

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

This statement meets the requirement to produce a Statement of Internal Control pursuant to Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulation 2014.

Part 1: SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Gwynedd Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. Gwynedd Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, Gwynedd Council is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk and adequate and effective financial management.

Gwynedd Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/Solace Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. A copy of the code is available on our website or can be obtained by writing to the Gwynedd Council, Council Offices, Shirehall Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 1SH. This statement explains how the Authority has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 5(5) of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 in relation to the publication of a statement on internal control.

Part 2: THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of the governance framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Gwynedd Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework described above has been in place at Gwynedd Council for the year ended 31 March 2016 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

Part 3: GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The **Governance Arrangements Assessment Group** keeps a continuous, disciplined overview on matters of governance, raising a wider awareness of them and promoting a wider ownership of the Annual Governance Statement. The Group comprises the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer, the Head of Corporate Support, two Corporate Support Senior Managers and the Senior Manager Revenues and Risk.
- 3.2 The Group has identified 33 elements that form Gwynedd Council’s Governance framework and special consideration is given to the effect that each one of these is expected to have as they add public value for the people of Gwynedd. Prior to assessing the effectiveness of these elements, an Impact score was noted for each of the elements to reflect how comparatively large the effect of each one of them will be as they add public value.
- 3.3 During 2015/16, on the recommendation of the Management Group and the Audit Committee, these range of Impact scores was changed. These scores now vary from 1 (little impact) to 5 (very large impact). These scores have been assessed, challenged and confirmed by the Council's Audit Committee and Management Group.
- 3.4 The Council is of the opinion that the elements that have the greatest impact as they enable it to achieve are:

Impact Score of 5 (out of 5):

The Council’s Culture	Having the right culture means that this outweighs everything else that affects our ability to achieve as the principles of good governance would be an integral part of the day to day behaviour of each individual within the organisation.
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Impact Score of 4:

Integrated Public Services	The willingness of public sector bodies, including Gwynedd Council, other neighbouring unitary councils, the Police, the Health Board and others to collaborate in order to deliver public services jointly will have a substantial and visible effect on the People of Gwynedd.
The Council’s Strategic Plan	This is the high level statement that outlines what the Council aims to achieve during the life of the current Council and this ensures that we are clear and open about what we intend to achieve.
Engagement	Clear engagement with the People of Gwynedd, to establish clear communication and to get a true understanding of their needs, is one of the most important elements of the governance arrangements.
Leadership Programme	Leadership sets the standard that every member and employee in the Council follows. Therefore, its impact is great – good Leadership can overcome everything else, whilst poor Leadership can destroy what the Council is trying to achieve. This facilitates the underpinning of the Council’s culture.
Information Governance	Having the right information is essential if the Council is to provide the right services to the right people in the right way. The information that is collected and stored must be current and relevant, not only to comply with the Data Protection Act but also to ensure that the services we provide are those that doing the right things. Good Information Governance is the foundation of good decision making.

Financial Strategy	<p>The Financial Strategy sets the key context for everything the Council does.</p> <p>The financial projections for the Council suggest that substantial savings must be identified in the years to come. The Financial Strategy establishes how we will achieve this and, therefore, it is a very important statement that outlines how the Council will deal with the situation.</p>
Workforce Planning	<p>To ensure that the Council is in a position to provide services that always place the residents of Gwynedd in the centre, we must ensure that we have the right staff in the right place with the right skills. This means that there must be continuous staff training, their performance must be monitored and their talent fostered and developed. Staff training arrangements are an important method of promoting and dissipating Ffordd Gwynedd thinking across the Council and of course it is vitally important that the Council has officers with the skills to carry out their duties.</p>

Impact Score of 3:

Risk Management Arrangements	<p>Our risk management arrangements are an integral part of the Authority's management arrangements. Robust, correct and proportionate risk management arrangements support innovation and do not inhibit it.</p>
The Local Governance Code	<p>The Local Governance Code is the foundation of the Council's governance arrangements. It encompasses a large number of elements which need to be in place to enable the Council to achieve on behalf of the People of Gwynedd.</p>
The Constitution	<p>As the system and rules for the manner in which the Council operates, it is inevitable that the Constitution, by definition, has a significant impact on the way in which the Council achieves on behalf of the people of Gwynedd.</p>
Performance Management	<p>This is the Council's business planning and performance management system. Consequently, the effect of the system on the Council's ability to provide services on behalf of the people of Gwynedd is crucial.</p>
The Scrutiny Procedure	<p>The scrutiny procedure is the process that is in place to ensure that the Council's Cabinet implements its policies in accordance with its pledges and for the benefit of the people of Gwynedd. It is therefore a very important part of the governance framework.</p>
Use of Technology	<p>The effective use of technology is an essential tool to ensure that services are delivered in a way which meets the needs of our residents and does so in a cost-effective way.</p>
Asset Management	<p>Council departments use a wide range of assets as well as its main asset – its workforce – and it is essential that those assets meet the requirements of our residents while ensuring that we do not spend unnecessarily on assets where the cost of providing them is higher than the benefit that is derived from them.</p>

In addition, the following elements received a lower score in terms of their impact on public value:

Element	Impact Score (out of 5)
Member/Officer Relations Members' Code of Conduct Officers' Code of Conduct Audit Committee Anti-fraud and Anti-corruption Policy Response to The External Auditor's Annual Report Internal Audit Procurement Strategy Gwynedd Council Performance Report Equality	2
The Standards Committee Decision Notices Statutory Officers' Protocols Member Inter-relationship Whistleblowing Code of Practice Member Training and Development The Complaints Process Statement of Accounts	1

3.5 The following developments in our governance arrangements were seen during 2015/16, and in the period since 31 March 2016:

April 2015	The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 becomes law.
July 2015	The Full Council adopts the Strategic Plan 2015-17.
	The Cabinet adopts the Ffordd Gwynedd Strategy.
	The Cabinet adopts the Procurement Strategy.
December 2015	The Full Council, unopposed, agrees to consider specialisms and experience, rather than implementing political balance on committees inflexibly on each occasion.
January 2016	A special meeting of the Audit Committee to consider recommendations and proposals for improvement in the reports of external auditors and regulators. This starts a practice that will happen every 6 months from now on.
	The establishment of a subgroup of Cabinet members, Scrutiny Forum and Audit Committee to consider our Scrutiny arrangements.
February 2016	The Council presents formal comments of the Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill.
March 2016	The Full Council adopts the Strategic Plan 2016-17.
	The Full Council adopts the Financial Strategy, which includes cuts to meet the funding gap, following the “Gwynedd Challenge” engagement exercise.
	The Cabinet approves the Gwynedd Council 2016-20 Strategic Equality Plan.
	The Cabinet adopts the Property Asset Management Plan.
April 2016	The addition of “Use of Technology” and “Asset Management” to the Governance Framework.
	The Council responds to the Audit General for Wales Consultation - <i>The Well-being of Future Generations and what it means for your audit.</i>
May 2016	The Cabinet adopts the Information Technology Strategy (2016-2018).

Part 4: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 Gwynedd Council is responsible for undertaking, at least on an annual basis, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the internal management system. The review of effectiveness is steered by the work of the operational manager within the authority who is responsible for developing and maintaining the governance environment, the annual report of the head of internal audit, along with the observations made by the external auditors and other reviewing agencies and inspectorates.
- 4.2 The Governance Arrangement Assessment Group has convened regularly during the year to continuously assess the Council’s governance arrangements, and it has attended to matters that have been brought to its attention that affect the perception of the governance framework. In doing this, it has assessed the effectiveness of each of the 33 elements of the governance framework by undertaking a systematic assessment of each of these elements in turn, with the assistance of a template prepared by the Wales Audit Office that is based on the CIPFA / Solace Framework.
- 4.3 The following are some of the key steps in assessing our Governance Arrangements during 2015/16 and during the period since 31 March 2016:

October 2015	The Governance Arrangement Assessment Group considers the requirements of the WAO Corporate Assessment, and starts to map out the WAO questions to the Council’s governance framework.
	Visits to Isle of Anglesey County Council and Conwy County Borough Council to learn lessons from their corporate governance reviews.
	The Full Council approves the Council's annual performance report.
November 2015	Publication of the Wales Audit Office report <i>Review of the Effectiveness of Scrutiny Arrangements</i> and the publication of the results of a 360° Review of the opinions of members and senior officers within the Council of the effectiveness of scrutiny arrangements within the Council.
December 2015	The Audit Committee considers the Council's risk management arrangements.
January 2016	The Governance Arrangements Assessment Group completes a half-year review of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements.
	The Governance Arrangements Assessment Group reviews the effectiveness of Use of Technology.
February 2016	Presentation of the result of the half-year review to the Audit Committee and the Management Group.
March 2016	Publication of the Wales Audit Office report <i>Financial Resilience Assessment</i> , which confirms the auditors’ opinion that Gwynedd Council is low risk in terms of financial planning, financial control and financial governance.
May 2016	Based on a recommendation by the Management Group, and after consideration by the Governance Arrangements Assessment Group, the Audit Committee agrees to use a 5x5 matrix rather than 10x10 from now on to assess the effectiveness of the governance framework.
	The Governance Arrangements Assessment Group considers a self-assessment of Asset Management.
	The Governance Arrangements Assessment Group considers a self-assessment of Information Governance.

- 4.4 The following have also contributed in undertaking the assessment of the effectiveness of the governance framework during the year:
- Assessments by members and principal officers in developing the “Ffordd Gwynedd” principles, namely, the same common and clear vision for everyone in the Council regarding the corporate culture needed if the people of Gwynedd are to be central in everything that we do.
 - The work of Internal Audit is summarised in the Head of Internal Audit’s Annual Report, submitted to the Audit Committee in May 2016. The report included the following general assurance: ***“On the basis of Internal Audit work completed during 2015/16, in my opinion Gwynedd Council has a sound framework of control to manage risks. This assists in providing assurance in the arrangements for ensuring effective and efficient achievement of the Council’s objectives, as the steps taken by the Council during the accounting period to establish and strengthen internal controls and to ensure that recommendations to remedy weaknesses identified by the Internal Audit service have, overall, been satisfactory.”***
 - Consideration of the results of the work of external auditors and regulators, including the Wales Audit Office, Estyn and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).
- 4.5 A comparative score is used to show the result of the assessment of the effectiveness of elements of the governance framework described above. Like the Impact scores, the range of the Effectiveness score has also been changed this year to being from 1 to 5 instead of from 1 to 10. The Effectiveness scores vary from 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective), and are shown in the following table.
- 4.6 **The result of the self-assessment work described above is that the two elements identified as being the least effective at present are Scrutiny Arrangements and Member Inter-relationships.**

4.7 No element received an Effectiveness Score of 1 out of 5. The table below shows that elements that have received a score of 2 or 3 out of 5, and the reasons for that.

Effectiveness Score of 2 (out of 5):

Element	Assessment of its Effectiveness in assisting us to deliver
The Scrutiny Procedure	<p>During the year an external auditor report was published which noted that in his opinion significant problems remain with the Scrutiny Arrangements, and an internal Council 360° Review has also confirmed that a number of elements within the regime need further attention in order to improve them</p> <p>Scrutiny and challenging of decisions and policies are transparent and objective but there is uncertainty about how effective that is. This will be addressed in the Scrutiny Review commissioned by the Audit Committee in 2016/17 that looks at further honing of the purpose of scrutiny and the value it adds, and more scrutiny before a decision. Some of the proposals of that action plan are already in place with others will be addressed with a view to the scrutiny arrangements after the elections of May 2017.</p>
Member inter-relationship	<p>There is some evidence of tension in the past between members as the new Cabinet arrangements were implemented within the Council and the resulting changes in roles, and there is no evidence to suggest that those tensions have disappeared, with the recent External Auditor report on Scrutiny reinforcing this view. However there are signs that tensions are starting to ease.</p> <p>Tensions are inevitable during times of significant changes and to be expected.</p>

Effectiveness Score of 3 (out of 5):

Element	Assessment of its Effectiveness in assisting us to deliver
The Council's Culture	<p>The Ffordd Gwynedd Strategy now states that one of the Council's key objectives is to place the People of Gwynedd at the centre to everything we do. In reality this also describes the values of the Council – namely anything which is compatible with that objective.</p> <p>Ffordd Gwynedd work has already started in 6 areas within the Council with further substantial work proceeding so that the change in culture can spread throughout the Council, by highlighting to managers what this means to them and their teams.</p> <p>There are now continuous signs that the culture attached to Ffordd Gwynedd are embedded in the conversations that arise within the Council.</p>
Performance Management	<p>In the past, the relatively low Effectiveness Score for Performance Management reflected the inconsistency across the Council. By now, officers and members question continuously if we are measuring the right things.</p> <p>Cabinet members submit performance reports on their areas to Cabinet meetings on a regular basis.</p>

Element	Assessment of its Effectiveness in assisting us to deliver
Integrated Public Services	<p>Work is going ahead at present to respond to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Among these requirements is the need to establish a statutory Public Services Board, which includes local authorities and a number of other bodies. Work has taken place to undertake an assessment of well-being, which is part of the initial work of the Public Services Board</p> <p>In addition, the system review work in the Care area, which includes close collaboration with stakeholders from external bodies, is showing promising signs. Work has taken place to identify schemes that should be commissioned for the future.</p>
The Council's Strategic Plan	<p>The Strategic Plan is an important guidance for the achievement on behalf of the People of Gwynedd. The Wales Audit Office has identified improvements in the way that the Council is providing its services. However, the Council recognises that the nature of the current Plan means that it is not easy to interpret from it what constitutes the core work of the Council. The Plan in its current form is a catalogue of things that need to be changed within the Council and in the Gwynedd area, rather than a business plan for the Authority. Work is ongoing to identify how this can be changed with a view to introducing changes in 2016.</p>
Engagement	<p>During 2015/16, the Gwynedd Challenge, a scheme to discuss the financial position with Gwynedd residents, showed that substantial progress has been made in our Engagement arrangements.</p> <p>The Gwynedd Challenge exercise was extremely successful, attracting a response from over 2,000 Gwynedd residents and enabling the Council to make logical decisions on priorities for the future in light of the views of the people we serve. While there is a need to ensure that we permeate this good practice among all Council departments the score now reflects the improvement seen in this area given the Gwynedd Challenge and the work undertaken in the field of Waste in particular.</p> <p>However, because the Gwynedd Challenge has been given priority in the last year, some parts of the Engagement Strategy have not moved forward as expected.</p>
Information Governance	<p>Despite efforts to improve Information Governance, the Council continues to hold vast amounts of information, and there is a need to continue working to ensure that it does not hold more data than is needed. There are examples of information being used to make effective decisions, but there is room to challenge whether the practice is as good as it could be, and practiced widely across all Council service units. It is expected that the EDRMS project will contribute to a significant improvement in this regard, and the Governance Arrangements Working Group has also commissioned work within individual departments.</p> <p>Research work has shown that there is continuous need to raise awareness on Data Protection principles, and improve attitudes in this area. This work is continuing as part of the Council's Strategic Plan, and is showing progress.</p>

Element	Assessment of its Effectiveness in assisting us to deliver
Risk Management Arrangements	<p>Arrangements are now in place for every department to maintain a departmental risk register and there are also cross-departmental registers in place with supporting protocols. Nevertheless, the permeation of risk management amongst individual business units remains somewhat inconsistent.</p> <p>Also, apart from Health and Safety risks, systems tests show that not all the workforce is aware of the risks that could prevent achievement for the people of Gwynedd and take ownership of them – risk management tends to be seen as a matter for Managers.</p> <p>Substantial work has been undertaken in the field of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity, to better prepare the authority for unforeseen events.</p> <p>Arrangement to deal with risks around Safeguarding Children and Adults continue to receive attention, in order to maintain work done since 2013. Additional work that has been allocated to the Safeguarding Panel during 2015/16 is the “PREVENT” agenda, with regards to radicalisation.</p>
Workforce Planning	<p>Difficulties in filling some senior posts within the Council suggest that there is a need to improve our ability to create progression at least for senior posts. This has been identified as a basis for developing internal talent. Further, there are recruitment difficulties for some posts in certain geographic locations within Gwynedd (e.g. care workers in Meirionnydd).</p> <p>A 360° appraisal procedure for heads, senior managers and some managers has been established, but its development need to continue.</p> <p>In addition to this, a Senior Managers Group has been established and will continue</p>
The Audit Committee	<p>Gwynedd Council’s Audit Committee has been established since 1999 and it has agreed terms of reference.</p> <p>There is evidence that the Audit Committee is very effective in achieving some of the functions that it has undertaken for some time, but its capacity to deal with new responsibilities pursuant the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 continue to develop.</p>
Response to the External Auditor’s Annual Letter	<p>Whilst the letter includes constructive criticism, the Council will try to implement the matters raised but sometimes there may be conflict between what the Council feels should be addressed and some matters raised in the letter in terms of the effort required to be given to them and the level of risk they represent. However, these examples are not significant; there were no recommendations in the most recent report, and in general the messages are positive.</p>
Internal Audit	<p>The effectiveness of the Internal Audit system is under continuous review and although the service satisfies the professional standards in accordance with expectation, there is a need to consider further whether it reviews the right things and if it operates in a manner that is compatible with Ffordd Gwynedd. The service’s capacity has decreased significantly since 1 April 2015, down from 10 to 7 full-time officers. It is expected that the adoption of Ffordd Gwynedd principles will ensure the effectiveness of the service will be maintained, but there may be some reduction in the short term.</p>

Element	Assessment of its Effectiveness in assisting us to deliver
Procurement Strategy	<p>A Procurement Project in collaboration with Denbighshire and Flintshire councils has led to a new Procurement Strategy that was adopted by the Cabinet in July 2015.</p> <p>Category Management was introduced during 2015/16. It has already been introduced in the People area, but further progress is needed in other areas.</p>
Member Training and Development	<p>Steps have been taken in the period since the 2012 election to draw up a training programme for members with the Democratic Services leading on the work.</p> <p>Only some members have taken advantage of the Personal Development Interviews that were introduced during 2014/15.</p>
The Complaints Process	<p>The new corporate complaints procedure continues to develop well, and the Service Improvement Officer ensures that we learn lessons from complaints, and avoid repeating mistakes.</p>
Equality	<p>Although an Equality Scheme is in place, there is evidence that awareness of equality is not as rooted as it should be, and that the mentality has not yet spread throughout the Council. For example, there is no evidence to show that the Council is thinking of conducting routinely Equality Impact Assessments when making its decisions.</p> <p>However, an Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken on each of the proposals for cuts that were presented as part of the Gwynedd Challenge.</p>
Use of Technology	<p>Information Technology activities over recent years have focussed on ensuring an appropriate infrastructure in order to guarantee basic support for services.</p> <p>While there are instances where we have been able to use information technology more widely to improve how we deliver services to the residents of Gwynedd, there is no evidence that this is consistent across the authority and that it is happening at the speed that we would like it to happen.</p> <p>The Information Technology Strategy that has been adopted for the forthcoming period seeks to extend the use of technology in order to support the improvement objectives in the Strategic Plan, whilst also improving the ability of services to take advantage of the opportunities to use technology effectively.</p>

The other elements received an effectiveness score of 8 or above:

Element	Effectiveness Score (out of 5)
Financial Strategy Leadership Programme Local Code of Governance Member/Officer Relations Members' Code of Conduct Gwynedd Council Performance Report Standards Committee Whistleblowing Code of Practice Asset Management	4
The Constitution Officers' Code of Conduct Anti-fraud and Anti-corruption Policy Decision Notices Statutory Officers' Protocols Statement of the Accounts	5

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the **review of the effectiveness of the governance framework** by the Audit Committee, and that the arrangements **continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework**. The areas that have already been addressed and those which the Council will address specifically have new on-going action plans and are outlined below.

Part 5: SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES

In setting the Impact and Effectiveness scores in the diagram below, the issues to be addressed as a matter of priority are displayed, namely those areas that have the greatest impact, but are least effective at the moment

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES THAT FORM GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S GOVERNANCE

Impact: How relatively large is the impact when adding public value for the people of Gwynedd?	5		The Council's Culture		
			4		The Council's Strategic Plan
	Workforce Planning				
	Integrated Public Services	Financial Strategy			
	Information Governance				
	Engagement				
	3	The Scrutiny Process	Risk Management Arrangements	Local Code of Governance	The Constitution
			Performance Management	Asset Management	
			Use of Technology		
	2		Response to External Auditor's Annual Report	Gwynedd Council's Performance Report	Officer Code of Conduct
			Audit Committee		
			Internal Audit	Member/Officer Relations	Anti-fraud and Anti-corruption policy
			Procurement Strategy	Members Code of Conduct	
	1	Member Inter-relationships	Member Training and Development	Whistleblowing Code of Practice	Statutory Officer Protocols
			The Complaints Process	The Standards Committee	Decision Notices
				Statement of Accounts	
	1	2	3	4	5
	Effectiveness: How well do the current arrangements help us in achieving for the people of Gwynedd?				

None of the 33 elements are now considered to be issues of very high priority, but many of them are high priority.

Action plans for areas with High Priority are set out below. Where a specific project within the Strategic Plan has been identified as a response, progress will be reported regularly to the Cabinet in the Performance Report of the relevant Cabinet Member.

High Priority

Matter that has been identified	Response Arrangements	Responsibility of whom?
<p>The Council's Culture. There are encouraging signs that the values of giving Gwynedd people central to everything we do are beginning to emerge in staff conversations. Nevertheless, we need to continue the effort of ensuring that everyone is "doing" as well as "saying".</p>	<p>Council Culture will receive attention under the Effective and Efficient Council priority field within the Strategic Plan, namely project C1 – Enabling units to put Ffordd Gwynedd to work.</p> <p>By March 2017, 12 service reviews will have been completed and the Ffordd Gwynedd principles will have been promoted amongst the Council's managers.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>
<p>Performance Management. During 2015/16, a new regime was established and Council departments have started to implement the new performance regime by identifying purposes and measures that are consistent with the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd</p>	<p>Will receive attention under the Effective and Efficient Council priority field within the Strategic Plan, namely project C4 – Implementing a performance framework.</p> <p>By the end of March 2017 the framework will be fully operational throughout the Council and there will be assurance that we are measuring and monitoring the appropriate matters.</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Support</p>
<p>The Council's Strategic Plan. There is concern whether all Council staff give due priority to matters that are in the Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>Continuing to refine business planning arrangements of all the Council's business units in order to address the right priorities.</p>	<p>Corporate Support Senior Manager</p>
<p>Workforce Planning. Tests have been conducted in different departments to examine different ways to improve the procedure.</p>	<p>Continue to develop and promulgate the new appraisal process that is based on Ffordd Gwynedd principles.</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Support</p>
<p>Integrated Public Services. We will develop our procedures in order to respond to the requirements of the Welfare of Future Generations Act.</p>	<p>Complete the task of establishing the governance arrangements of the Public Services Board.</p>	<p>Corporate Support Senior Manager</p>

Matter that has been identified	Response Arrangements	Responsibility of whom?
<p>Information Governance. The Council maintains a large amount of data.</p>	<p>Receiving attention under the Effective and Efficient Council priority field within the Strategic Plan, namely projects C7 – Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRMS) and C8 – Information Governance.</p> <p>By the end of March 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least five of the Council’s departments will use the EDRMS system • The Council will have assessed the propriety of our information protection arrangements (including the efficiency of our training arrangements), communicating and introducing a data protection policy for staff, introducing new training arrangements and introducing audit arrangements in order to embed information protection principles throughout the whole establishment. 	<p>Corporate Support Senior Manager</p>
<p>Engagement. The Council’s engagement arrangements are not as good as they should be for the new climate that lies ahead.</p>	<p>Receiving attention under the Effective and Efficient Council priority field within the Strategic Plan, namely project C3 – Engagement.</p> <p>By the end of March 2017, this project will ensure that an Engagement Strategy is implemented that includes a series of activities aimed at improving engagement across the Council.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>
<p>The Scrutiny Procedure. Weaknesses have been identified in the scrutiny arrangements and we will develop proposals for focusing on the dialogue between Scrutiny and the Executive, pressure of work within the system, the slow pace and clarity about what is intended to be improved, and the skills and resources for doing so.</p>	<p>Although there is no Strategic Plan project as such, the Audit Committee has set up a task and finish sub-group to address the themes identified.</p> <p>The sub-group works on some elements that need improvement and implemented this year and other changes that will lead to proposals for new scrutiny arrangements to be implemented after the May 2017 election.</p>	<p>Corporate Support Senior Manager</p>

Matter that has been identified	Response Arrangements	Responsibility of whom?
<p>Risk Management Arrangements. The permeation of risk management amongst individual business units is inconsistent and the general perception is that risk management is a hindrance rather than a help in achieving the aims.</p>	<p>Build on the work of ensuring that every department has prepared a risk register on a departmental level and report on it regularly. Continue to support business units to raise awareness of the use of risk management in their day-to-day work in the context of the Ffordd Gwynedd principles.</p>	<p>Senior Manager Revenues and Risk</p>
<p>Use of Technology. The Information Technology Strategy 2016-18 was adopted by the Cabinet on 3 May 2016. When adopting it, the Cabinet noted that IT is a critical tool and enabler when it comes to improving services and reducing the costs of providing services.</p>	<p>Acting in accordance with the programme of work contained in the Information Technology Strategy.</p>	<p>Head of Finance / Senior Manager Information Technology and Business Transformation</p>

In addition to the above, the Council will also review its Governance Framework in relation to the revised CIPFA / Solace Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*.

Part 6: OPINION

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

DILWYN O WILLIAMS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE GWYNEDD COUNCIL

Cllr DYFED WYN EDWARDS
LEADER OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL

DATE

DATE