



## 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 Community Resilience and Self-Reliance

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide a briefing to the Governance and Audit Committee on the progress being made against the Auditor General's report 'Together We Can' on community resilience and self-reliance.
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Swansea Council's Report on the current position in relation to Audit Wales 'Together We Can' – Community resilience and self-reliance 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 23 January 2023, Audit Wales published the report 'Together We Can' – Community resilience and self-reliance. The report looked at the priority placed on community resilience and self-reliance in local authority plans, and how local authorities are equipping people to be less reliant on often overstretched local authority services. A copy of the report is available for reference at <https://www.audit.wales/publication/together-we-can-community-resilience-and-self-reliance> .
- 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 opportunities for the Council to do more to achieve a clear vision for community resilience and self-reliance in Swansea. 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.
- 3.2 Through the governance of the Enabling Communities Transformation Programme, a **Together We Can Action Plan** was created and is being monitored and reported against.
- 3.3 This report highlights the current position of this work including:
  - Consistent Understanding – We have developed key definitions, established underlying principles and baselined this initiative in the wider context of the transformation programme.
  - Clear governance – We have established programme governance arrangements aligned with the Corporate Priority ‘Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities’ and reporting/governance controls are in place.
  - Engagement with Communities – We have appointed a Community Engagement Transformation Lead Officer who is reviewing and developing improvements to how we engage with the people and communities of Swansea.
  - Embedding Co-production Principles – We are building on good connections and relationships in order to introduce and embed the key principles of co-production, with an aim of piloting new ways of working.
- 3.4 With this progress being made, we are in a stronger position to begin implementing further steps and actions around community resilience and self-reliance. This will be managed through the Transformation Programme and include actions such as:
  - Creating new approaches and improvements – We will use the underlying definitions, principles, knowledge and relationships developed through the previous actions to deliver new ways of achieving community resilience and self-reliance in collaboration with communities and partners.
  - Learning lessons – We have already started capturing lessons learned from previous interactions between the Council and communities to identify areas of good practice or improvement.
  - Increasing community engagement – We will use the momentum from this work to encourage people to become more active in their community and to develop new opportunities driven by what communities actually want.

## **4. Way Forward**

- 4.1 We will continue to deliver the actions, monitor our performance and report our progress towards improving community resilience and self-reliance. In line with the recommendations of the Audit Wales report, we are embedding this work within our transformation programmes to ensure that it is delivered in line with best practice and council policy.
- 4.2 Work is ongoing to refresh our Tackling Poverty Strategy and one of the eight key themes we have identified in the draft strategy is 'Community-enabled Support'. This work will contribute to our strategic goals for enabling communities and achieving the Council's Corporate Priorities.

## **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 Community Resilience and Self-Reliance

Appendix B – Together We Can Action Plan

Appendix C – IIA Screening Form