



## Report of the Director of Corporate Services

Governance and Audit Committee – 28 February 2024

### Audit Wales Recommendations Tracker

<b>Purpose:</b>	The report presents a tracker providing progress updates meeting Audit Wales recommendations.
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#### For Information

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 All relevant recommendations from Audit Wales national and local reports are recorded in a tracker and are monitored for progress.
- 1.2 The tracker is attached at Appendix A for information.
- 1.3 The tracker lists the relevant Audit Wales report, the recommendations, the actions that the Council intends to undertake to implement the recommendations, progress to date and target dates for completion.

#### 2. Summary

- 2.1 The first sheet in the tracker lists all the Audit Wales recommendations that are considered closed and complete as at January 2024. The second sheet in the tracker lists all the Audit Wales recommendations that are considered open, as at January 2024:
  - 2.1.2 *'A missed opportunity' – Social Enterprises*. This national report looked at how local authorities are working to grow and make the most of Social Enterprises. Recommendations regarding self-evaluation and leadership on the poverty agenda have been implemented. Recommendations regarding self-evaluation and leadership on the

poverty agenda have been implemented. A number of initiatives are underway and a Missed Opportunities Action Plan has been baselined.

- 2.1.3 *'Together we can' – Community resilience and self-reliance.* This national report looked at how local authorities are creating the conditions needed to help communities thrive as independently as possible. The Council has implemented recommendations on self-evaluation. A Together We Can Action Plan has been drafted but is subject to further review to finalise priorities and timescales. Actions to address the gaps have been identified and progress is recorded in Appendix A with completion dates identified during 2024/25.
- 2.1.4 *'Time for change' – Poverty in Wales.* This national report looked at the challenge of poverty in Wales and how government is responding. Recommendations regarding leadership on the poverty agenda, experience mapping to create inclusive services for people in poverty, a single web landing page for people seeking help, streamlining and improving application and information services for people in poverty and complying with the socio-economic duty are in place. The refresh of the Swansea Tackling Poverty Strategy has been progressing and a draft refreshed strategy is going through review and will soon be issued for public consultation.
- 2.1.5 *Direct Payments for Adult Social Care.* This national report looked at how local authorities manage and encourage take up of Direct Payments and whether these services present value for money. The Council has implemented several recommendations from the report. Further work is required to review how advocacy services are considered at first point of contact to provide independent advice for Direct Payments to service users and Carers; work is in progress and ongoing.
- 2.1.6 *'Cracks in the Foundations' – Building Safety in Wales.* This national report looked at how Welsh Government, local authorities and their key partners are implementing the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022. The Council intends to expand on existing action plans taking account of the requirements of the new building safety act and work is in progress. LABC (Local Authority Building Control - National membership organisation) is extending the support already provided to Welsh local authorities to assist them to implement the recommendations.
- 2.1.7 *Digital Strategy Review.* This study reviewed the Council's strategic approach to digital, and specifically the extent to which this has been developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle; and that it will help to secure value for money in the use of the Council's resources. The study found that the Council has a clear vision for its approach to digital and is developing comprehensive arrangements to support the delivery and monitoring of its digital

strategy. The Council will undertake a review from 2027 onwards as a new revised Digital Strategy will be underway.

- 2.1.8 *Setting of well-being objectives.* This report set out to answer the question ‘to what extent has the Council acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting its new well-being objectives’. The report concluded that the Council had applied the Sustainable Development Principle in setting its Well-being Objectives and that embedding its approach to engagement and performance monitoring would further strengthen this. Recommendations on improving consultation and engagement and considering the impact of future financial savings and risks have been implemented. Work to revise service planning to help measure progress implementing the Councils Well-being Objectives has been completed in preparation for the 2024/25 planning cycle.
- 2.1.9 *Update on the progress the Council is making around its Transformation Programme.* This report describes if the Council is effectively planning and monitoring its approach to its organisational transformation programme and the delivery of associated savings. The overall view in the report is that whilst many aspects of the Council’s strategic approach to planning, monitoring, and delivering its new Transformation Programme are well defined, some key arrangements could be strengthened to enable the Transformation Programme to adapt to the ongoing financial pressures and achieve its ambitions. The Council has outlined a number of actions to address the recommendations to be implemented during 2023/24.
- 2.1.10 *Use of Performance information.* This report considered the service user perspective and outcome information provided to senior officers and senior members (senior leaders), and how this information is used. The report found that, in common with most of other local authorities in Wales, performance information provided to senior leaders to enable them to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of the Council’s activities is limited. The Council has addressed the recommendations by undertaking a residents survey and introducing a new and integrated performance monitoring report. Corporate performance indicators and success measures will be reviewed each year as part of the annual service planning process.
- 2.1.11 *Springing Forward – Workforce.* This report examined the Council’s arrangements for managing its workforce. It looked at how the Council strategically plans for its workforce, how it monitors the use of its workforce and how it reviews and evaluates the effectiveness of its arrangements. The report found that the Council has a clear vision for its workforce, strengthened by its work with partners, but has not identified the resources required to deliver its strategy. The transformation delivery board has approved temporary funding to create additional capacity within the HR&OD service to deliver the

workforce strategy; consideration will need to be given to the long-term delivery arrangements.

2.1.12 *Sustainable development? – making best use of brownfield land and empty buildings.* This all-Wales report examines how Welsh councils are supporting and encouraging repurposing and regeneration of vacant properties and brownfield sites into homes or for other uses. The Council will undertake a systematic assessment all land within the settlement boundaries of Swansea, with a particular focus on brownfield land as part of efforts to safeguard and enhance greenfield infrastructure assets.

### **3. Integrated Assessment Implications**

3.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

3.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the ‘well-being goals’.

3.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

3.1.3 A Screening form was completed. This report is a ‘for information’ report and so is not relevant for an IIA.

#### **4. Legal Implications**

4.1 There are no legal implications.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications.

### **For Information**

**Background papers:** *None*

**Appendices:** Appendix A – Audit Wales recommendations tracker.  
Appendix B – IIA Screening Form.