



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Annual Improvement Report

Cardiff Council

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This Annual Improvement Report has been prepared on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales by Samantha Clements and Sara-Jane Byrne under the direction of Huw Rees.

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The Auditor General is independent of government, and is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office Board, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General. The Wales Audit Office is held to account by the National Assembly.

The Auditor General audits local government bodies in Wales, including unitary authorities, police, probation, fire and rescue authorities, national parks and community councils. He also conducts local government value for money studies and assesses compliance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Beyond local government, the Auditor General is the external auditor of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, the Assembly Commission and National Health Service bodies in Wales.

The Auditor General and staff of the Wales Audit Office aim to provide public-focused and proportionate reporting on the stewardship of public resources and in the process provide insight and promote improvement.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

This document is also available in Welsh.

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Summary report

2018-19 performance audit work

- 1 To decide the range and nature of the work we would undertake during the year, we considered how much we already know from all previous audit and inspection work and from other sources of information including Cardiff Council's (the Council) own mechanisms for review and evaluation. For 2018-19, we undertook improvement assessment work; an assurance and risk assessment project and work in relation to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act at all councils. At some councils, we supplemented this work with local risk-based audits, identified in the Audit Plan for 2018-19.
- 2 The work carried out since the last Annual Improvement Report (AIR), including that of the relevant regulators, is set out in [Exhibit 2](#).

The Council is meeting its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement but faces challenges going forward

- 3 Based on, and limited to, the work carried out by the Wales Audit Office and relevant regulators, the Auditor General believes that the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Measure (2009) during 2019-20. However, the Council recognises that it faces some key challenges particularly in relation to its financial position and the significant level of savings it needs to achieve over the medium term.

Recommendations and proposals for improvement

- 4 Given the wide range of services provided by the Council and the challenges it is facing, it would be unusual if we did not find things that can be improved. The Auditor General is able to:
 - make proposals for improvement – if proposals are made to the Council, we would expect it to do something about them and we will follow up what happens;
 - make formal recommendations for improvement – if a formal recommendation is made, the Council must prepare a response to that recommendation within 30 working days;
 - conduct a special inspection, publish a report and make recommendations; and
 - recommend to ministers of the Welsh Government that they intervene in some way.

- 5 During the course of the year, the Auditor General did not make any formal recommendations. However, we have made a number of proposals for improvement and these are repeated in this report. We will monitor progress against them and relevant recommendations made in our national reports ([Appendix 3](#)) as part of our improvement assessment work.

Audit, regulatory and inspection work reported during 2018-19

Exhibit 1: description of the work carried out since the last AIR, including that of the relevant regulators, where relevant.

| Issue date | Brief description | Conclusions | Proposals for improvement |
|---------------|--|---|---------------------------|
| February 2019 | <p>Assurance and Risk Assessment Project to identify the level of audit assurance and/or where further audit work may be required in future years in relation to risks to the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • putting in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources; • putting in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement; and • acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in setting wellbeing objectives and taking steps to meet them. | <p>Arising from this project we identified the following topics for inclusion in our audit programme at the Council for 2019-20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the Council's financial sustainability (national themed review across 22 councils); • A review of waste management/recycling; • A review of Social Services budget and cost pressures; and • Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (WFG Act) examinations. | None. |

| Issue date | Brief description | Conclusions | Proposals for improvement |
|---|---|--|---------------------------|
| <p>July 2019</p> <p>Our report is available here on our website</p> | <p>Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (WFG Act) examinations</p> <p>Examination of the extent to which the Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle in developing and launching a new Transport and Clean Air Vision for the City, a step the Council is taking to meet its wellbeing objectives.</p> | <p>The Council has incorporated the sustainable development principle in its approach to developing the vision for Transport and Clean Air in Cardiff. The Council now needs to embed a consistent understanding and application of the principle and five ways of working in its endeavours to improve outcomes for its citizens.</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>December 2018</p> | <p>Annual audit letter 2017-18</p> <p>Letter summarising the key messages arising from the Auditor General's statutory responsibilities under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and his reporting responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice. The Annual Audit Letter is in Appendix 2 of this report.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources; • I am satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and • My work to date on certification of grant claims and returns has not identified significant issues that would impact on the 2018-19 accounts or key financial systems. | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Local risk-based performance audit</p> | | | |

| Issue date | Brief description | Conclusions | Proposals for improvement |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>April 2019</p> <p>A copy of our report is available here on our website.</p> | <p>Delivering Capital Ambition</p> <p>A review of the development and implementation of the Delivering Capital Ambition programme to provide assurance that the Council has suitable arrangements to enable it to address its financial and organisational challenges.</p> | <p>The Council has sound programme management arrangements in place for its Capital Ambition Delivery Programme, but it needs to strengthen engagement with scrutiny and links to its medium term financial plan.</p> | <p>P1 The Council needs to strengthen the role of scrutiny in engaging with, and challenging the delivery and impact of, the Programme to increase accountability and help provide momentum.</p> <p>P2 The Council would benefit from a review of the Capital Ambition Delivery Programme management arrangements alongside others that support delivery of the Corporate Plan such as the Directorate Delivery Plans.</p> <p>P3 The Council could do more to assess the extent to which the Capital Ambition Delivery Programme is contributing to the achievement of the Council's £91m savings target and make links to the medium term financial plan.</p> |
| <p>June 2019</p> <p>A copy of our report is available here on our website</p> | <p>Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements</p> <p>Review of the effectiveness of corporate safeguarding arrangements building on the study</p> | <p>The Council has been slow to implement a number of our previous recommendations and proposals for improvement, but has made progress in recent months. We have identified some further proposals for improvement to strengthen aspects of the Council's safeguarding arrangements.</p> | <p>P1 The Council should improve its approach to safeguarding training in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get staff through mandatory safeguarding training more quickly and take forward the |

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| | previously undertaken by the Auditor General in this area. | | <p>work identified by the Corporate Safeguarding Board to collate a percentage breakdown of safeguarding training compliance within each Council Directorate;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure it centrally collates safeguarding training records for those staff and volunteers who have had face to face safeguarding training as well as the e-learning safeguarding training; • clarify when mandatory safeguarding training for staff and members needs to be refreshed; • consider ways in which it could extend its safeguarding training offer, for example building on the planned Child Sexual Exploitation awareness training to be given to taxi drivers, and to provide safeguarding training to (for example) those |

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| | | | <p>working in the night time economy; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accelerate the mandatory completion of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (VAWDASV) training. <p>P2 The Council's corporate safeguarding intranet pages could be strengthened by providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a link to the Corporate Safeguarding Policy; • information on the lead officer for corporate safeguarding, the lead member for corporate safeguarding and the Corporate Safeguarding Board; and • information on where to report concerns or to find out further information. <p>P3 The Council should strengthen its Recruitment and Selection Policy in</p> |

| Issue date | Brief description | Conclusions | Proposals for improvement |
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| | | | <p>relation to safeguarding and safe recruitment.</p> <p>P4 The Council should strengthen its safeguarding contractual provisions by being more explicit about its safeguarding training requirements.</p> <p>P5 The Council should ensure it is able to record and monitor volunteer information centrally, including any training records and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for volunteers.</p> |
| <p>September 2019</p> <p>A copy of the report is available here on our website</p> | <p>Environmental Health</p> <p>Review of the arrangements the council has put in place to deliver environmental health services building on the study previously undertaken by the Auditor General as part of the 'delivering with less' themed studies.</p> | <p>The shared regulatory services (SRS) model is enabling the Council to sustain its delivery of environmental health services in a context of reducing resources and additional responsibilities placed on it by ongoing changes in legislation. There is scope for the Council to strengthen its independent oversight and assurance arrangements in relation to the SRS and work with SRS partners to explore opportunities for future improvement.</p> | <p>P1 The Council should subject any future changes to environmental health services to a more rigorous analysis of costs, benefits and impacts.</p> <p>We found some evidence of cost/benefit/impact analysis being performed to enable decision-making around savings and changes to services.</p> <p>However, whilst some consideration was given to the impact of staffing restructuring over the period between 2018-2021, officers and members acknowledged that the real impact of this will be largely unknown</p> |

| Issue date | Brief description | Conclusions | Proposals for improvement |
|------------|-------------------|-------------|---|
| | | | <p>until £498,000 of savings begin to take effect.</p> <p>P2 The Council should investigate further possibilities for commercialisation and income generation for environmental health services in order to provide additional financial capacity if funding reduces in the future.</p> <p>P3 When considering how environmental health services may need to change in the future, the Council should ensure that the distinction between statutory and non-statutory services is clearly documented and understood by decision-makers. This will help to ensure that statutory responsibilities and powers are weighed and prioritised appropriately alongside discretionary services.</p> <p>P4 The Council should introduce greater independent challenge of the level and quality of services provided by the SRS under the Joint Working Agreement.</p> <p>P5 The Council should work with SRS to undertake a review of business</p> |

| Issue date | Brief description | Conclusions | Proposals for improvement |
|------------|-------------------|-------------|--|
| | | | <p>continuity and succession planning arrangements in relation to the SRS to mitigate the risk of overreliance on key individuals, such as the Head of SRS and operational managers.</p> <p>P6 The Council should strengthen elected member oversight of its environmental health services, for example through more regular scrutiny of services provided by third parties including the SRS.</p> <p>P7 The Council should consider introducing more structured and targeted development and training opportunities for relevant members, which may be beneficial in the event of changes in personnel and in areas experiencing changes in environmental health legislation, e.g. air pollution/food safety/ infectious diseases.</p> <p>P8 The Council should more clearly link any future decisions on changes to service levels to an assessment of impact on relevant stakeholders, including service users and residents. Whether consultation is necessary, and the most appropriate</p> |

| Issue date | Brief description | Conclusions | Proposals for improvement |
|--|--|---|---|
| | | | <p>means of consulting should be decided on a case-by-case basis. However, where changes are likely to impact service users, businesses and local residents, they should be aware of and consulted on these decisions.</p> <p>P9 The Council needs to build on initiatives, such as the Noise app, to ensure that future funding reductions can be mitigated by innovation and transformation in service delivery and that environmental health services are able to benefit from new technologies.</p> |
| <p>October 2018</p> <p>Our report is available here on our website</p> | <p>Welsh Housing Quality Standard review (WHQS) including tenants' views</p> <p>A review of the arrangements in place to enable the Council to maintain the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and address the number of acceptable fails.</p> | <p>The Council met the Welsh Housing Quality Standard in 2012, and its arrangements to maintain compliance with the WHQS are effective and making a positive difference to residents' lives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Council's approach to the WHQS is well-integrated into its strategic housing function; the Council has comprehensive information on the condition of the whole of the housing stock to direct investment priorities; | <p>None</p> |

| Issue date | Brief description | Conclusions | Proposals for improvement |
|---|--|---|---------------------------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council has a financed and deliverable programme for the repair and improvement of the housing stock including addressing acceptable fails; • the Council has effective arrangements to monitor and scrutinise its progress to maintain the WHQS and has learnt from its progress to date; • the Council has a strong customer care focus to the way it interacts with its tenants; and • the Council's integrated approach to the WHQS is making a positive difference to the lives of its housing tenants. | |
| Improvement planning and reporting | | | |
| April 2019 | Wales Audit Office annual improvement plan audit Review of the Council's published plans for delivering on improvement objectives. | The Council has complied with its statutory improvement planning duties. | None |
| August 2019 | Wales Audit Office annual assessment of performance audit Review of the Council's published performance assessment. | The Council has complied with its statutory improvement reporting duties. | None |

| Issue date | Brief description | Conclusions | Proposals for improvement |
|--|---|---|---------------------------|
| June 2018 | Wales Audit Office annual improvement plan audit Review of the Council's published plans for delivering on improvement objectives. | The Council has complied with its statutory improvement planning duties. | None |
| November 2018 | Wales Audit Office annual assessment of performance audit Review of the Council's published performance assessment. | The Council has complied with its statutory improvement reporting duties. | None |
| Reviews by inspection and regulation bodies | | | |
| Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) June 2019 | Local authority annual performance review letter 2018-19 This letter summarises CIW's evaluation of performance of social services (adults and children's services) during 2018-19. It also sets out how CIW is planning to review performance over the coming year. | <u>Copy of CIW's annual performance review letter 2018/19</u> | Not applicable |

Appendix 1

Status of this report

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) requires the Auditor General to undertake a forward-looking annual improvement assessment, and to publish an annual improvement report, for each improvement authority in Wales. Improvement authorities (defined as local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue authorities) have a general duty to 'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of [their] functions'.

The annual improvement assessment considers the likelihood that an authority will comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. The assessment is also the main piece of work that enables the Auditor General to fulfil his duties. Staff of the Wales Audit Office, on behalf of the Auditor General, produce the annual improvement report. The report discharges the Auditor General's duties under section 24 of the Measure, by summarising his audit and assessment work in a published annual improvement report for each authority. The report also discharges his duties under section 19 to issue a report certifying that he has carried out an improvement assessment under section 18 and stating whether (as a result of his improvement plan audit under section 17) he believes that the authority has discharged its improvement planning duties under section 15.

The Auditor General may also, in some circumstances, carry out special inspections (under section 21), which will be reported to the authority and Ministers, and which he may publish (under section 22). An important ancillary activity for the Auditor General is the co-ordination of assessment and regulatory work (required by section 23), which takes into consideration the overall programme of work of all relevant regulators at an improvement authority. The Auditor General may also take account of information shared by relevant regulators (under section 33) in his assessments.

Appendix 2

Annual Audit Letter

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Please contact us in Welsh or English.

Cysylltwch â ni'n Gymraeg neu'n Saesneg.

Councillor Huw Thomas
Leader
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
Cardiff
CF10 4UQ

Reference:

Date issued: 14 December 2018

Dear Councillor Thomas,

Annual Audit Letter of Cardiff Council 2017-18

This letter summarises the key messages arising from my statutory responsibilities under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and my reporting responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice.

The Council complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources

It is the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff's (the Council) responsibility to:

- put systems of internal control in place to ensure the regularity and lawfulness of transactions and to ensure that its assets are secure;
- maintain proper accounting records;
- prepare a Statement of Accounts in accordance with relevant requirements; and
- establish and keep under review appropriate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 requires me to:

- provide an audit opinion on the accounting statements;

- review the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- issue a certificate confirming that I have completed the audit of the accounts.

Local authorities in Wales prepare their accounting statements in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. This code is based on International Financial Reporting Standards. On 28 September 2018, I issued an unqualified audit opinion on the accounting statements confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council's, the Group's and the Pension Fund's financial position and transactions. My report is contained within the Statement of Accounts. The key matters arising from the accounts audit were reported to members of the Audit Committee and the Council in my Audit of Financial Statements report on the 18 and 27 September 2018.

I issued a certificate confirming that the audit of the accounts had been completed on 28 September 2018.

Like other local authorities in Wales Cardiff Council continues to face significant financial challenges

Austerity remains the most significant challenge facing local government bodies in Wales and these financial pressures are likely to continue into the medium term.

The Council's earmarked and usable reserves have increased slightly over the last three years as shown in Table 1 below. The Council's Capital Receipts Reserve has also increased. This reserve however, can only be used to finance future capital expenditure or to repay historical capital finance incurred, it cannot be used to meet revenue costs.

Table 1 – Council Fund, Earmarked and Capital Receipts Reserves

| | 31 March 16 £m | 31 March 17 £m | 31 March 18 £m |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Council Fund | 15.255 | 14.255 | 14.255 |
| Earmarked reserves (including Schools) | 52.226 | 59.391 | 61.843 |
| Total Council Fund & Earmarked Reserves | 67.481 | 73.646 | £76.098 |
| Capital Receipts Reserve | 5.423 | 7.205 | 21.320 |

The Council's 2018-19 budget identified that it needed to make savings totalling approximately £14.3m. The Council's month six revenue budget monitoring report for 2018-19, highlights that it is currently predicting a balanced position at the year-end. Although there are financial pressures and shortfalls against budget savings targets in directorate budgets, these are offset by projected savings on capital financing, an

anticipated surplus on Council Tax collection and Non-Domestic Rate refunds on Council properties.

As at 30 September 2018, the projected overspends in directorate budgets include £3.2 million in Social Services, £1.5 million in Planning, Transport & Environment, £0.8 million in Education & Lifelong Learning and £0.3m in Corporate Management. The directorate positions reflect a range of factors including increased demographic pressures in Social Services, particularly in relation to looked after children, shortfalls in income and the anticipated failure to fully achieve the savings targets set as part of the 2018/19 Budget, together with on-going shortfalls carried forward from the previous financial year. An overall shortfall of £3.0 million is currently anticipated against the £14.3 million directorate savings target with £5.3 million having been achieved to date and a further £6.0 million anticipated to be achieved by the year end.

The overspend and shortfall are partly offset by projected underspends in other directorates and by a £3.0 million general contingency budget which was provided within the 2018-19 budget to reflect the quantum, risk and planning status of the proposed savings for 2018-19.

In July 2018, the Council's Cabinet considered the 2019-20 Budget Strategy. This identified a potential budget reduction requirement totalling £91.4m for the three-year period 2019-20 to 2021-22, with £65.6m of this being required to be made from savings within directorate budgets.

In October 2018, Welsh Government (WG) published the 2019-20 Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement. This indicates that on average, Welsh Authorities will receive a 0.3% decrease in general revenue funding in the next financial year. Individual authority settlements range from funding reductions of 1% to a funding increase of 0.4% for Cardiff.

Following this, the Council has refreshed its budget reduction requirements and, as reported to the Council's Cabinet on 15 November 2018, it is currently forecasting that for 2019-20 it is facing a total budget reduction requirement of £35.2 million. The Council's strategy to address this gap includes directorate savings of £19.4m with over 100 different proposals being required to achieve this.

The 2019-20 Budget Strategy Report considered by Cabinet in July 2018, highlighted that further Directorate savings of approximately £19.3 million and £22.2 million would also be required in 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively. The Council is yet determine how it is to address the savings required for these two years.

In addition, to finance the Council's Capital Programme where capital expenditure is incurred without a resource to pay for it immediately (e.g. via capital receipts, grants or other contributions), the Council undertakes long term borrowing i.e. its Capital Financing Requirement. The Council's underlying need to borrow has been increasing over recent years and this increase will also need to be repaid from future revenue budgets either from savings, revenue income or Council Tax and Housing Rents.

I am satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

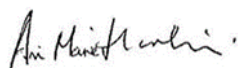
My consideration of the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness has been based on the audit work undertaken on the accounts as well as placing reliance on the work completed under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Auditor General has highlighted areas where the effectiveness of these arrangements has yet to be demonstrated or where improvements could be made in his [Annual Improvement Report](#) published in August 2018.

My work to date on certification of grant claims and returns has not identified significant issues that would impact on the 2018-19 accounts or key financial systems

A more detailed report on my grant certification work will follow once this year's programme of certification work is complete.

The financial audit fee for our 2017-18 audit work is currently expected to be in line with the agreed fee set out in the Annual Audit Plan issued in March 2018.

Yours sincerely



Ann-Marie Harkin
Engagement Director
For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales

cc. Paul Orders, Chief Executive
Christine Salter, Director of Finance

Appendix 3

National report recommendations 2018-19

Exhibit 2: national report recommendations 2018-19

Summary of proposals for improvement relevant to local government, included in national reports published by the Wales Audit Office, since publication of the last AIR

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
|----------------|---|--|
| October 2018 | <u>Procuring Residual and Food Waste Treatment Capacity</u> | <p>R1 The projections for the three residual waste projects in the Programme assume that, across the 14 councils involved, the overall amount of residual waste will increase through the lifetime of the contracts. If these projections are accurate then something significant would have to occur beyond 2040 to reach zero waste across these council areas by 2050. If the projections are not accurate then there is the risk that councils will pay for capacity they do not need. We recommend that the Welsh Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• in reviewing the Towards Zero Waste strategy, considers how its ambition of there being no residual waste by 2050 aligns with current projections for residual waste treatment; and• works with councils to consider the impact of changes in projections on the likely cost of |

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
|----------------|-----------------|---|
| | | <p style="text-align: center;">residual waste projects and any mitigating action needed to manage these costs.</p> <p>R2 The Welsh Government’s programme support to date has mainly focused on project development and procurement. Now that most of the projects are operational, the focus has shifted to contract management. We recommend that the Welsh Government continue its oversight of projects during the operational phase by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building on its existing model of providing experienced individuals to assist with project development and procurement and making sure input is available to assist with contract management if required; • setting out its expectations of councils regarding contract management; • ensuring partnerships revisit their waste projections and associated risks periodically, for example to reflect updated population projections or economic forecasts; and • obtaining from partnerships basic management information on gate fees paid, amount of waste sent to facilities and quality of contractor service. |

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
|----------------|---|--|
| November 2018 | <u>Local Government Services to Rural Communities</u> | <p>R1 Socio economic change, poor infrastructure and shifts in provision of key services and facilities has resulted in the residualisation of communities in rural Wales. We recommend that Welsh Government support public bodies to deliver a more integrated approach to service delivery in rural areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refreshing rural grant programmes to create sustainable financial structures, with multi-year allocations; and • helping people and businesses make the most of digital connectivity through targeted and more effective business and adult education support programmes. <p>R2 The role of Public Service Boards is evolving but there are opportunities to articulate a clearer and more ambitious shared vision for rural Wales (see paragraphs 2.2 to 2.9 and 2.28 to 2.31). We recommend that PSB public services partners respond more effectively to the challenges faced by rural communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their different rural communities using the Welsh Governments Rural Proofing Tool and identify and agree the local and strategic actions needed to support community sustainability; and • ensuring the Local Well-Being Plan sets out a more optimistic and ambitious vision for ‘place’ |

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
|----------------|-----------------|---|
| | | <p style="text-align: center;">with joint priorities co-produced by partners and with citizens to address agreed challenges.</p> <p>R3 To help sustain rural communities, public services need to think differently in the future (see paragraphs 3.1 to 3.12). We recommend councils provide a more effective response to the challenges faced by rural communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring service commissioners have cost data and qualitative information on the full range of service options available; and • using citizens' views on the availability, affordability, accessibility, adequacy and acceptability of council services to shape the delivery and integration of services. <p>R4 To help sustain rural communities, public services need to act differently in the future (see paragraphs 3.1 to 3.12). We recommend councils do more to develop community resilience and self-help by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with relevant bodies such as the Wales Co-operative Centre to support social enterprise and more collaborative business models; • providing tailored community outreach for those who face multiple barriers to accessing public services and work; |

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
|----------------|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing and recognising the role of town and community councils by capitalising on their local knowledge and supporting them to do more; • encouraging a more integrated approach to service delivery in rural areas by establishing pan-public service community hubs, networks of expertise, and clusters of advice and prevention services; • enabling local action by supporting community asset transfer identifying which assets are suitable to transfer, and having the right systems in place to make things happen; and • improving community-based leadership by developing networks of interest, training and coaching, and encouraging volunteering. |
| November 2018 | <u>Waste Management in Wales: Municipal Recycling</u> | <p>R1 Benchmarking work has found that the cost of certain waste management services show surprising variation (paragraphs 1.31-1.39). The Welsh Government should work with councils to understand better the basis of the variation in spending on waste management services that are fundamentally the same and ensure that waste management costs are accounted for in a consistent way.</p> <p>R2 The Welsh Government believes that, if applied optimally, its Collections Blueprint offers the most cost-effective overall means of collecting recyclable resources but is planning</p> |

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
|----------------|-----------------|--|
| | | <p>further analysis (paragraphs 1.40-1.51). When undertaking its further analysis to understand better the reasons for differences in councils' reported costs, and the impact on costs where councils have adopted the Collections Blueprint, we recommend that the Welsh Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explores how the cost of collecting dry recyclables may affect the overall cost of providing kerbside waste management services to households; and • compares the actual costs with the costs modelled previously as part of the Welsh Government-commissioned review of the Collections Blueprint for councils that now operate the Collections Blueprint. <p>R3 The Welsh Government has undertaken to consider alternatives to the current weight-based recycling targets which can better demonstrate the delivery of its ecological footprint and carbon reduction goals (paragraphs 2.38-2.45). We recommend that the Welsh Government replace or complement the current target to recycle, compost and reuse wastes with performance measures to refocus recycling on the waste resources that have the largest impact on carbon reduction, and/or are scarce. We recognise that the Welsh Government may need to consider the affordability of data collection for any alternative means of measurement.</p> |

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
|----------------|---|---|
| | | <p>R4 In refreshing Towards Zero Waste, the Welsh Government needs to show that wider sustainability benefits sought through municipal recycling offer value and cannot be more readily attained in other ways and at lower cost including, but not necessarily limited to, other waste management interventions (paragraphs 2.52-2.53). The Welsh Government should demonstrate in the revised waste strategy that not only is it possible to recycle a greater proportion of municipal waste, but how doing so maximises its contribution to achieving its sustainable development objectives.</p> |
| November 2018 | <p><u>Provision of Local Government Services to Rural Communities: Community Asset Transfer</u></p> | <p>R1 Local authorities need to do more to make CATs (Community Asset Transfers) simpler and more appealing, help build the capacity of community and town councils, give them more guidance in raising finance, and look to support other community development models such as social enterprises that support social value and citizen involvement. In addition, we recommend that local authorities monitor and publish CAT numbers and measure the social impact of CATs.</p> <p>R2 Local authorities have significant scope to provide better and more visible help and support before, during, and after the community asset transfer process. We conclude that there is considerable scope to improve the business planning, preparation, and aftercare for community asset transfer. We recommend that local authorities:</p> |

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify community assets transfer's role in establishing community hubs, networks of expertise and clusters of advice and prevention services; • work with town and community councils to develop their ability to take on more CATs; • identify which assets are suitable to transfer, and clarify what the authority needs to do to enable their transfer; • ensure their CAT policy adequately covers aftercare, long term support, post transfer support, signposting access to finance, and sharing the learning about works well; and • support community-based leadership by developing networks of interest, training and coaching, and encouraging volunteering. |
| December 2018 | <u>The maturity of local government in use of data</u> | <p>R1 Part 1 of the report highlights the importance of creating a strong data culture and clear leadership to make better use of data. We recommend that local authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a clear vision that treats data as a key resource; • establish corporate data standards and coding that all services use for their core data; • undertake an audit to determine what data is held by services and identify any duplicated records and information requests; and |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a central integrated customer account as a gateway to services. <p>R2 Part 2 of the report notes that whilst it is important that authorities comply with relevant data protection legislation, they also need to share data with partners to ensure citizens receive efficient and effective services. Whilst these two things are not mutually exclusive, uncertainty on data protection responsibilities is resulting in some officers not sharing data, even where there is agreement to provide partners with information. We recommend that authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide refresher training to service managers to ensure they know when and what data they can and cannot share; and • review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities. <p>R3 In Part 3 of our report, we conclude that adequate resources and sufficient capacity are ongoing challenges. However, without upskilling staff to make better use of data, authorities are missing opportunities to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. We recommend that authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify staff who have a role in analysing and managing data to remove duplication and free up |

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
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| | | <p>resources to build and develop capacity in data usage; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invest and support the development of staff data analytical, mining and segmentation skills. <p>R4 Part 4 of our report highlights that authorities have more to do to create a data-driven decision-making culture and to unlock the potential of the data they hold. We recommend that local authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set data reporting standards to ensure minimum data standards underpin decision making; and • make more open data available. |
| March 2019 | <p><u>Waste Management in Wales - Preventing waste</u></p> | <p>R1 Increasing the focus on waste prevention to reflect the overall aims of Towards Zero Waste</p> <p>Available data on the amount of waste produced suggests mixed progress to deliver the Welsh Government’s waste prevention targets. We recommend that the Welsh Government:</p> <p>a) revisits the relative priority it gives to recycling and waste prevention as part of its review of Towards Zero Waste;</p> <p>b) sets out clearly the expectations on different organisations and sectors for waste prevention; and</p> <p>c) revisits its overall waste prevention targets and the approach it has taken to monitor them in light of progress to date, examples from other countries and in the context of current projections about waste arising through to 2050.</p> |

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
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| | | <p>R2 Improving data on commercial, industrial, construction and demolition waste</p> <p>The Welsh Government is a partner in initial work to assess the feasibility of developing a new digital solution to track all waste. If this preferred option does not succeed, we recommend that the Welsh Government works with Natural Resources Wales to explore the costs and benefits of other options to improve non-municipal waste data in Wales, including additional powers to require waste data from businesses.</p> <p>R3 Enhancing producer responsibility and using more legal, financial and fiscal levers</p> <p>The Welsh Government has opportunities to influence waste prevention through legislation and financial incentives. It can also influence changes at UK level where fiscal matters are not devolved. We recommend that the Welsh Government consider whether provisions to extend producer responsibility and the use of financial powers such as grant conditions, fiscal measures and customer charges and incentives, are needed to promote and to prioritise waste prevention.</p> |
| June 2019 | <u>The effectiveness of local planning authorities in Wales</u> | R1 Part 1 of the report sets out the complexities of the planning system showing how challenging it is for local planning authorities to effectively engage with and involve stakeholders in choices and decisions. To |

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| | | <p>improve involvement with stakeholders and ownership of decisions we recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local planning authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – test current engagement and involvement practices and consider the full range of other options available to ensure involvement activities are fit for purpose; – use ‘Place Plans’ as a vehicle to engage and involve communities and citizens in planning choices and decision making; and – improve transparency and accountability by holding planning meetings at appropriate times, rotating meetings to take place in areas which are subject to proposed development, webcasting meetings and providing opportunities for stakeholders to address committee meetings. • Welsh Government: – review the Development Management Procedure Order 2012 and update the engagement and involvement standards for local planning authorities. R2 <p>R2 Part 2 of the report highlights that local planning authorities have been subject to significant reductions in funding and struggle to deliver their statutory responsibilities. To improve resilience, we recommend that local planning authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review their building control fee regimes to ensure the levels set, better reflect the actual cost of providing these services and make the service self-funding; and |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve capacity by working regionally to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – integrate services to address specialism gaps; – develop joint supplementary planning guidance; and – develop future local development plans regionally and in partnership with other local planning authorities. <p>R3 Part 2 of the report highlights that the cost of development control services is not reflected in the charges set for these services and progress in developing regional responses to strengthen resilience has been slow. We recommend that the Welsh Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviews development control fees to ensure the levels set, better reflect the actual cost of providing these services; and • consider how to use the powers in the Planning (Wales) Act to support and improve local planning authority capacity and resilience. <p>R4 Part 3 of the report summarises the effectiveness and impact of local planning authorities' decision making and how well they are performing against national measures. We recommend that local planning authorities improve the effectiveness of planning committees by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing their scheme of delegation to ensure planning committees are focussed on the most important strategic issues relevant to their authority; |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revising reporting templates to ensure they are clear and unambiguous to help guide decision making and reduce the level of officer recommendations overturned; and • enforcing the local planning authorities' standards of conduct for meetings. <p>R5 Part 4 of the report identifies the central role of planning to delivering the ambitions of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. We recommend that local planning authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set a clear ambitious vision that shows how planning contributes to improving wellbeing; • provide planning committee members with regular and appropriate wellbeing training and support to help deliver their wider responsibilities; • set appropriate measures for their administration of the planning system and the impact of their planning decisions on wellbeing; and • annually publish these performance measures to judge planning authorities impact on wellbeing. |
| September 2019 | <u>The 'front door' to adult social care</u> | <p>Improving access to the front door</p> <p>R1 Part 1 of the report sets out how authorities promote access to the 'front door' and provide information, advice and assistance to help people to improve their wellbeing and prevent their needs from deteriorating. To improve awareness of the front door we recommend that:</p> |

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review their current approaches, consider their audience, and ensure that good-quality information is made available in a timely manner to avoid needs deteriorating and people presenting for assistance in ‘crisis’; - work in partnership with public and third-sector partners to help ensure people accessing via partner referrals, or other avenues, are given the best information to help them; - ensure that advocacy services are commissioned and proactively offered to those who need them at first point of contact; and - to take local ownership and lead on the co-ordination and editing of local information published on Dewis Cymru locally. • The Welsh Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve carers’ awareness and understanding of their rights to be assessed for their own care and support needs, aimed at generating demand for local authorities’ preventative services; and - undertake a full evaluation of the role of Dewis Cymru in the wider implementation of the Act and use the data gained to build on its potential as a national information sharing portal. <p>Investing in prevention and understanding impact</p> <p>R2 Part 2 of the report highlights weaknesses in authorities’ assurance of the availability and quality of third-sector, preventative, community based services that they signpost people to. We recommend that:</p> |

| Date of report | Title of review | Recommendation |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - map the availability of preventative services in their area to better understand current levels of provision and identify gaps and duplication; - involve third-sector partners in co-producing preventative solutions to meet people’s needs and ensure people have equitable access to these services; - work with third-sector partners to tailor and commission new services where gaps are identified; and - work with partners to improve data to evaluate the impact of preventative services on individuals and the population more generally. • Welsh Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve the cost evaluation in relation to the impact of the Act in a national context, and support local authorities to ensure that the desired impact of prevention on overall social-care expenditure becomes a demonstratable reality. <p>As part of our report, we also published an interactive data tool, short film and an infographic about carers’ stories. These are available on our website here.</p> |

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