



Internal Audit Working Group

Summary report for Audit Committee – 19 November 2020

The Internal Audit Working Group met on 10 November 2020 and considered SWAP reports on Welshpool High School and Employee Development.

Welshpool High School

The Head Teacher and Chair of the Governing Body joined the Group for discussion.

A Partial Opinion had been given following the Audit with one Priority 1, two Priority 2 and five Priority 3 recommendations made. The audit had taken place in December 2019 and was published in May 2020.

The key issue had been the lack of effective budgetary control with an unlicensed deficit accumulating and no clear pathway to bring the deficit back within acceptable tolerances. There was a lack of evidence around PAT testing and fire alarm testing.

A new financial plan was in place with the current year expecting to generate a surplus. A smaller surplus was likely in 2021/22 but further deficits were anticipated in future years. However, this was currently being dealt with. Whilst improvements were being made and further efficiencies sought, the Head Teacher was of the opinion the current system was unsustainable and that transformation of education was essential.

An improved relationship between Finance and schools in general was recognised.

The actions identified were being addressed. Records would be forwarded to SWAP for the period in question to provide assurance that appropriate testing had been undertaken.

All recommendations from audits were monitored. A two year visiting programme was in place for high schools and it was likely that Welshpool High School would be revisited in the next six to twelve months.

Employee Development

The Head of Workforce and Organisational Development and the Manager, Organisational Design and Development joined the meeting.

A Limited Opinion had been given with one Priority 1, four Priority 2 and two Priority 3 recommendations made. The audit was published in September 2020.

A key finding of the audit was that there was no Learning and Development Policy in place – however, one was in development and a pathway for recovery was evident. The Training Programme had been based on an historic plan and did not meet the needs of the Council. Records were not effective in relation to training that had been delivered and there was no evaluation process in place to determine success. Staff appraisals were not being completed or the information was not being collated.

The Training and Development Team had been depleted but, since the Head of Workforce and Organisational Development had been appointed, this team has been rebuilt to consider the Workforce Futures Plan, Corporate Resourcing Plan and Training Development. The findings of the Audit had not identified anything that the service was not already aware of.

A Learning and Development Plan has been finalised and is awaiting sign off by the Employment Committee. Staff appraisals had been substantially completed by the end of September 2020. Each service has a training needs analysis and information will be collated to determine future training needs. Workforce Planning is being undertaken with individual service areas to assess key roles and identify risks that could damage delivery of a service. This should also form part of the Integrated Business Planning Process.

It was acknowledged that evaluation of training could be better. A new Project support Officer has been appointed and will build evaluation into the Trent system. This should be in place by the time regular training resumes.

A Corporate Induction Programme should have been launched on 1 April 2020 but the pandemic intervened. Digital delivery is being developed and this will be launched in January 2021.

Service areas also delivered their own training and these records should be updated corporately.

The recommendations would be monitored over the next six months and Group would be advised of compliance.

Internal Audit Working Group members present: County Councillors J G Morris, Chair, W D Powell and R G Thomas and Mr J Brautigam.

Officers present: Ian Halstead and Kevin Price, SWAP, Jane Thomas, Head of Finance and Clive Pinney, Head of Legal and Democratic Services