



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

Annual Improvement Report

Torfaen County Borough Council

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This Annual Improvement Report has been prepared on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales by Gareth Jones and Non Jenkins under the direction of Huw Rees.

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

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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 Torfaen County Borough Council (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

- 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.

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

Description of the work carried out since the last Annual Improvement Report, including that of the relevant regulators, where relevant

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
March 2019	<p>Assurance and Risk Assessment</p> <p>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 plan at the Council for 2019-20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the delivery of the T22 Programme. This review will consider the extent to which the Council's T22 Transformation programme is delivering its objectives; • Follow-up review of the Shared Resource Service (SRS). This review will follow up on the recommendations made by the Auditor General in his 2015 report reviewing the SRS. The review will be carried out across the four local councils that are members of the SRS; and • A review of the Council's Financial Sustainability. A project common to all local councils that will assess financial sustainability in light of current and anticipated future challenges. 	Not applicable

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
March 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 when taking the step of developing a new model for delivering adult social care services based on patch-based teams to meet the following wellbeing objective: redesigning adult services</p> <p>Weblink to Wales Audit Office report: <u>English</u> <u>Welsh</u></p>	<p>In taking this step and acting in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being Act, the Council has a number of positive examples of how it has taken account of the sustainable development principle, particularly in prevention and involvement. However, the Council recognises that there is more to do to consistently embed all five ways of working and could strengthen its integration both within the Council and with external partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by developing its patch-based teams, the Council is better placed to meet people's short-term needs and has a good understanding of the potential longer-term benefits but there are opportunities to take greater account of wider societal changes that may affect longer-term need; • prevention is at the heart of the step and evidence from service users shows that this is happening. The Council is proactively considering how it can demonstrate the effectiveness of its preventative approach; • the Council recognises the need to further develop its approach to integration. The Council does not currently fully consider how this step contributes to its other well-being objectives and the health board's objectives; 	<p>We did not make any proposals for improvement in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (WFG Act) examinations report but did highlight some areas of development which the Council plans to act on.</p>

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patch based teams collaborate well to deliver the vision but the Council could further extend collaboration internally and consider how it could impact on other bodies' well-being objectives; • the Council's approach to involvement is well developed and contributed effectively to the redesign. The Council could further develop its service user engagement to inform the design and delivery of services. 	
1 October 2018	<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; • we are satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and • our work to date on certification of grant claims and returns has not identified significant issues that would impact on the 2017-18 accounts or key financial systems. 	None

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
Local risk-based performance audit			
January 2019	<p>Waste Service follow up review Follow up on the Council's progress in addressing the proposals for improvement made in our 'Waste Management Follow-up Review' issued in June 2015.</p> <p>Weblink to Wales Audit Office report English Welsh</p>	<p>The Council has made slow progress in addressing our proposals for improvement and some significant issues remain, but performance has improved and there is renewed pace and focus on achieving sustainable improvements in the waste service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council has been slow to develop an integrated waste strategy, but this has not prevented improvements in performance in the short term; • Scrutiny now has greater engagement in developing the waste service, however, scrutiny's impact can be further strengthened through more effective challenge; • the Council now more actively promotes its service standards; • workforce planning and staff training are improving, working practices are now more consistent and the Council is attempting to reduce its reliance on agency staff; • the Council introduced a service level agreement for routine maintenance between Fleet and Waste services in July 2018; • the Council has improved the information it provides to members on the performance of contracts; 	<p>None</p> <p>Whilst this follow-up report does not include any further proposals for improvement, the report identified remaining significant issues.</p> <p>These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarify the strategic direction of the waste service to enable sustainable improved outcomes for waste management; • improve the monitoring and management of waste service level risks; • strengthen accountability and scrutiny challenge.

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council has not yet made the necessary improvements to the performance management arrangements for waste operatives; • the Council now uses a wider range of communication methods about the waste service to inform residents; • the Council has made progress in strengthening its strategic risk management arrangements for the Waste service but needs to ensure that operational risks are effectively managed; and • the Council has not adequately monitored its progress in addressing our 2015 proposals for improvement. 	
May 2019	<p>Thematic Review – Service User Perspective</p> <p>A service user review focussed on food waste recycling in the Trevethin area of the County Borough. The review sought to understand what is driving lower food recycling rates in that community.</p>	<p>Service users are satisfied with the food waste service, however, the Council could use residents’ views to further explore opportunities to increase participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current service users consider that the Council has designed its food waste service with their needs in mind but participation across different communities varies greatly. • Current users are generally satisfied with the quality of and access to the service but made suggestions to improve it. • Service users are satisfied with the Council’s communication with them but some did not 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council should take account of the age profile and differing needs of specific groups of residents as it designs interventions to help increase food waste participation. 2. The Council should ensure its future interventions around food waste recycling focus on minimising food waste as well as measures to increase participation. 3. When considering future service changes, such as changes to food waste bags, the Council should ensure

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
		<p>think that the Council will improve the food waste service.</p>	<p>that residents are fully engaged in helping to understand and design this change.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The Council should communicate its decision to place Brown caddies on their side after collection to residents. 5. The Council should monitor the way in which Brown caddies are left after collection to ensure this meets its service standard. 6. The Council should consider residents' suggested improvements to the food waste service. 7. The Council should ensure that it targets communication of its Assisted Collection Service to those who are likely to be eligible. 8. The Council should explore if the residents' suggested improvements to communication around the food waste service, would result in greater participation. 9. The Council should explore how to improve residents' ability to contact the waste service easily including increasing awareness of the Torfaen App.

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
July 2019	<p>Review of the Council's Transformation Programme's (T22) governance arrangements Review to provide assurance that the Council's governance arrangements are efficiently and effectively supporting the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.</p>	<p>Improved governance arrangements as well as clear commitment and energy supports a renewed T22 Programme although some checks and balances need strengthening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council's priorities for transformation are clear and align with its corporate and medium term financial plans, and this can become stronger as it agrees its future operating model; • the Council has strengthened the governance arrangements for the renewed (Phase 2) T22 Programme and generally understands roles and responsibilities, but it needs to clarify Scrutiny's involvement and the Head of Procurement's and Monitoring Officer's roles; • the Council's senior leaders have provided considerable commitment and energy to refocus the Programme in the past six months, and have identified it needs greater programme management capacity; and • the Council has not fully developed its approach to evaluating the effectiveness of its T22 governance arrangements. 	<p>P1 To strengthen the T22 Programme governance arrangements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarifying the involvement of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Scrutiny; – Procurement; and – Legal advice / Monitoring Officer • strengthening shared understanding between the Programme Board and Cabinet (the Sponsoring Group) on timescales for key T22 Programme decisions; • establishing a robust approach to reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Programme's governance arrangements.

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
Improvement planning and reporting			
April 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			
No reviews by inspection and regulation bodies have taken place during the time period covered in this report			

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

Reference TCBC/JM/GTR

Date 1 October 2018

Pages 1 of 3

Ms Alison Ward
Chief Executive
Torfaen County Borough Council
Civic Centre
Pontypool
NP4 6YB

Dear Alison

Annual Audit Letter – Torfaen County Borough Council 2017-18

This letter summarises the key messages arising from our statutory responsibilities under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and our 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 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 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 we 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 27 June 2018 we issued an unqualified audit opinion on the accounting statements confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council's financial position and transactions. Our report is contained within the Statement of Accounts. The key matters arising from the accounts audit were reported to members of the Audit Committee in our Audit of Financial Statements report on the 13 June 2018.

- The Council continues to demonstrate effective arrangements in the preparation of its financial statements, enabling us to conclude our audit on 27 June 2018, significantly ahead of the statutory deadline of 30 September. The Council has continued to provide good quality draft financial statements and accompanying working papers for audit. These were available for us to commence our audit fieldwork on 14 May 2018.
- All misstatements identified during the course of our audit of the financial statements were corrected by management.
- We identified a correction to the Council's Income and Expenditure Account of £10.445 million due to the transfer of the SRS pensions' assets and liabilities being transferred out of the Council's financial statements.
- We identified a correction of £80,664 in relation to schools expenditure which had not been accrued.
- We identified that a farm asset with a value of £611,000 had been incorrectly excluded from the revaluations table. This impacted upon the Property, Plant and Equipment table and flowed through to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- We identified one recommendation in relation to internal controls where journals below £200,000 are not always subject to review. We highlighted to those charged with governance the risk that inappropriate or erroneous journals below £200,000 could be processed and impact on the financial statements.
- As part of our work, we also undertook our audit of the financial statements of Greater Gwent Pension Fund and no significant issues were identified.

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

Our 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.

We issued a certificate confirming that the audit of the accounts has been completed on 27 June 2018.

Our work to date on certification of grant claims and returns has not identified significant issues that would impact on the 2017-18 accounts or key financial systems.

A more detailed report on our grant certification work will follow in January 2019 once this year's programme of certification work is complete.

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

Yours sincerely,

Grant Thornton UK LLP

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Grant Thornton UK LLP 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 Annual Improvement Report

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.

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
		<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
		<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

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
		<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 resources to build and develop capacity in data usage; and

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
		<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	<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.

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

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
		<p>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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – review the Development Management Procedure Order 2012 and update the engagement and involvement standards for local planning authorities. <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</p>

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

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		<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; • 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;

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales

Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru
24 Heol y Gadeirlan
Caerdydd CF11 9LJ

Ffôn: 029 2032 0500

Ffacs: 029 2032 0600

Ffôn testun: 029 2032 0660

E-bost: post@archwilio.cymru

Gwefan: www.archwilio.cymru