

REPORT TO THE POLICY REVIEW & AUDIT COMMITTEEDATE: 1ST OCTOBER 2007**SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF 'FFYNNON' PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM****SUMMARY:**

Members are asked to consider the report on the evaluation of the 'Ffynnon' Performance Management System. The software is being provided as part of a project by the Local Government Data Unit for the Welsh Assembly Government to enable performance management reporting and comparison for local authorities and other stakeholders.

OBJECTIVES		IMPLICATIONS	
Trusted & Respect		Operational Risk Management	x
More than Emergencies		Community Risk Reduction	
Saving Lives, Protecting Communities		Training & Development	
Managing within Budget		Civil Contingencies	
Improving Efficiency	X	Finance & Procurement	
Resources to Priorities	X	H.R.	
Alternative Resources		ICT	x
Managing People	X	Corporate Services	
Integrated Management Planning		Transport	
Partnership Working		Health & Safety	
Effective & Empowered People	x	Premises	
Sustainability & the Environment		Welsh Language	
Governance		Legal	

COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS:**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the members of the Policy Review & Audit Committee accept the attached reports

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT:

Local Government Data Unit Web Site – Ffynnon Project

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EVALUATION OF 'FFYNNON' PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Background

The Local Government Data Unit was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government to undertake a project to provide a shared software solution that would assist local authorities and other stakeholders in Wales with performance management reporting and comparison.

This had been initiated as many local authorities had not invested in performance management software solutions and it was agreed to investigate a common solution that would provide a holistic approach to performance management. This would allow strategic partners to interact using a system that would capture, and report progress on strategic and community partnerships. The Fire and Rescue Services were included in this process as one of the stakeholders, as were the National Parks departments.

Several companies demonstrated software solutions as part of the evaluation process and the contract was awarded to an established software company 'Aspiren'; the name given to the software package and the project was '*Ffynnon*'

The Welsh Assembly Government have pledged their support to the project financially for the first two years. Funding following this establishment period may be subject to Welsh Assembly Government contributions or grant funding but this is yet to be confirmed. In order to provide stakeholders with a 'worst case scenario' they were advised that there was a potential cost of £22,000 per annum for each authority dependant on how many stakeholders adopted the system.

Our existing Performance Management Software

The Authority had long since recognised the need to establish a software system to assist with performance reporting and in 2004, following extensive evaluation, the CorVu system was selected for this purpose. This system was already being used by other Fire & Rescue Services within the UK and by many Welsh local authorities. The software and support for CorVu is provided at a cost of £5,500 per annum.

Since its implementation significant long term investment has been made in terms of creating and populating the measures that are reported upon. A substantial amount of development work has been undertaken with Commands and Departments and the system is available throughout the Service area. A project to further develop the system to its full potential within all departments is underway and considerable work has been undertaken at all levels to support these objectives.

The initial investment in the system is now showing progress and the system is used throughout the Service area to monitor progress against objectives and is used to report quarterly performance at the Performance Board. In order to fully report on all aspects of the service a large number of measures have been established. The maintenance and support required to populate the system with these measures does however involve a significant investment in resource both from the Communications and Information Systems Department and the Strategic Planning and Performance Department.

Evaluation of 'Ffynnon'

The benefits of having access to a system that would enable sharing and comparison of performance information with other authorities and organisations in Wales was recognised. It was therefore agreed that members of staff who were involved in the CorVu project would attend information events and training days in order to fully evaluate the system. This evaluation was undertaken during the Summer Months.

It was found that *'Ffynnon'* provided a web based system that accommodated risk management, and project management functions as well as reporting capabilities. The reporting capabilities provided similar information to that currently available on CorVu and there was no improvement in the methods used to populate the system with the underlying data.

It is envisaged that *'Ffynnon'* could be used to report on the proposed performance indicators. There is however no requirement to use the *'Ffynnon'* system to report this information and existing arrangements for reporting and comparing data are established.

It would be possible to use the *'Ffynnon'* system to report on the measures currently monitored by CorVu. This would involve a great deal of development work to create the measures and the periodic transfer of the underlying data would result in a large amount of duplication of effort to achieve this reporting. The long term costs of providing the software once initial funding is withdrawn is not known, and whilst some contributions or grants may be available the cost could potentially be in the region of £22,000.

The Data Unit have provided a data set on *'Ffynnon'* to enable reporting on the proposed indicators but this has not been tested. There may be opportunities to investigate this with the other Welsh Fire & Rescue Services

Staff at the Local Government Data Unit have provided support for stakeholders and have pledged their continued support if help is required in the future to develop the software. However, additional professional services from the software providers *'Aspiren'* are available only at an additional cost to the stakeholder for each area of work undertaken.

Other Welsh Fire & Rescue Services

North Wales Fire & Rescue Service have existing performance management software but this has not been developed to the extent our CorVu system, and they are investigating the use of *'Ffynnon'* to provide them with a solution to their performance management reporting.

South Wales Fire & Rescue Service also have an existing performance management system and have not yet made a decision on the use of the *Ffynnon* system to supplement their current system.

Our close links with North and South Wales Fire & Rescue Service will enable close monitoring of any developments if they are involved in the project.

Recommendation

Significant investment has been made over a number of years in our existing CorVu system and this has been developed to suit the organisation's needs both to monitor local performance and to compare nationally with other services. This software is provided at a cost of £5,500 per annum; a sum that is acceptable to the Service. The potential costs of providing *'Ffynnon'* and any development work is not known.

There is currently no Welsh Assembly Government requirement to use *'Ffynnon'* to report performance and our existing methods of reporting are appropriate to provide the information on the proposed performance indicators.

It is recommended that we progress with our existing performance management project using the CorVu system. It is also recommended that we maintain our links with the Local Government Data Unit in order to monitor the *'Ffynnon'* project in order to take advantage of any developments that would easily accommodate future reporting.