



Annual Plan 2020-21

Including additional information on
our longer-term ambitions and key
performance indicators

This Annual Plan for Audit Wales for the year ending 31 March 2021, which includes additional information on our longer-term ambitions and key performance indicators, has been jointly prepared by the Auditor General for Wales and the Chair of the Wales Audit Office under section 25(1) of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013.

It is laid before the National Assembly for Wales under section 26 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013.

The National Assembly has made provision through Standing Order 18.11(i) for its Finance Committee to be responsible for considering and reporting to the Assembly on the Annual Plan.

Audit Wales is the umbrella identity of the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office, which are each separate legal entities with their own legal functions. The Auditor General has functions of auditing and reporting on Welsh public bodies. The Wales Audit Office has functions of providing resources, such as staff, for the exercise of the Auditor General's functions, and of monitoring and advising the Auditor General. Where relevant, the text of this document identifies what are Auditor General functions and what are Wales Audit Office functions. Audit Wales is not a legal entity and itself does not have any functions.

If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language, or have any questions about its content, please contact us using the details below. We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English and we will respond in the language you have used. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay.

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This document is also available in Welsh.





Summary of our plan

On behalf of the people of Wales, we examine public spending and identify ways to improve public services. Our work supports the effective scrutiny of public money by the National Assembly for Wales and locally elected representatives. We are entirely independent of government.

Why are we here?

Assure	Explain	Inspire
		
the people of Wales that public money is well managed	how public money is being used to meet people's needs	and empower the Welsh public sector to improve

What are our ambitions?

			
Fully exploit our unique perspective, expertise and depth of insight	Strengthen our position as an authoritative, trusted and independent voice	Increase our visibility, influence and relevance	Be a model organisation for the public sector in Wales and beyond

How do we plan to achieve our ambitions?



Through our delivery of audits			When running the business
Maximise the power of our unique insight through more integrated team working and knowledge sharing.	Bring trusted commentary and evidence to the fore on the right issues at the right time.	Have an overtly outward focus and engage in a way that resonates with a wide range of audiences.	Since we form audit judgements on others, make sure we consistently practise what we preach.
Search proactively for synergies and trends within the information that we hold.	Ensure we clearly lay out the facts and concisely explain why we have arrived at a particular conclusion or interpretation.	Influence the thinking and behaviour of others and shape the wider public debate.	Provide clear, consistent and authentic leadership and increase the pace of our decision making.
Focus on what matters most and will make the biggest difference to the public and public bodies.	Be alert and responsive to new opportunities to share audit knowledge and insight where it can add value.	Seek and be receptive to ideas and lines of thought from outside Wales and outside the public sector.	Empower people throughout the organisation to come up with new ideas and effect positive change.



Foreword from the Auditor General for Wales and the Chair of the Wales Audit Office

This Annual Plan describes the steps we were intending to take over the coming year towards achieving our organisational ambitions and strategic objectives.

Shortly before publication, however, we were overtaken by the extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 outbreak. Like everyone, our immediate priorities have been fundamentally altered as we focus on the well-being of our employees, maintaining business continuity and supporting the wider public sector and community.

We have already communicated to the bodies that we audit that we have scaled down our work and are adopting alternative delivery approaches, to ensure that audit does not in any way add to the huge pressures currently faced by public service providers.

Audit Wales has essential expertise to help the Welsh Government and wider public sector respond to some of the challenges we face. So, over the coming weeks and months, we will determine how best we can help the people of Wales and their public services through the current crisis, providing assurance, promoting good practice and ensuring that public resources are used as effectively as possible. We will do that sensitively and as an ally to a public sector striving for good governance in a time of extraordinary turmoil.

“ over the coming weeks and months, we will determine how best we can help the people of Wales and their public services through the current crisis ”

Notwithstanding the uncertainty and difficulties that lie ahead, we believe that our overall ambitions remain the right ones. When circumstances permit, we will pick up the pace once more on our agenda for reaching our full potential as a driver of public service improvement.

In our next Interim Report, which will be published in October, we will provide a detailed update on any changes we make to this Plan in response to the rapidly evolving situation.



Adrian Crompton

Auditor General for Wales



Isobel Everett

Chair of the Wales
Audit Office

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Who we are and what we do

- 1 The Auditor General for Wales is the statutory external auditor of most of the Welsh public sector. The Auditor General is responsible for the audit of most of the public money spent in Wales, including the funds that are voted annually by the National Assembly. Significant elements of this funding are passed by the Welsh Government to the NHS and local government in Wales.
- 2 The Wales Audit Office employs around 270 professional staff and utilises other resources, including additional expertise from private sector accountancy firms, to enable the Auditor General to carry out his functions.
- 3 The Auditor General's functions include auditing accounts and undertaking local performance audit work at a broad range of public bodies, alongside conducting a programme of national value for money examinations and studies. Those functions may be exercised in combination if necessary, across different types of bodies, to examine public spending irrespective of who delivers the services.
- 4 Together, as Audit Wales, we audit around £20 billion of income and expenditure, which is over a quarter of Welsh GDP. Increasingly, we are considering the stewardship of human and natural resources, alongside our consideration of financial resources and the way in which public bodies account for their use.
- 5 We also identify good practice from across the full breadth of our audit work and disseminate this through our [Good Practice Exchange](#) and other media, including sharing learning seminars and webinars.

Why we are here



Assure
the people of
Wales that public
money is well
managed



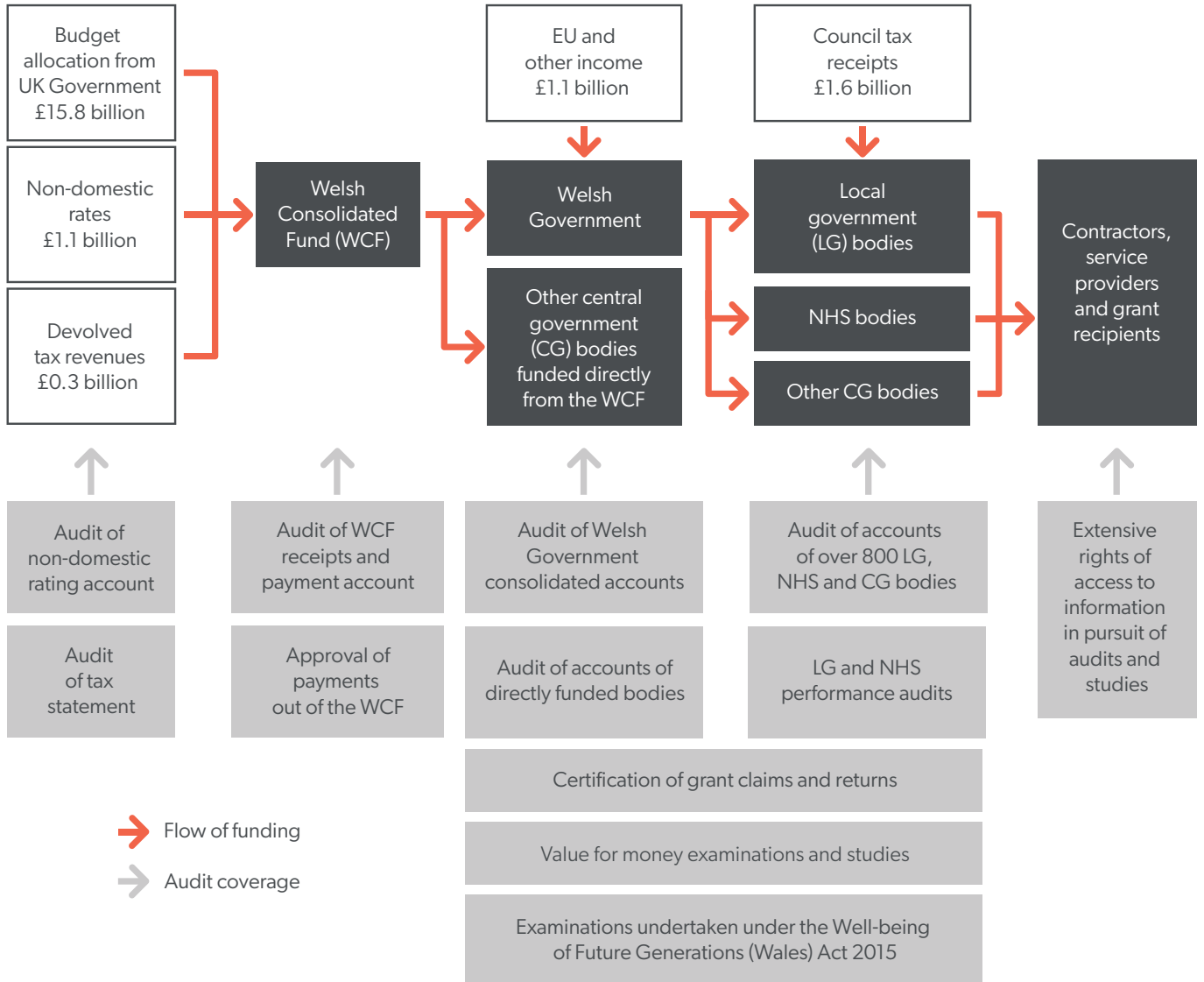
Explain
how public
money is being
used to meet
people's needs



Inspire
and empower
the Welsh
public sector to
improve

- 6 We undertake our work in accordance with [the Auditor General's Code of Audit Practice](#). The Code prescribes the way in which audit and certain other functions are to be carried out and embodies what the Auditor General considers to be best professional practice.
- 7 We also work closely with other UK audit agencies and with the other main external review bodies in Wales to enhance the collective impact of our work.

How we follow the public pound in Wales¹



1 Funding sources highlighted in exhibit do not include income generation activities at individual public bodies.

◀ Our ambitions and how we plan to achieve them

- 8 Over the coming years, we want to reach our full potential as a driver of change and improvement at the heart of public services and democratic accountability.
- 9 As first set out in [our 2019-20 Annual Plan](#), we have identified four broad ambitions and, for each ambition, three strategic objectives, which collectively describe the path we are taking towards achieving that potential.



Fully exploit our unique perspective, expertise and depth of insight

- Maximise the power of our unique insight through more integrated team working and knowledge sharing.
- Search proactively for synergies and trends within the information that we hold.
- Focus on what matters most and will make the biggest difference to the public and public bodies.



Strengthen our position as an authoritative, trusted and independent voice

- Bring trusted commentary and evidence to the fore on the right issues at the right time.
- Ensure we clearly lay out the facts and concisely explain why we have arrived at a particular conclusion or interpretation.
- Be alert and responsive to new opportunities to share audit knowledge and insight where it can add value.



Increase our visibility, influence and relevance

- Have an overtly outward focus and engage in a way that resonates with a wide range of audiences.
- Influence the thinking and behaviour of others and shape the wider public debate.
- Seek and be receptive to ideas and lines of thought from outside Wales and outside the public sector.



Be a model organisation for the public sector in Wales and beyond

- Since we form audit judgements on others, make sure we consistently practise what we preach.
- Provide clear, consistent and authentic leadership and increase the pace of our decision making.
- Empower people throughout the organisation to come up with new ideas and effect positive change.

Our operating environment

- 10 We consider the following to be the main factors that will influence the way we fulfil our ambitions, achieve our strategic objectives and deliver our programmes of work over the next few years.

The implications of Brexit

- 11 The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 and will be in a transition period until December 2020. During this period, the majority of the current EU rules and trading arrangements remain in place with no significant changes in most areas of public service delivery.
- 12 The UK Government will soon begin negotiations with the EU on a permanent long-term agreement and the Welsh Government has mapped out a set of negotiating priorities which it believes reflect Wales' interests.
- 13 At this stage, it remains difficult to fully assess the longer-term implications of Brexit for Welsh public service delivery, including in relation to the future shape of financial support for the rural economy and workforce availability for public service providers. We are committed to a programme of 'real-time' audit commentary on this complex and dynamic process as it continues to evolve.

Embedding the sustainable development principle within Welsh public services

- 14 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out a bold ambition for the future of public services and encourages a broad-ranging shift in both culture and practice.
- 15 Under the Act, listed public bodies have a duty to put sustainable development (meeting the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs) at the heart of what they do. They must work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by setting and publishing well-being objectives and taking action to make sure they meet those objectives.

- 16 In doing so, those bodies must take account of the importance of balancing short-term and long-term needs, taking a more integrated and holistic approach, involving and potentially collaborating with a diverse range of relevant stakeholders, and placing greater emphasis on taking a proactive and preventative approach to problem solving.
- 17 The Auditor General must examine the extent to which the listed public bodies have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting well-being objectives, and when taking steps to meet those objectives. Our reports on the steps individual bodies are taking to meet their well-being objectives are available via [the publications section of our website](#) and we will shortly be publishing a national report summarising the common themes and trends identified through this work.

Climate emergency

- 18 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires the Welsh Government to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in Wales by at least 80% for the year 2050 with a system of interim emissions targets and carbon budgets.
- 19 Following publication of its first [low carbon delivery plan](#), which sets out 100 policies and proposals to meet emissions targets, on 29 April 2019 the Welsh Ministers declared a climate emergency in Wales and subsequently announced a £140 million capital investment to support decarbonisation. The Welsh Government has also stated its intention for all Welsh public bodies to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 20 In addition, public authorities that exercise their functions in Wales have a specific [duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity](#), and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems. The first reports on what public bodies have done so far to comply with the duty were required to be published by the end of 2019. Further reports on compliance with the duty are required every three years.
- 21 On 18 February 2020, the Welsh Government announced an emergency flood relief scheme to make available up to £10m for the initial response to the recent severe weather and flooding. Work is ongoing to get a clear picture of the scale of the damage and to identify the longer term support needed, but [the Welsh Government has acknowledged](#) that further substantial funding over a number of years will be required to address the challenges we face from climate change.

Socio-economic challenges

- 22 More than one in five people live in poverty in Wales and more people in Wales are reliant on welfare than in England and Scotland. Poverty levels have remained largely static in the UK and in Wales for the past 25 years, and governments are rethinking their approaches to tackling poverty.
- 23 The Welsh Government's national strategy, Prosperity for All, focuses on the promotion of economic prosperity in order to help tackle the root causes of poverty in Wales. Many of the actions proposed in the strategy require public bodies and other organisations to work in a much more collaborative and integrated way when designing and implementing solutions for the future.
- 24 To address the growing numbers of homeless people, the Welsh Government also introduced the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 which requires local authorities and their partners to focus specifically on prevention. However, we have reported that, despite the new legislation and the Welsh Government providing additional funding, preventing homelessness remains challenging for many authorities.
- 25 In another recent report from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, evidence is provided that deepening poverty in Wales is leading to starker inequalities in the experiences and opportunities of people born into different socio-economic backgrounds. In late 2019, the Welsh Government consulted on its proposals to place a legislative duty on public bodies to consider the need to reduce the inequalities that result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking strategic decisions.

An increasingly networked society

- 26 Advances in information technology continue to drive increased digitisation of service delivery, public access to data, and opportunities to interact and engage through social media and other forms of digital communication. Digital transformation and inclusion form a central part of the Welsh Government's plans to make public services more accessible and meaningful to their users, and to achieve better outcomes.
- 27 Wales has specific topography and population density characteristics which pose challenges when providing mobile coverage and digital infrastructure. While telecommunications policy is not devolved to Wales, the Welsh Government has also set out an action plan for how it intends to work with the mobile phone industry and Ofcom to provide connectivity to meet the needs of people and businesses.



Our work programmes

- 28 Our planned work for 2020-21 can be broadly divided into two sections – audit delivery and running the business.
- 29 The first section on audit delivery comprises the Auditor General's work programme and priorities for 2020-21 in exercising his functions. The second section on running the business encapsulates the work programme and priorities for 2020-21 of the Wales Audit Office in exercising its functions.
- 30 For each section, some areas of focus for additional work have been identified which will support us in the delivery of our ambitions and strategic objectives over the coming year. Progress made towards delivery of our strategic objectives, including in each of these focus areas, will be led by our executive leadership team and closely monitored by the Board.
- 31 The resources available, and which may become available to the Wales Audit Office, as per the approved Estimate of Income and Expenses for the year ended 31 March 2021, are to be used in delivering these work programmes.

Audit Delivery

Core work



Undertaking audit work at over **800** public bodies



Delivering a programme of **value for money** examinations and studies



Certifying grant schemes worth approaching **£2.5 billion**



Approving around **£1 billion** of payments out of the Welsh Consolidated Fund every month



Supporting effective scrutiny including the work of the National Assembly Committees



Hosting **shared learning events** for over **1,100 attendees**



Facilitating the **detection of fraud and error** through the National Fraud Initiative



Participating with **observer status** on a range of key policy working groups

For further information see:

Appendix 1 – Local audit work

Appendix 2 – National value for money examinations and studies

Appendix 3 – Supporting effective scrutiny and accountability

Appendix 4 – Good practice work

- 32 Alongside legal and professional requirements, four widely recognised principles underpin our audit delivery:



- 33 The audit work that we do at individual public bodies involves:
- providing an opinion on the accounts;
 - considering how public money is being used for approved purposes (regularity);
 - considering how public business is being conducted (propriety);
 - examining whether proper arrangements are in place to secure value for money and continuous improvement; and
 - assessing the extent to which public bodies have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives.

- 34 We are committed to working closely with the other UK audit agencies through the Public Audit Forum, and with the other main external review bodies in Wales through the Inspection Wales initiative, to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public audit and the collective impact of our work. We are proud to represent Wales on occasion on the international audit stage, including at EURORAI².
- 35 We can also arrange with certain types of bodies, both in the UK and overseas, to undertake commissioned work³. This includes auditing around £320 million of European funds used to support farmers and agriculture across Wales⁴, and acting as Chief Auditor to, and auditing the accounts of, the Government of Anguilla.
- 36 In response to our operating environment and to help us in delivering our strategic objectives, we have identified 11 areas of focus for our audit delivery in 2020-21:
- improve how we source, acquire and analyse data, including through automating simple and repetitive tasks so that we can focus our time on areas of higher risk that require greater attention.
 - improve how we visualise and communicate our findings, including through publishing a broader range of interactive data tools and investing in further enhancing the engagement and influencing skills of our staff.
 - engage a wider range of audiences with the outcomes from our financial audit work, including through developing new outputs that explain, in more straightforward language, key information and trends from public bodies' accounts.
 - more closely examine arrangements for integrated and collaborative service delivery, including in relation to continuing healthcare arrangements, the provision of emergency services and the operation of Public Service Boards.
 - share the learning from our first round of sustainable development principle examinations and determine how we will further develop our audit approach in this area.
 - place greater emphasis on the importance of sound financial management across the Welsh public finance regime, including through introducing strengthened arrangements for the audit of town and community councils.

2 The [European Organisation of Regional External Public Finance Audit Institutions](#) (EURORAI) is a co-operation project among public sector audit institutions across Europe.

3 Where we provide services to, or exercise the functions of, those bodies. We are mindful that all such activities should be self-financing and must not be undertaken to the detriment of our core audit work in Wales.

4 On behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General

- prepare an updated 'Picture of Public Services' report⁵ setting out the key challenges currently facing Welsh public services and how well they are placed to respond, to inform the work of the Senedd⁶ following the 2021 elections.
- develop proposals for how we will respond through our audit work to the challenges presented by climate change, taking account of the objectives set out in our Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Plan.
- through our Good Practice Exchange, extend the range of approaches used to facilitate the sharing of learning outside our core programme of seminars and webinars.
- develop a more diverse range of mechanisms for capturing the views of our stakeholders on the value and impact of our work, with an initial focus on seeking the views of Assembly Members.
- expand our audit quality management arrangements to provide further assurance that all our work is underpinned by robust evidence and rigorous analysis, and to ensure continued alignment with new international auditing standards.

5 Following on from the publication of similar reports in 2011 and 2015

6 The Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 changes the name of the National Assembly for Wales to 'Senedd Cymru' or 'the Welsh Parliament' from 6 May 2020.

Running the business

Core work



Setting the overall budget of **£22 million** and charging fees for audit work



Employing around **270 staff** and managing a diverse range of physical and information assets



Providing **strong leadership** and embedding our values and behaviours



Monitoring the exercise of the Auditor General's functions and providing him with advice

For further information see:
Appendix 5 – Our Finances

- 37 The Board is responsible for setting and overseeing the strategic direction of the organisation and ensuring we are on track in the delivery of our ambitions. The Board membership includes non-executive and executive members, alongside two employee-elected members who provide an extra dimension of insight and experience.
- 38 The Executive Leadership Team, which is chaired by the Auditor General, advises him in his capacity as Auditor General, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. The terms of reference for the Executive Leadership Team were refreshed during 2019-20 and the membership expanded to include four employee members.
- 39 More detailed information on our governance arrangements can be found in the Governance Statement section of [our Annual Report and Accounts](#).

40 In response to our operating environment and to help us in delivering our strategic objectives, we have identified six areas of focus for our running of the business in 2020-21:

- Restructure our senior executive team to ensure best alignment with our overall ambitions and to strengthen the strategic leadership provided to Wales Audit Office staff.
- Achieve a step change in how we plan for and manage major change projects, including through applying more rigorous and consistent change management practices.
- Enhance our public profile by developing a more extrovert and distinctive corporate tone of voice and making ourselves more easily recognisable through adopting the umbrella identity 'Audit Wales'
- Strengthen our strategy for attracting, retaining and developing a highly skilled and diverse workforce, with a particular focus on ensuring our processes for recruitment, talent management and succession planning are refreshed and fit-for-purpose.
- Provide ongoing support to the National Assembly's Finance Committee for its work on addressing the unnecessary complexity in our statutory fee charging and governance arrangements.
- Embed the sustainable development principle to a greater extent in our decision-making processes, including when undertaking a review of our staff travel and subsistence arrangements, developing proposals for meeting our future accommodation needs, and experimenting with new, more efficient and smarter ways of working.

Measuring and reporting on our performance

- 41 In 2020-21, we will use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to measure, report and reflect on our performance, value for money and risks. This will include regular reporting to our Executive Leadership Team and Board on progress being made towards delivering our strategic objectives and achieving our key performance indicator (KPI) targets. It will also include internal audit reports to our Executive Leadership Team and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.
- 42 For each section of this Plan, we have identified a suite of high-level KPIs that will help us to measure progress made towards delivering our overall ambitions. We will place emphasis on evaluating our direction of travel and pace of improvement, alongside comparison with appropriate benchmarking.
- 43 We will report on our performance externally through our Annual Report and Accounts and Interim Report, and by providing evidence at meetings of the National Assembly's Finance Committee. It should be noted that our KPIs are a subset of a broader suite of operational and corporate performance indicators, many of which are also reported on externally in our Annual Report and Accounts and other corporate publications.
- 44 When preparing this Plan, we reviewed our suite of KPIs and associated targets with reference to current levels of performance and appropriate external benchmarks, to ensure alignment with our overall ambitions and improvement aspirations. The targets will continue to be subject to ongoing scrutiny and refinement to ensure they are suitably challenging but achievable within the specified timescales.

Audit delivery KPIs

No.	Indicator	Description	Target
1	Statutory deadlines	Proportion of audit products delivered by the required statutory deadline.	100%
2	On time	Proportion of other key audit products delivered in accordance with the planned timetable for ensuring timely and impactful reporting.	90%
3	Quality	Proportion of reviewed audits that are delivered in accordance with <u>Financial Reporting Council (FRC) quality standards</u> .	100% of sample assessed as satisfactory or above, and 90% as good or above ⁷
4	Credibility	Proportion of stakeholders that consider us to be an independent and authoritative communicator on the governance and stewardship of public money and assets.	At least 90%
5	Providing insight	Proportion of stakeholders who said that through our work, they gained useful insight that they would not have acquired otherwise.	At least 80%
6	Driving improvement	Proportion of stakeholders who believe our work has led to improvements in the provision of public services.	At least 80%
7	Potential financial impacts	Value of potential savings, income, productivity gains and other financial benefits identified through our work.	At least £30 million during 2018-2021
8	Good practice events	Proportion of attendees of our seminars and webinars who rated the events useful or very useful.	At least 90%
9	Website visits	Number of visits to our website where at least one action is performed, eg download a report, click on a video.	25,000 each year
10	Social media	Number of social media engagements, ie interactions with our posts such as a like, a comment, or a retweet/share.	1,300 each year
11	Sharing audit learning	Number of instances where we present audit learning to key policy working groups or at relevant externally hosted events.	50 each year

⁷ Where 'good' is equivalent to FRC audit quality category 2A, and 'satisfactory' equivalent to category 2B.

Running the business KPIs

No.	Indicator	Description	Target
12	Employee engagement	Percent positive annual staff survey engagement index score (aligned with that for the Civil Service People Survey).	At least the 9th decile score for the latest Civil Service People Survey (CSPS)
13	Employee experience	Percent positive annual staff survey thematic ⁸ employee experience scores.	At least the upper quartile (high performer) scores for the latest CSPS
14	Sickness absence	Average working days lost per member of staff per annum.	Less than 6 days
15	Financial balance	Level of variance in gross income and expenditure from that set out in our Estimate for the current year.	Within 2% of budget
16	Cost savings and efficiencies	Value of cost savings and efficiencies identified throughout the business.	£1.3 million in 2020-21
17	Greenhouse gas emissions	Total CO ₂ equivalent emissions from sources that we own or control, from consumption of purchased electricity, and that are produced indirectly as a consequence of our activities.	375 tonnes in 2020-21
18	Trainee success rate	Proportion of trainees achieving first-time passes in their Professional and Advanced level examinations with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.	At least 90%

⁸ The key CSPS employee experience themes are: organisational objectives and purpose; leadership and managing change; organisational culture; my manager; my work; my team; inclusion and fair treatment; learning and development; resources and workload; pay and benefits; and taking action.



Appendices

- 1 Local audit work
- 2 National value for money examinations and studies
- 3 Supporting effective scrutiny and accountability
- 4 Good practice work
- 5 Our finances

1 Local audit work

- 45 The Auditor General carries out local work at most public bodies in Wales. The programme includes audits of accounts, local performance audit work and well-being of future generations work.

Public body	Audit of accounts	Local performance audit work ⁹	Well-being of future generations work
National Assembly for Wales	✓		
Welsh Government	✓		✓
8 Welsh Government sponsored bodies	✓		✓ ¹⁰
Welsh Revenue Authority including the tax statement	✓		
4 Welsh Government companies	✓		
8 Commissioners, Inspectorates and Regulators	✓		
7 Local Health Boards	✓	✓	✓
3 NHS Trusts and a Special Health Authority	✓	✓	✓ ¹¹
22 Councils (Unitary Authorities)	✓	✓	✓
4 Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables	✓	✓	✓
3 Fire and Rescue Authorities	✓	✓	✓
3 National Park Authorities	✓	✓	✓
9 Pension funds	✓		
Several smaller local government bodies including joint committees, drainage districts and harbour authorities	✓		
Over 730 Town and Community Councils	✓ ¹²		

9 The Auditor General is not required to conduct a programme of local performance audit work at each central government body. Performance audit work conducted within this sector currently sits within his programme of national value for money examinations and studies.

10 Only for listed bodies under the Well-being of future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

11 Only for listed bodies under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

12 On a limited assurance basis.

2 National value for money examinations and studies

- 46 This programme of work includes value for money examinations, local government studies, and the preparation of summary reports on the findings from local audit work across multiple NHS, central government and/or local government bodies. It also includes examinations undertaken in response to issues of public concern identified through our audit work or raised with the Auditor General through correspondence.
- 47 The outputs from much of this programme supports the work of the National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee and other Assembly committees. Further [information on our programme of examinations and studies](#) is available on our website.
- 48 The programme retains a degree of flexibility to respond to changing circumstances, priorities and issues of public or parliamentary concern, and to incorporate learning of wider relevance from local audit work.

Work already in progress

- Welsh Government management of European Agricultural Fund for Regional Development (EAFRD) funding
- Think-piece on the implementation of new legislation (drawing on previous audit work)
- Public service boards – tackling rough sleeping
- Well-being of future generations
- Asbestos removal programme at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd – Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- NHS clinical coding
- Local government – financial sustainability
- Collaborative arrangements for managing local public health resources
- Elective NHS waiting times
- Orthopaedic services
- Counter fraud arrangements in the Welsh public sector
- Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)
- Covering teachers' absence
- Quality governance arrangements in NHS bodies
- Commercialisation in local authorities
- Impact of austerity on local authority discretionary services
- Welsh Government workforce
- Welsh Government grants management
- Welsh Government ICT
- Administration of student finance
- Warm homes programme – Arbed and Nest
- Public bodies' digital resilience

New work that we plan to take forward in 2020-21

- Brexit
- Picture of Public Services
- General Equality Duty
- Curriculum reform
- Affordable housing
- Coastal flood and erosion risk management
- Broadband infrastructure
- Welsh Government accounts commentary
- Empty buildings/homes
- Direct payments in local government
- Emergency services – collaborative working
- Unscheduled care
- Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee
- Prevention in local government
- Local government - financial sustainability

3 Supporting effective scrutiny and accountability

Supporting the work of the Public Accounts Committee and other Assembly Committees

- 49 Our work plays a key role in supporting the work of the Public Accounts Committee in its consideration of the use of resources in the discharge of public functions in Wales. Our work can also, where applicable, inform the work of other National Assembly committees whose wider remit includes scrutinising the expenditure and policies of the Welsh Government, holding Ministers to account, and examining proposed legislation.
- 50 In 2020-21, we will provide regular briefings to the Public Accounts Committee on the content of the Auditor General's published reports, which will help the Committee determine its subsequent course of action. We will also provide further advice and support to the Committee as required, particularly in relation to:
- the development of members' briefings for evidence sessions with witnesses from the Welsh Government and other organisations;
 - the development of the Committee's reports, including any legacy reporting; and
 - providing advice on the adequacy of the Welsh Government's formal responses to recommendations in the Committee's reports.

Supporting the work of the audit and scrutiny committees of public bodies

- 51 Throughout the year, we will attend most meetings of the audit committees of the principal bodies that we audit to provide regular briefings and report on our audit work.
- 52 We will also provide further advice and support to audit and scrutiny committees, where applicable, particularly in relation to:
- providing support and guidance to committee chairs to support them in being more effective in their role; and
 - providing good practice seminar opportunities and awareness raising sessions for committee members on particularly relevant issues.

Supporting the public and their local elected representatives

- 53 We regularly receive correspondence from the public, their local and national elected representatives and others that raises potential concerns about the stewardship of public money and assets. The Auditor General is also a 'prescribed person' for receiving whistle-blowing disclosures about the proper conduct of public business and fraud, value for money and corruption in relation to the provision of public services.
- 54 In 2020-21, we will continue to ensure that we:
- respond to such concerns promptly and in a fair, objective and professional manner;
 - appreciate the importance of the issues to those who have taken the time to highlight them;
 - issue audit reports where we consider these are merited; and
 - make sure that we do not use public money looking at issues that are not relevant to our audit work or spend too much time on minor issues.

4 Good practice work

- 55 A key focus of our good practice work is to facilitate conversations between service providers where the learning from our audit work and from their comparative successes and failures is shared face-to-face. Increasingly we are bringing the views and experiences of service users and global experts to these conversations.
- 56 Our programme of shared learning seminars and webinars is flexible and further topics may be added during the year.

Topic	Event ¹³	When
Moving from strategy to action – progress in implementing the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act	Seminar	May 2020
Sharing the lessons learnt from our Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act examinations in 2018-2019	Seminar	June 2020
Sustainable financial management of public bodies.	Seminar	July 2020
Town and Community Councils – new audit arrangements.	Webinar	September 2020
Tackling poverty	Seminar	September – October 2020
Orthopaedics / waiting times	Seminar	October – November 2020
The front door to social care – looking at how public services can provide equal social care services to everyone regardless of where they live.	Seminar	December 2020
Making the most of an organisation's data - sharing learning on how organisations are becoming data enabled.	Webinar	January 2021

13 Our seminars are delivered at two venues in Cardiff and Llanrwst.

Topic	Event	When
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language – sharing examples of public services supporting people to engage with Welsh culture and language in their daily lives.	Seminar	February 2021
Picture of public services – highlighting the patterns of public spending trends	Webinar	March 2021
Sustainable procurement - what do public bodies need to do differently to ensure money can be spent in a way that delivers wider benefits for Wales?	Seminar	March 2021

5 Our finances

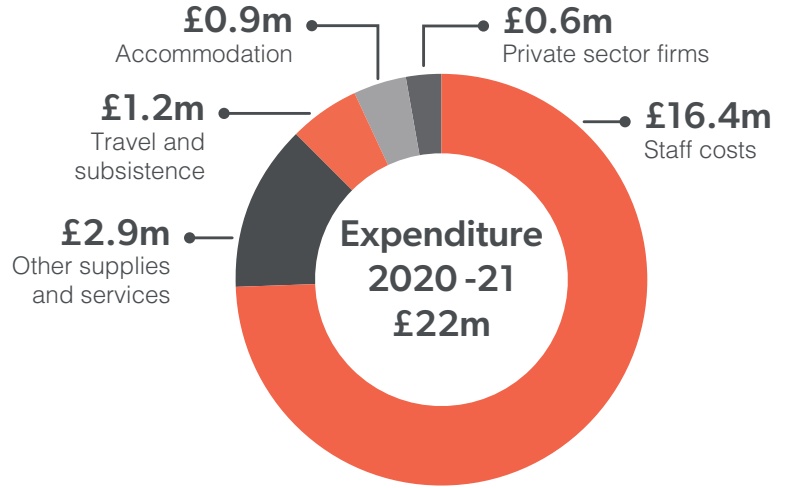
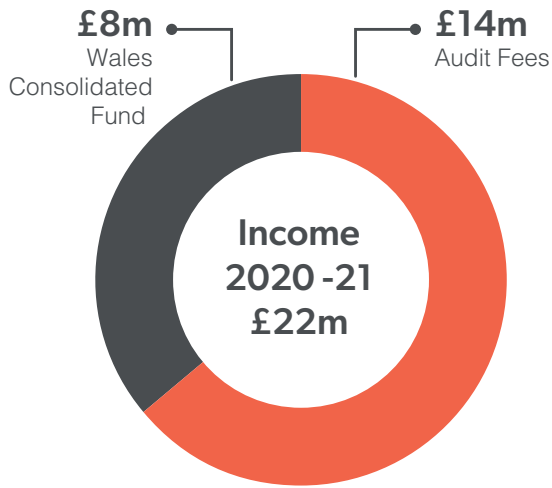
- 57 The National Assembly's Finance Committee scrutinises our use of resources, including through consideration of this Plan, our Estimate, Fee Scheme, Interim Report and Annual Report and Accounts.
- 58 Approximately two thirds of our funding come from fees charged to audited bodies in accordance with a scheme of fees approved¹⁴ by the National Assembly. Most of the remainder comprises approved financing from the Welsh Consolidated Fund, our use of which is subject to scrutiny from the Board at regular intervals during the year.
- 59 The key priorities for our use of resources in 2020-21 are laid out in our most recent Estimate, which was considered and approved by the National Assembly's Finance Committee in November 2019. £16 million of our planned expenditure relates to resources to be made available to the Auditor General to carry out his work programme¹⁵. A further £6 million provides a range of corporate enabling services, including accommodation and other support services, such as legal advice, ICT and HR¹⁶.
- 60 The Board reviews our financial performance each time it meets throughout the year. Each month, our Executive Leadership Team considers a risk assessment of our corporate financial health with a view to ensuring value for money and a year-end outturn within budget. The risk assessment covers year-to-date financial performance, achievement of in-year savings, forecast out-turn, capital expenditure, debtors' levels and cash flow.

14 Following a consultation exercise with the bodies we audit and other key stakeholders.

15 This is the maximum amount of the resources available, and which may become available, that it is anticipated will be allocated by the Wales Audit Office to the Auditor General for undertaking his work programme.

16 This constitutes the resources required to support the Wales Audit Office's work programme.

Income and expenditure





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