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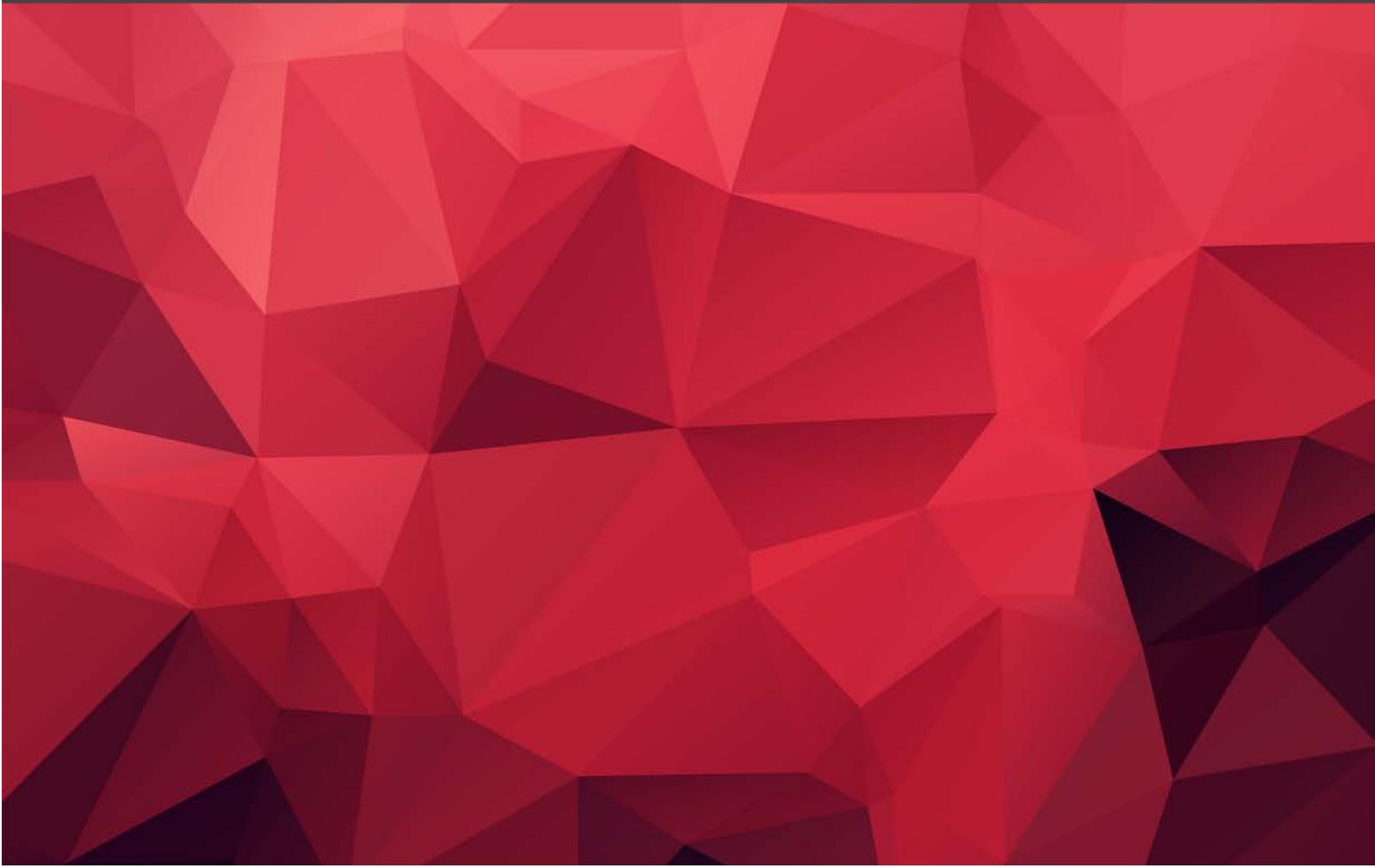
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# Review of Performance Management Arrangements – **Conwy County Borough Council**

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Richard Hayward, Gwilym Bury and Andy Bruce under the direction of Huw Rees.

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# Summary report

- 1 In 2015, Conwy County Borough Council (the Council) purchased a new local government performance management system (developed and supplied by CAMMS) to enhance arrangements for performance management. CAMMS provides the functionality to align the recording and reporting of performance information with risk management, project management and strategic planning.
- 2 The expected benefits of CAMMS include streamlining the process for producing better performance reports, improving access to data, and greater transparency and accountability for outcomes.
- 3 To evaluate the impact of CAMMS, during 2018 we undertook document reviews, interviewed key officers and elected members and reviewed the system.
- 4 The performance indicator 'percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted' was used as a test tracer to audit the quality of data in CAMMS.
- 5 In this review we concluded that **the performance management system collates data efficiently and supports the Council's evaluation of its work, but lacks financial information**. We reached this conclusion because:
  - The efficient collection of performance measures supports the monitoring of improvement objectives
  - The Council is effective in validating and testing the data included in the performance management system.
  - The performance management system has the capacity to record all relevant data but the Council does not include financial information in the data set.
- 6 We have made one proposal for improvement.

## Proposal for improvement

### Exhibit 1: proposal for improvement

| Proposals for improvement       |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Proposal for improvement</b> |   |
| P1                              | The Council should include summary financial information in the Service Performance Review reports. |

- 7 The audit team wishes to thank all those we met for their time in contributing to this review.

# Detailed report

## The performance management system collates data efficiently and supports the Council's evaluation of its work, but lacks financial information

### The efficient collection of performance measures supports the monitoring of improvement objectives

- 8 There are clear links within the new CAMMS system between performance measures, actions, risks and projects and specific improvement objectives. The indexing in CAMMS creates a hierarchy of performance information that directly links to the vision statement 'Conwy – a progressive County creating opportunity'. This shows the 'golden thread' i.e. individual tasks that form actions, actions that deliver service outcomes and service outcomes that are aligned to Council priorities. The information can be viewed from either a service or Council priority perspective.
- 9 CAMMS has improved the Council's capability to manage performance. The Council already has a well-established performance management framework and CAMMS has strengthened the arrangements. The main benefit of CAMMS is the ability to store a range of related information in one place. Previously, the information on projects and risks existed in 'silos' with limited connection to the 'golden thread'. All the Council's major projects have been input into CAMMS and are managed by a PRINCE2<sup>1</sup> methodology. Additionally, no Council project can be created without first stating where it sits in the Corporate Plan.
- 10 The reporting function in CAMMS allows officers to produce clear reports that help monitor progress against priorities and outcomes. A range of reports have been developed by the Corporate Performance Team to review and export data from the system. Selection criteria allow users to refine results based on specific requirements. The senior managers and members we spoke to felt the reports are well presented and can be easily interpreted, which aids decision making in the Council.
- 11 CAMMS has enabled the Corporate Performance Team to be more effective. The reduction in time needed to produce performance reports has enabled the team to spend more time on data review, validation and evaluation. Prior to the implementation of CAMMS, the production of performance reports was very time consuming and labour intensive for the Corporate Performance Team. To produce

<sup>1</sup> PRINCE2 is a structured project management method and practitioner certification programme. PRINCE2 emphasises dividing projects into manageable and controllable stages.

a report, data needed to be collated from various systems across the Council and formatted for consistency. The process involved ongoing requests for information from the service staff and manual checks to ensure the reports were fully populated prior to publication.

- 12 CAMMS has streamlined the data collection process. During the implementation phase of CAMMS the Corporate Performance Team completed an audit of all requests for data and information. They identified that in some cases, services were being asked for the same information more than once to populate various reports and data returns. CAMMS has removed the potential for duplication by ensuring data is only collected once.
- 13 The training and support available for CAMMS users are of a high standard. The Corporate Performance Team offers group training on a rolling programme and one-to-one support is available on request. A dedicated CAMMS intranet site includes training materials, for example, guidance on how to assign the correct status against actions, the allocation of 'RAG' ratings ('red' off track, 'amber' monitor and 'green' on track) and method statements for reporting performance indicators. The officers we spoke to felt the training was of a high standard and were confident the updaters in the service understand how to use the system. Going forward there are early thoughts of using Skype to record training sessions and hold webinars.
- 14 The majority of CAMMS users have received training. The total number of CAMMS users has grown significantly from approximately 100 in 2016 to over 700, which includes 116 users who are currently waiting for training.

### **The Council is effective in validating and testing the data included in the performance management system**

- 15 The processes to record information in CAMMS are clear and well understood. The majority of information in CAMMS is input by 'updaters' from the services who are identified by service Business Managers based on their area of work and responsibility. The rationale for this approach is that it places more accountability on the individuals and services for their own performance. To ensure the system is secure, the updaters are allocated with specific permissions to view and amend relevant items in CAMMS through the 'MyQuick Update' page.
- 16 Robust system testing ensures CAMMS is configured correctly. Extensive testing took place during the implementation phase of CAMMS. This included checking and refining the indexing to ensure the correct results populate the relevant reports. Ongoing testing takes place when required, such as when there is a system upgrade. The testing and checking are designated across all members of the Corporate Performance Team.
- 17 The arrangements for data validation and quality assurance are effective. Data validation is carried out centrally by the Corporate Performance Team and in the services where it is led by the Business Managers. A period of two weeks is

allocated for the Corporate Performance Team to review the biannual Service Performance Reviews and Corporate Plan updates. The majority of time is spent proof reading documents and liaising with the services to clarify anything that is unclear. The services carry out ongoing data validation checks as part of the performance management arrangements.

- 18 The performance information included in the system generated reports is accurate. The senior officers and members we spoke to class the accuracy of data and quality of information in CAMMS reports as excellent. The main improvement over the previous reports was identified as the quality of narrative that is included to explain the context and reasons for the performance.
- 19 Our testing of the performance indicator 'the percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted' did not identify any concerns. The quarterly inputs for the numerator and denominator in 2016-17 reconciled against the base data taken from the Waste Flow data returns to the Welsh Government.

### The performance management system has the capacity to record all relevant data, but the Council does not include financial information in the data set

- 20 Although CAMMS includes the majority of information needed to evaluate how the Council is performing, it does not include financial data. The system consists of three modules that collectively cover measures, actions, projects and risks for the Corporate Plan, other strategic plans and service plans. The Interplan module produces a summary of the actions, measures, risks and budget to show the 'RAG' status of each item but there is no information for overall budget. The budget methodology in CAMMS is based on a budget for individual actions, which does not align with the Council's budget setting arrangements. The lack of financial information within CAMMS was highlighted as a weakness by some officers when we spoke to them.
- 21 The Council believes that although the system has the capacity to record an overall budget allocation by each action it is not sophisticated enough to meet the needs of the financial management systems of the Council, and is currently working collaboratively to purchase a new corporate finance system. However the financial information currently included within service's self assessment review reports is very limited and does not provide a comprehensive summary of financial information.
- 22 The advantage of integrating financial data against actions, measures, risks and projects is to evidence the impact of budget changes on service quality and delivery. This is particularly true against the national picture of further budget reductions. It could be considered a net 'gain' or positive improvement where a service has maintained performance following a budget reduction. Similarly the finance data, actions and projects will show if a service is delivering 'more for less' as the Council delivers its Corporate Plan over the next five years.

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