



Report of the Cabinet Member for Community

Governance & Audit Committee – 4 September 2024

Report on the Council's Response to the Audit Wales 2023 Report on Social Enterprises

Purpose:	To provide a briefing to the Governance and Audit Committee on the progress being made against the Auditor General's report 'A missed opportunity' on Social Enterprises.
Report Authors:	Lee Cambule
Legal Officer:	Carolyn Isaac
Finance Officer:	Chris Davies
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar
For Information	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Swansea Council's Report on the current position in relation to Audit Wales 'A missed opportunity' Social Enterprises report provides a summary of the action taken by Swansea Council to date in response to the Auditor General's findings and recommendations. This includes our response to the three recommendations and notes areas for further action which we intend to explore further

2. Context

- 2.1 On 1 December 2022, Audit Wales published the report 'A missed opportunity' – Social Enterprises, looking at how local authorities across Wales are working to grow and make the most of Social Enterprises. A copy of the report is available for reference at <https://www.audit.wales/publication/missed-opportunity-social-enterprises>.
- 2.2 Since the report was published, the Council has undertaken a self-evaluation of its existing approach and identified actions to be taken. These actions are being delivered in the Enabling Communities Transformation

Programme. This report provides an update on progress in delivering those actions and the recommendations of the Audit Wales report.

3. Content

- 3.1 The original report from Audit Wales highlighted that local authorities take a passive leadership role with variable support arrangements that means local authorities miss out on the potential for Social Enterprises to help deliver services that improve the quality of life for our population. It summarises that most local authorities are not delivering their responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, although there are some good opportunities for development as well as a drive for positive change. For reference, Section 16 of the Act places a duty on local authorities to '**promote development of Social Enterprises to provide care and support and preventative services**'.
- 3.2 In response to this report, the Enabling Communities Group completed an evaluation exercise and identified eight key actions to be taken forward, previously reported in October 2023.
- 3.3 Through the governance of the Enabling Communities Transformation Programme, the **A Missed Opportunity Action Plan** was created and is being monitored and reported against.
- 3.4 The report highlights the current position of this work including:
- Establishing our A Missed Opportunity Action Plan and aligning it with our corporate governance;
 - Working on a regional level to implement a new framework and establish a new forum for all Section 16 type organisations (including Social Enterprises);
 - Helping to establish governance and forums to improve our engagement and support for Social Enterprises;
 - Implementing improvements to our processes, data and reporting in relation to Social Enterprises;
 - Building strong partnerships and positive relationships with new and potential Section 16 type organisations;
 - Planning for next steps, taking the regional framework and elements of the work supporting health and social care to assess Council-wide opportunities for improvement.

4. Way Forward

- 4.1 Our analysis of the findings of Audit Wales' report is detailed in the report at Appendix A. This includes the first iteration of our completed self-evaluation checklist, which has been developed in collaboration with colleagues across the organisation and with oversight from the Enabling Communities Group and Swansea Council Poverty Forum.
- 4.2 Based on the evaluation completed as part of the first recommendation, we have identified the following key actions to be taken forward:

5. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 5.1 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 favorably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 5.2 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'.
- 5.3 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, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 5.4 An Integrated Impact Screening has been completed for this report with no further assessment required (See Appendix C). This is an IIA Screening for the 'For Information' Report to the Governance and Audit Committee regarding on the findings of the Auditor General for Wales review of Social Enterprises in Wales and its recommendations for action by local authorities. A full IIA will be carried out as part of the development process for the Tackling Poverty Strategy in due course.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

7. Finance Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A – Report on Supporting Social Enterprises

Appendix B – IIA Screening Form