



WALES **AUDIT** OFFICE
SWYDDFA **ARCHWILIO** CYMRU

Annual Improvement Report

Isle of Anglesey County Council

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This Annual Improvement Report has been prepared on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales by Alan Hughes and Jeremy Evans under the direction of Huw Rees.

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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 the Isle of Anglesey County 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 1](#).

The Council is meeting its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement but, as with all councils in Wales, it 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, all councils face significant financial pressures which will need continued attention in the short and medium term to enable them to reach a stable and sustainable financial position.

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: audit, regulatory and inspection work reported during 2018-19

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
April 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"> • Assurance and Risk Assessment: 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 putting in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources. • Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (WFG Act) examinations, focusing on prevention and early intervention in Children’s Services; • Financial Sustainability – a project common to all local councils that will assess financial sustainability in light of current and anticipated future challenges; and • Resilience – a review on the Council’s resilience including its workforce capacity and capability and managing risk and sustainable improvement. 	Not applicable

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
July 2019	<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 to ‘Promote Anglesey to encourage major developers to invest in the Island and use this as a catalyst for business development and jobs on the Island’, towards meeting its well-being objective:</p> <p>Improve employment opportunities, skills and training.</p>	<p>The Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle in developing the step, but there are opportunities to further embed the five ways of working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council has a thorough understanding of current and long term needs of communities and the associated challenges and opportunities presented by major developments on the island • the Council has sought to obtain a thorough understanding of the adverse effects of a large scale project, and understands the importance of gathering data to inform its preventative activities • the Council considers how its step could contribute to the seven national well-being goals and its other well-being objectives, but the Council it has not formally considered how the development will impact other public bodies’ well-being objectives • the Council has taken steps to collaborate with partners and reflect the needs and wishes of local communities, but could improve how it reviews the effectiveness of collaboration • the Council has involved stakeholders in the Wylfa Newydd project, but needs to develop its approach to involving the full diversity of the community 	<p>The Council elected to undertake a number of actions as a result of the review, these are detailed in our full report:</p> <p><u>Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of ‘Promote Anglesey to Encourage Major Developers to Invest in the Island’ – Isle of Anglesey County Council.</u></p>

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
January 2019	<p>Annual audit letter 2017-18 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; • The Auditor General is satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; • 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; and • The Council faces significant challenges in seeking to set a balanced budget accompanied by diminishing general fund balance. 	Not applicable
Local risk-based performance audit			
July 2018	<p>Follow-up review of proposals for Improvement A review to gain assurance that the Council has effective arrangements for addressing proposals for improvement and recommendations made by the Wales Audit Office and is evaluating the extent to which its actions are contributing to delivering improved service</p>	<p>The Council has satisfactory processes for addressing proposals for improvement and recommendations from the Wales Audit Office but arrangements could be strengthened to provide greater assurance on progress to elected members;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council has satisfactory arrangements for addressing proposals for improvement and recommendations from the Wales Audit Office but elected members are not consistently informed of progress; and 	<p>P1 Keep elected members informed of Wales Audit Office proposals for improvement and recommendations, and the Council's progress against them by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • circulating all Wales Audit Office reports to Audit and Governance Committee members for information; and • reporting annually to the Audit and Governance Committee on progress made against

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
	performance and outcomes for citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Council has addressed the proposals for improvement issued in the selected reports. 	outstanding Wales Audit Office proposals for improvement and recommendations.
October 2018	<p>Overview and Scrutiny: Fit for the Future?</p> <p>A review on how well-placed Councils' overview and scrutiny functions are able to respond to current and future challenges.</p>	<p>The Council has strengthened its overview and scrutiny function and is making arrangements to meet future challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Council is supportive of overview and scrutiny, and arrangements necessary to help overview and scrutiny members meet future challenges are being put in place; Overview and scrutiny committee practice is improving, the range of evidence sources they draw on has increased, and scrutiny committees forward work programmes align with the work of the Executive; and the overview and scrutiny function is contributing to improvements in performance and decision-making, and the Council regularly evaluates its effectiveness. 	<p>P1 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny function should further improve arrangements for promoting the engagement of the public and other stakeholders in scrutiny activity.</p> <p>P2 The Council should build on its experience through further self-assessment, to consider more innovative methods of undertaking scrutiny activity.</p>

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
Improvement planning and reporting			
August 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			
Estyn	Estyn did not undertake a Isle of Anglesey County Council inspection in this period, but several school inspections were carried out. Full details are on Estyn's web site https://www.estyn.gov.wales/	Not applicable	Not applicable
Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) December 2018	Inspection of Children's Services Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) last inspected children's services at the Council in November 2016. The inspection found management oversight of safeguarding, access and assessment arrangements were insufficient and the pace of change in improving the provision of help, care and support and/or	Overview of findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We found children's services able to demonstrate significant improvement in a number of key areas with some other areas still requiring further work. Staff morale is high and there is passion and commitment at all levels to continuing to work hard on the journey of improvement to deliver excellent services for children. 	Areas for development: Access arrangements: Information, Advice and Assistance <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The opportunity to provide feedback to people who make referrals should be maximised. There is an electronic form already available it could be used more consistently to improve communication with people who

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	<p>protection for children and families in Anglesey needed to be accelerated and improvement sustained. Due to the significant concerns identified, CIW to re-inspected the Council's Children's Services in October 2018.</p> <p>This re-inspection focused on how families are empowered to access help and care & support services and on the quality of outcomes achieved for children in need of help, care & support and/or protection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) service has improved significantly since our last inspection and is now more in line with the Social Services and Well-being Act (SSWBA). Staffing levels have increased within this service and 'what matters' conversations are being undertaken with increasing confidence and success. Chronologies are routinely begun at this early stage and referrals passed to other teams appropriately. Decisions and case recording are mostly timely and proportionate. Safeguarding responses are mostly timely and proportionate. There is room for improvement in collation and recording of evidence and analysis of risk. We were not always confident all key pieces of information were available at the right time to consistently support managers to make good decisions. This can lead to unnecessary delays in formulating plans for children. The quality improvement service has benefitted from increased staffing and external professional support over the past year. This new impetus has led to the development of a number of policies and procedures. Some policies and procedures require more detail to ensure they maximise improvements. There is some evidence of a feedback loop between case audit and 	<p>make referrals and build the reputation of the service.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure chronologies are consistently updated to assist practitioners to access relevant and significant case information in a timely manner. <p>Assessment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the individual child is not lost in the wider case discussion of the family circumstance. A greater focus must be held on individual children's needs and wishes, as well as impact and mitigation of risk(s) to them. High quality, robust and timely supervision and audit of individual assessments must become routine within the service to drive the pace of service improvement. Supervision and audit need to include reflection on use of professional knowledge, evidence and social work skills Evidence collection, recording and analysis must be brought up to a consistently high level to enable informed decision making and ensure cases where children are suffering significant harm are not allowed to drift. Managers need to be confident and supportive in critically

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
		<p>practice. However, we are not yet confident current case audit and supervision consistently identifies and improves practice that falls short of the standards expected within legislation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in management oversight and professional accountability at all levels is continuing to highlight cases where opportunities to support children have been missed in previous years. There is firm commitment and direct evidence of the local authority proactively and systematically responding to the needs of these children. This has led to a noticeable increase in the number of children becoming looked after and corresponding increase in work load for teams. • There is a lack of suitable placements for children. More work is required to ensure placement options meet the particular needs of children within their community. We heard about and spoke to children with complex needs who are receiving specialist support out of county. We were told these placements can be very expensive and how they need to be carefully commissioned and tightly monitored to ensure children's needs are met. The Service is considering specific measures designed to address this shortage. 	<p>appraising incomplete or inadequate written documentation.</p> <p>6. Children need to be able to build relationships with social workers they can trust, the number of social workers to which each child has to repeat their story needs to be minimised. Social workers must ensure every interaction with a child counts and be able to evidence their work.</p> <p>Care and support and review</p> <p>7. More work is required to support independent safeguarding and reviewing officers (IRSOs) to ensure they have capacity and confidence to effectively challenge where services fall short of standards required for individual children.</p> <p>8. There needs to be early emphasis and priority given to improving consistency of contact and engagement of IRSOs with children before reviews to ensure children's voices are clearly and effectively heard.</p> <p>9. Care planning and engagement with children and carers must be strengthened to ensure consistent</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is strong leadership and governance in IoACC. Members of the council were able to demonstrate their contribution to children's services improvement journey. They were able to demonstrate their knowledge of key challenges facing the council and how they interact to impact upon children and families. Senior officers are visible, available and driving improvements. Partners on the regional safeguarding board, North Wales Police and Health Board operational colleagues are positive about the changes they have seen in Anglesey, describing a new open culture and good joint working. 	<p>development of co-produced plans. Children and carers must receive the support offered to them in care and support plans.</p> <p>10. Continue to explore and hasten current opportunities to increase the number and range of placements options for children on the island. The provision of new placement opportunities needs to be based upon professional understanding of children's needs.</p> <p>11. Develop mechanisms to ensure looked after children are not disadvantaged by pressures on staff to respond to new safeguarding concerns in other cases.</p> <p>Leadership and governance</p> <p>12. Continue with development of robust quality assurance mechanisms across the service.</p> <p>13. Encourage further joint working between children's services and education services to ensure all children have timely Personal Education Plans that reflect the importance of education to each child's ability to reach their potential.</p>

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			<p>14. Ensure there are opportunities to pause and reflect on the new structure including constructive challenge as to whether the experience and outcomes of children are being best served by the number of practice leaders who are non case holders and the number of changes in social worker experienced by each child.</p>

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

Llinos Medi / Marc Jones
Council Offices
Llangefni
Anglesey
LL77 7TW

Reference IH 201718
Date 07/01/2019
Pages 16 of 4

Dear Llinos / Marc

Annual Audit Letter – Isle of Anglesey County Council 2017-18

This letter summarises the key messages arising from the Auditor General for Wales's (Auditor General's) 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 Isle of Anglesey County Council's (the Council's) 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 the Auditor General 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.

The draft financial statements were prepared to a good standard and were supported by comprehensive and timely working papers. The key matters arising from the audit of the financial statements were reported to members of the Audit and Governance Committee in my Audit of Financial Statements report on the 19 September 2018.

On 28 September 2018, the Auditor General issued an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council's financial position and transactions.

The key matters arising from these audits were reported to the relevant committees where appropriate.

The Auditor General is satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Auditor General's 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 will highlight areas where the effectiveness of these arrangements has yet to be demonstrated or where improvements could be made when he publishes his Annual Improvement Report.

To date my work on behalf of the Auditor General on the certification of grant claims and returns has not identified significant issues that would impact on the 2018-19 accounts or key financial systems.

My ongoing work on the certification of grants claims and returns has not identified any significant issues to date in relation to the accounts or the Council's key financial systems. I will report any key issues to the Council once this year's programme of certification work is complete.

The Council faces significant challenges in seeking to set a balanced budget accompanied by diminishing general fund balance.

Austerity funding remains the most significant challenge facing all local government bodies in Wales and these financial pressures are likely to continue for the medium term. The 2018/19 local government funding settlement saw the Council's settlement increase by only 0.7% when inflation is more than 2%.

For 2018-19, the authority projects that it will report a deficit on the provision of services of £3.3m and has identified demand pressures in the number of children looked after and associated out of county placement costs and increased demand for adult social care as key drivers of the projected deficit.

To respond to these pressures, the council has had to make tough decisions about where to devote scarce resource and consider new ways to deliver services to people. In its medium term financial plan it has identified the following targets and savings to achieve those targets.

Short Term: In the 2018/19 budget the Council has identified the need for savings of £2.5m and a 4.8% increase in Council Tax. Budget savings of £2.522m were removed from service budgets for 2018/19. It is anticipated that £2.255m have or will be fulfilled by the year-end. However, £267k may potentially not be achieved.

Medium Term: The Council has identified the need in 2019/20 for savings of £3.7m and between a 6.5 – 9.5% increase in Council Tax to stay to budget. This includes proposals to close or sell a building, reduce the numbers of low level care packages, charge for

services the Council has previously delivered for free, and provide a cash settlement to schools which is lower than the full cost of their forecasted budget pressures.

The Council determined in February 2018 that general fund balances should be maintained at £6.5m or above. The Council intends to re-consider this target level at its meeting in February 2019.

At 31 March 2016 the general fund balance was £8.9m its highest level for several years. However, since then the balance has been utilised resulting in a balance at 31 March 2018 of £6.9m. Whilst this is currently above the Council's target level, projections by the Council to 31 March 2019 suggest the balance could be as low as £3.6m. This recent trend of reduction in the general fund balance is unsustainable and increases the need for the Council to deliver recurring savings. This is recognised as a risk by the S151 Officer and the Council and there is an acceptance that over the longer term the budgets need to provide for the replenishing of the reserves.

Similarly the Council's other reserves have been decreasing through planned usage and changes in accounting treatment of one reserve. Earmarked reserves have reduced from £16m at 31 March 2016 to a forecasted £6.5m at 31 March 2019. Over the same period schools balances have reduced from £2.5m to a forecast of £1m as expected by the reduction in the delegated schools budget.

Continued careful consideration of reserves balances and how they might be used to support financial plans is particularly important as it is not sustainable to rely on reserves to support ongoing costs of demand led Care / Children's services. Once reserves have been depleted, other sources of funds or efficiencies must be identified.

The Executive's resolution to "make sufficient savings in 2019/20 to balance the revenue budget without resorting to the use of general reserves and to ensure that the required savings in 2019/20 are achievable." is therefore a welcomed statement.

Early estimates for 2019/20 after allowing for a 5% increase in Council Tax indicate a funding gap of £5m. Services have been asked to identify budget savings which would generate the £5m of savings, and budget workshops held over the summer with Heads of Service have identified potential savings of £3.747m. Identified savings will need to be realised with minimal slippage, as any delay in implementation will ultimately have an adverse effect on diminishing General Fund balances.

The financial audit fee for 2017-18 is expected to be in accordance with the agreed fee set out in the Annual Audit Plan.

Yours sincerely

Ian Howse
For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales

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 residual waste projects and any mitigating action needed to manage these costs. <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</p>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
		<p>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.
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</p>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
		<p>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’ with joint priorities co-produced by partners and with citizens to address agreed challenges. <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;

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing tailored community outreach for those who face multiple barriers to accessing public services and work; • 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	<p><u>Waste Management in Wales: Municipal Recycling</u></p>	<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 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>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
		<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> <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>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
November 2018	<u>Provision of Local Government Services to Rural Communities: Community Asset Transfer</u>	<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> <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.

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
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 • 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>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify staff who have a role in analysing and managing data to remove duplication and free up resources to build and develop capacity in data usage; and • 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	<u>Waste Management in Wales - Preventing waste</u>	<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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) revisits the relative priority it gives to recycling and waste prevention as part of its review of Towards Zero Waste; b) sets out clearly the expectations on different organisations and sectors for waste prevention; and 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>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</p>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
		<p>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>

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