiny arrangements to more effectively inform and challenge policies, options, decisions and actions, and hold Cabinet Members, officers, partners and others to account more robustly to drive an increased pace of progress and improvement; and strengthening and mandating member and officer development and learning programmes based on competency assessments to improve skills and understanding to enable them to undertake their roles more effectively. 	14	13	1
Recommendation 4	The Council must continue to develop its people management arrangements, to ensure it has the capacity and capabilities necessary to change and improve. In doing so, it should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to develop its draft Workforce Plan and associated action plans by, for each action: allocating responsibility to an officer and setting a deadline for completion; and in the absence of a formal approach to 360-degree feedback for all 	12	11	1

Recommendations (Note: reference numbers do not coincide due to recommendations closed by the WAO e.g. recommendation 3 has been closed)		Number of actions identified in initial action plan	Number of actions completed	Number of Outstanding actions
	staff, address manager inconsistency in carrying out appraisals and ensure all staff receive a constructive and developmental appraisal to support job performance.			
Recommendation 5	<p>To strengthen the arrangements that enable the Council to scrutinise its improvement objectives. In doing so, the Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable Members to effectively challenge and scrutinise service performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that meeting agendas allow for sufficient time for Members to focus on (broad) underperformance; and ▪ provide training on effective challenge and scrutiny for Members. 	6	4	2

Accountability and Monitoring Arrangements

Quarterly updates will continue to be provided to Cabinet to monitor progress made against the recommendations and proposals for improvement.

Financial Summary

- There are no direct financial implications associated with this report

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Reputational risk to the council if future WAO Corporate Assessments show lack of progress.	H	L	An action plan to address each recommendation and proposal for improvement has been compiled and shared with the WAO. Progress made is monitored regularly to ensure that actions are carried out in a timely manner.	Chief Executive

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The Corporate Assessment Review links to all of the council's key plans.

Options Available

- To accept the progress made and approve the actions planned for the next quarter.
- To not accept the progress made and/or not approve the actions planned for the next quarter.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Separate comments are included in the action plan update.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

There are no direct staffing HR implications arising from this report. This action plan progress update allows monitoring of planned actions to ensure that they are appropriate and carried out within a reasonable time frame. Separate comments are included in the action plan update. The Wales Audit Office consider the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act in the course of their work therefore, by addressing the recommendations made the council will ensure it is meeting its duties under the act.

Comments of Cabinet Member

The Chair of Cabinet has been consulted and has agreed that this report goes forward to Cabinet for consideration.

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

Not relevant to this report

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

Not relevant to this report

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The guidance on the Act is clear – it requires public bodies to maximise their contribution to improving the wellbeing of Wales. The Act provides a framework for better decision making by ensuring public bodies take account of the **long term**, focus on **prevention**, take an **integrated** and **collaborative** approach, and **involve** people in policy making and planning and delivery of services.

The Act places a duty on the public sector to:

- Adopt the Sustainable Development Principle
- Work towards 7 national wellbeing goals
- Focus work on future generations
- Take a central role in the establishment and scrutiny of a Public Services Board (PSB)
- Take a central role in the development of a Wellbeing Plan based on a long term needs assessment
- Respond to a new accountability framework including reporting and review by the Auditor General Wales

The Act has implications for how the local authority will work in future and Part 2 of the Act places an individual wellbeing duty on public bodies. Key areas where change needs to happen include:

- Corporate Planning
- Risk Management
- Workforce Planning
- Performance Management
- Financial Planning
- Procurement
- Assets

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 which came into force in April 2016 sets the context for the move towards long term planning of services. A programme of training for senior management and elected members is underway so that the wide-ranging and transformational implications of the Act are understood and can be embedded in the Council's ways of working.

Key documents and processes have been revised so that they incorporate sustainable development and wellbeing principles. Over the last three years extensive public engagement has been undertaken in relation to setting service delivery priorities and identifying which services matter most to people, and contribute to their wellbeing. This will continue to inform future planning.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Not relevant to this report

Consultation

Not relevant to this report.

Background Papers

Cabinet Report "Corporate Assessment" (21/10/13)

Cabinet Report "Corporate Assessment: Update on the Action Plan" (21/12/16)

Cabinet Report "Corporate Assessment: Update on the Action Plan" (24/04/17)

Cabinet Report "Corporate Assessment: Update on the Action Plan" (19/07/17)

Appendix One: Corporate Assessment Action Plan 2016/17 – Progress Update

Dated: October 2017

Corporate Assessment Action Plan 2016/17 – Progress Update

Appendix One

Completed actions are highlighted in grey

Recommendation 1

Recommendation 1	The Council should ensure that Members are routinely and transparently considering robust information at the earliest opportunity to enable them to inform, take, and challenge choices and decisions effectively, and ensure that decisions are recorded and reported transparently.
WAO's Intended outcome/benefit	Decisions and scrutiny are based on consideration of up to date and accurate information. Decisions are accurately recorded on a timely basis on the Council's decision making tracker so the public are able to easily find and understand what decisions have been taken and by whom.
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Head of Law & Regulation

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
1.1	Chief Officers will view all decision making reports and conclude on whether they are of sufficient quality before submission to the decision making and scrutiny processes.	March 2017	Cabinet reports are received by SLT for consideration of content and quality before submission to the Cabinet cycle.	This is now embedded in the process, no further actions planned.	Chief Executive
1.2	Heads of Service will ensure that appropriate quality assurance processes are implemented within their service areas to ensure that reports are of an acceptable quality and standard before submission for inclusion in the decision – making or scrutiny processes	July 2017	Reports will be considered by Heads of Service before consideration by SLT and submission to the decision making or scrutiny process	To continue this process and assess its effectiveness	Chief Executive

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
1.3	All Cabinet, Cabinet Member and delegated officer decisions are properly recorded, including background information, options and reasons for those decisions, in accordance with the Council's constitution and legislative requirements. Minutes of Council and Committee meetings are also recorded accurately, approved at subsequent meetings and published in a timely manner. All decisions, background reports and minutes are published on the Council's web site, with a search engine to enable decisions to be tracked and easily found.	July 2017	The new template is now being used. An updated template has also been made available for reports to Scrutiny	Implemented	Head of Law & Regulation

Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2	<p>The Council should address with more urgency the weaknesses in its governance arrangements that underpin its decision making to support improvement. This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthening committee work programming arrangements to ensure they are timely, meaningful, informative, transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up; • reviewing and updating the Council’s constitution ensuring that roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear, and that all Members understand and apply their respective roles in relation to each other without compromising independence; • empowering Members to be more proactive and accountable for their roles and responsibilities; • strengthening scrutiny arrangements to more effectively inform and challenge policies, options, decisions and actions, and hold Cabinet Members, officers, partners and others to account more robustly to drive an increased pace of progress and improvement; and • strengthening and mandating member and officer development and learning programmes based on competency assessments to improve skills and understanding to enable them to undertake their roles more effectively.
WAO’s Intended outcome/benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The areas of focus of each of the committees is clear, linked to corporate priorities, regularly updated and considered in an open forum. • The Council’s constitution accurately reflects existing arrangements and clearly sets out roles and responsibilities. • Members are able to fulfil their roles effectively and are held to account for these roles. • Scrutiny is used effectively to inform policy development and hold Cabinet Members and officers to account for performance. • Members and officers are equipped and supported to undertake their roles.
Responsible Officer	Head of Law & Regulation

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
2.1	To develop the use of Committee pre-meetings in order to focus challenge more effectively and improve the quality of questioning. (Scrutiny AR Action 1)	July 2017	Pre-meetings are continuing for the new scrutiny committees. Chairing and questioning training delivered.	Implemented.	Head of Law & Regulation
2.2	To introduce an effective system for	By April	A new scrutiny committee	Implemented.	Head of Law

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
	scrutiny of the Public Services Board, in response to the statutory duty placed on scrutiny by the WFGA (Scrutiny AR Action 2)	2018	structure was agreed at this year's AGM, including a separate committee for partnership scrutiny. This Committee is now up and running.		& Regulation
2.3	To introduce a new report template to improve the quality and focus of the information that is presented to Committees (Scrutiny AR Action 3)	By November 2016 meeting cycle	This has been implemented and is on-going.	Implemented	Head of Law & Regulation
2.4	To continue to develop the links between Scrutiny and Auditors / Inspectors / Regulators, in particular to support work programming and training (Scrutiny AR Action 4)	Ongoing	Outcomes of the peer review with Caerphilly and Monmouthshire will be reported in the Scrutiny Annual Report. Further links with AIRs are being incorporated as the new work programmes develop.	Implemented	Head of Law & Regulation
2.5	To continue implementation of the Public Engagement Strategy agreed in 2015 (Scrutiny AR Action 5)	By April 2017	This has been implemented and is ongoing.	Implemented	Head of Law & Regulation
2.6	Cabinet work programmes are presented to each cabinet meeting	By April 2017	This has been implemented and is ongoing	Implemented	Head of Law & Regulation
2.7	The Democratic Services Committee are reviewing the various elements of the Constitution	Ongoing	This has been implemented and is ongoing	Implemented	Head of Law & Regulation
2.8	To develop the use of Committee pre-meetings in order to focus challenge more effectively and improve the quality of questioning. (Scrutiny AR Action 1)	July 2017	See 2.1 above	Implemented	Head of Law & Regulation
2.9	To introduce a new report template to improve the quality and focus of the information that is presented to Committees (Scrutiny AR Action 3)	By November 2016 meeting cycle	See 2.3 above	Implemented	Head of Law & Regulation

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
2.10	To develop the use of Committee pre-meetings in order to focus challenge more effectively and improve the quality of questioning. (Scrutiny AR Action 1)	July 2017	See 2.1 and 2.8 above	Implemented	Head of Law & Regulation
2.11	To continue regular meetings of the Chairs of Scrutiny, the Scrutiny Officer Team and leading Members of the Executive, to ensure a positive relationship continues, and workloads are coordinated effectively (Scrutiny AR Action 6)	Meetings already diarised	New schedule of meetings to be arranged.	TBA.	Head of Law & Regulation
2.12	To develop an appropriate role for Scrutiny within the new arrangements for managing performance, and building on the existing measures for service plan monitoring (Scrutiny AR Action 7)	By December 2017	We have introduced a new system for performance reporting, including scrutiny consideration.	Implemented	Head of Law & Regulation
2.13	To update and deliver the training and seminar programme for Members, including training to support: - Budget scrutiny - Performance scrutiny - Implementation of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Scrutiny AR Action 8)	July 2017	Training for the new Committees is underway, and a report is being presented to Democratic Services Committee in November to start working towards the WLGA Member Development Charter.	Implemented	Head of Law & Regulation
2.14	To work with current Members to develop an effective scrutiny induction programme for Elected Members after the 2017 election. (Scrutiny AR Action 9)	July 2017	Programme implemented.	Implemented.	Head of Law & Regulation

Recommendation 4

Recommendation 4	<p>The Council must continue to develop its people management arrangements, to ensure it has the capacity and capabilities necessary to change and improve. In doing so, it should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to develop its draft Workforce Plan and associated action plans by, for each action: allocating responsibility to an officer and setting a deadline for completion; and • in the absence of a formal approach to 360-degree feedback for all staff, address manager inconsistency in carrying out appraisals and ensure all staff receive a constructive and developmental appraisal to support job performance.
WAO's Intended outcome/benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has effective workforce planning arrangements in place, which will help it deliver its vision and priorities. • Staff appraisals are consistently undertaken and to a good standard and these are used to inform staff development.
Responsible Officer	Head of People & Business Change

Action Update

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
4.1	Creation of a workforce plan review group	February 2016	Completed		Head of People & Business Change
4.2	Publication of workforce plan	June 2016	Completed		Head of People & Business Change
4.3	Second version of workforce plan in place for 2016/17	June 2016	Completed		Head of People & Business Change
4.4	HR Business Partners to meet with Head of Service to discuss workforce objectives for 2016/17	June 2016 onwards	Completed		Head of People & Business Change
4.5	2016/17 objective for workforce planning set in both service planning and individual objectives	May 2016	Completed		Head of People & Business Change
4.6	Carry out self-assessment audit to assess current performance and	December 2016	Completed		Head of People & Business

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
	identify future priorities				Change
4.7	Conduct enhanced training on workforce planning for all HR/OD officers	December 2016	Completed		Head of People & Business Change
4.8	Feedback to managers on quality of appraisals sampled	October 2016	Feedback provided on sample of appraisals		Head of People & Business Change
4.9	Options to review current processes are investigated to bring about technology in the PM cycle and modernise the system	July 2017	<p>Currently on a pilot for new performance management system to move to a continuous performance management process instead of an annual appraisal</p> <p>Pilot was conducted from January – March 2017 with a group of 100 employees across all service areas.</p> <p>Review of the pilot was successful and contracts have been agreed to implement full roll out across the Council.</p> <p>Sessions have been taking place with senior managers to explain the project and a full comms plan will come out to employees later in July</p> <p>Clear Review is now in full operation and has been rolled out to many service areas across the Council. We estimate to be fully rolled out by the end of September.</p>	<p>Make determination as to whether to proceed and roll out across the Council. Plan roll out of training and support to use the system</p> <p>Roll out is fully planned and has commenced with senior managers.</p> <p>Comms to staff will commence in July 2017.</p> <p>KPI will be amended to show % of successfully achieved objectives</p> <p>Reporting will start in October and HRBP's will work with Heads of Service on specific issues relating to their teams.</p> <p>Objective writing has already been identified as a barrier to</p>	Head of People & Business Change

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
				performance improvement and training will be sourced and provided to encourage better objective setting	
4.10	Review of Coaching for Performance course and recommendations made on future procurement	August 2016	Review undertaken and we will continue to run the course but add additional coaching support in the form of ILM qualifications	Implemented	Head of People & Business Change
4.11	Solutions identified to offer both coaching and mentoring ILM qualifications	August 2016	ILM in coaching and mentoring has been identified and a cohort of 14 managers signed up – this commenced January 2017	Implemented	Head of People & Business Change
4.12	Creation of action learning set network	October 2016	ILM in action learning sets identified and offered to managers but take up low at this point. Informal action learning set took place in one service area in November Focus will be on coaching at this time	Implemented	Head of People & Business Change

Recommendation 5

Recommendation 5	To strengthen the arrangements that enable the Council to scrutinise its improvement objectives. In doing so, the Council should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable Members to effectively challenge and scrutinise service performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that meeting agendas allow for sufficient time for Members to focus on (broad) underperformance; and ▪ provide training on effective challenge and scrutiny for Members.
WAO's Intended outcome/benefit	Members are given accurate and timely information to enable them to challenge performance and progress against improvement objectives effectively. Remedial action is identified and taken forward. Performance is frequently discussed and challenged by scrutiny and members have sufficient time to do so. Members have the necessary skills to challenge and scrutinise effectively.
Responsible Officer	Head of People & Business Change

Action Update

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
5.1	New Performance reporting framework in place ensures more information is provided to scrutiny and Cabinet Members in a timelier manner.	Framework agreed by Cabinet and Scrutiny Chairs September 2016	This has now been implemented	No further action planned	Head of People & Business Change
5.2	New performance management system will allow information on performance to be more visible and readily available around the authority.	New System Implemented April 2016 Further development continues.	Further work has been carried out on the system by Performance Management Officer. Development plan in progress and further training has been rolled out. The system is now available across the council with users able to comment on performance that is relative to them.	The system is now implemented for performance management data The system will continue to be developed for other areas	Head of People & Business Change
5.3	Exception dashboards and reports for service plans highlight key areas.	January 2017	Service plans will adapted to cover the same time period as the corporate plan with regular	A new reporting framework will be developed in conjunction with Scrutiny.	Head of People & Business Change

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
			reviews of progress and content. This will ensure that the service plans support the delivery of the corporate plan and allow service areas to plan in the short and longer term.		
5.4	Performance reports that go to Cabinet now go to the Scrutiny Chairs for Information.	Framework agreed by Cabinet September 2016	This has now been implemented, detailed improvement plan Cabinet update sent to Scrutiny for information for Q1	No further actions planned, this will be ongoing.	Head of People & Business Change
5.5	Heads of Service have regular briefing meetings with Cabinet Members who in turn brief the Leader of the Council.	Framework agreed by Cabinet September 2016	Heads of Service have had regular briefing meetings with Cabinet Members. Cabinet Members then brief the Leader of the Council.	This is now embedded, no further actions planned.	Chief Executive
5.6	We have put in place a training and seminar programme for Scrutiny Members, and we have also introduced pre-meetings to improve the focus and challenge of Member questions. We are also developing the new induction programme for May 2017 which will include focus on effective challenge.	Systems in place and in ongoing development Induction programme from May 2017	<p>Induction programme delivered.</p> <p>We have changed the scheduling for performance information, so that monitoring of improvement objectives and other performance information is presented to scrutiny ahead of Cabinet, so that scrutiny comments are considered as part of the Cabinet process.</p> <p>A report will be presented to Democratic Services Committee in November to start working towards the WLGA Member Development Charter, which will review provision of all training and</p>	Working towards WLGA Member Development Charter.	Head of Law & Regulation

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
			support for Councillors, including for scrutiny.		

Proposal for Improvement 1

Proposal for Improvement 1	The Council should: Provide Cabinet with a more detailed update of progress in addressing our Corporate Assessment and its Follow-up recommendations to facilitate more active discussion and challenge of progress.
WAO's Intended outcome/benefit	Cabinet are able to challenge and monitor progress against the Corporate Assessment action plan and understand reasons for delay and to identify further actions as necessary. There is open discussion of progress during public meetings so that public and members can see the progress being made.
Responsible Officer	Head of People & Business Change

Action Update

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
1.1	The Action plan will be reported as a separate report in its own right; this will raise its profile with Members as it will be an agenda item.	The first report will go to cabinet on 17th October.	Cabinet have received the Review of progress in addressing the Corporate Assessment and Corporate Assessment Follow-up recommendations 2015/16. The Quarterly update on progress against the Corporate Assessment Recommendations and Proposals for improvement is now considered by cabinet as a report in its own right.	No further action planned	Head of People & Business Change
1.2	The action plan will provide a more detailed update of progress made.	January 2017	The reporting process outlined in response to Recommendation 1 (ref 1.1 and 1.2) will ensure that sufficient detail is included. The Quarterly update is now submitted to Chief Officers prior to submission to Cabinet to ensure that enough detail has been included.	No further action, this is now part of the process.	Head of People & Business Change

Proposal for Improvement 2

Proposal for Improvement 2	Review the timespan for completion of return to work interviews.
WAO's Intended outcome/benefit	Return to work interviews are undertaken on a more timely basis for mutual benefit to the Council and the employee.
Responsible Officer	Head of People & Business Change

Action update

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
2.1	<p>Newport is in the second quartile for sickness absence based on 2015/16 data, and is joint 7th based on the number of days lost per FTE. Our policy uses best practice of 7 calendar days for RTW's to be completed and whilst we do not achieve 100% submission, we do not believe that reducing the time frame will ensure greater submission response rates. However, we will look to move from a paper based system to an online one in an attempt to improve submission rates as we believe that completing paper documentation has a greater impact on delayed submission rates.</p>	September 2017	<p>We have rolled out People Manager on iTrent to managers in the organisation. We anticipate that this action will shorten the length of time to complete return to work interviews and will increase the percentage of returns within the timeframe.</p> <p>People Manager self-service in relation to sickness absence has been rolled out across the Council</p> <p>Newport continues to perform well nationally for sickness days lost and remains in the second quartile, above the Wales average.</p>	<p>Further consideration of the removal of the paper form and move to an online form.</p> <p>We have reviewed the option of moving to an online form, but are now considering removing the form entirely and building an iTrent screen for managers to log the detail of the RTW when they are closing the period of sickness in the actual RTW discussion with the employee – removing the form altogether. This should remove practically all late RTW completion providing managers are holding the RTW discussion at the same time as closing the sickness on iTrent</p>	Head of People & Business Change

Proposal for Improvement 3

Proposal for Improvement 3	Review whether it has appropriate capacity and capability within its People and Business Change service area to strengthen workforce planning.
WAO's Intended outcome/benefit	The Council has the confidence that it has the necessary resources and support to address workforce planning to meet its priorities and vision.
Responsible Officer	Head of People & Business Change

Action update

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
3.1	<p>Workforce planning has been a theme of the HR service plan for the last year and officers have been identified as leads for enabling workforce planning to become an integral function of the HR service. We have visited the Vale of Glamorgan, Swansea and RCT Councils to learn from their best practice and apply this knowledge at Newport. We intend to undertake the WAO self-assessment audit tool to review our progress and identify priorities for the future. Officers will be effectively trained on workforce planning There is a risk in terms of capacity within the HR/OD team as Newport has considerably fewer HR FTE than comparable Councils and priorities will need to be assessed accordingly.</p>	September 2017	<p>Workforce Plan 2016/17 published and all service areas have completed their template for the year with their workforce planning objectives identified. HR Business Partners are working proactively with Heads of Service to discuss their templates as part of normal business discussions and each member of the HR team has contribution towards the workforce planning progress report.</p> <p>A SHRBP has been allocated responsibility for promoting workforce planning with service areas.</p> <p>The actions required for progress with the workforce plan are contained within the People and Culture Strategy</p>	<p>Currently working on a longer term workforce plan for the organisation which will match up to the next People Plan – i.e. a 5 year plan for both</p> <p>The draft People and Culture Strategy has a workforce plan element contained within it and is with Cabinet Member and Head of Service for feedback. We intend to consult with the workforce on the strategy in the next quarter</p>	Head of People & Business Change

Ref	Planned Actions	Completion Date	Progress to date	Planned next quarter	Responsible Officer
				We will be carrying out a workforce planning self-assessment exercise in the next quarter	