



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Annual Improvement Report 2014-15

Pembrokeshire County Council

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This Annual Improvement Report has been prepared on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales by Colin Davies and Jeremy Evans under the direction of Jane Holownia.

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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.

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Summary report

Purpose of this report

- 1 Each year, the Auditor General is required to audit the improvement planning and reporting arrangements of Welsh councils, fire and rescue authorities and national park authorities, and to assess whether each authority will meet statutory continuous improvement duties¹. This work has been undertaken on behalf of the Auditor General by staff of the Wales Audit Office. **Appendix 1** provides more information about the Auditor General's powers and duties in local government.
- 2 In addition, the Auditor General undertakes an in-depth corporate assessment at each authority on a cyclical basis (currently at least once every four years). In the intervening years, in addition to audits of improvement planning and reporting, the Wales Audit Office, on behalf of the Auditor General, will keep track of developments and focus further assessment work on a number of key themes, developed in discussion with each authority.
- 3 This Annual Improvement Report (AIR) summarises the audit work undertaken at Pembrokeshire County Council (the Council) since the last such report was published in July 2014. This report also includes a summary of the key findings from reports issued by 'relevant regulators', namely: the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW); Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (Estyn); and the Welsh Language Commissioner (WLC). Nonetheless, this report does not represent a comprehensive review of all the Council's arrangements or services. The conclusions in this report are based on the work carried out at the Council by relevant external review bodies and, unless stated otherwise, reflect the situation at the point in time that such work was concluded.
- 4 Taking into consideration the work carried out during 2014-15, the Auditor General will state in this report whether he believes that the Council is likely to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2015-16.
- 5 This statement should not be seen as a definitive diagnosis of organisational health or as a prediction of future success. Rather, it should be viewed as providing an opinion on the extent to which the arrangements currently in place are reasonably sound insofar as can be ascertained from the work carried out.
- 6 We want to find out if this report gives you the information you need and whether it is easy to understand. You can let us know your views by e-mailing us at info@audit.wales or writing to us at 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ.

¹ Duties and requirements contained within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure).

2014-15 performance audit work

- 7 In determining the breadth of work undertaken during the year, we considered the extent of accumulated audit and inspection knowledge as well as other available sources of information including the Council's own mechanisms for review and evaluation. For 2014-15, we undertook improvement assessment work under three themes: use of resources; governance; and performance.
- 8 The work carried out since the last AIR, including that of the 'relevant regulators', is set out below:

Project name	Brief description
Wales Audit Office Financial Planning Assessment	Review of the Council's financial position and how it is budgeting and delivering on required savings.
Estyn – Local Authority Education Service	Monitoring visit.
Wales Audit Office Annual 'Improvement Plan' Audit	Review of the Council's published plans for delivering on improvement objectives.
CSSIW Annual Report	Annual Review of the Council's social services function.
Estyn – Community Learning Partnership	Review of Pembrokeshire's Community Learning Partnership.
Wales Audit Office Annual 'Assessment of Performance' Audit	Review of the Council's published performance assessment, including testing and validation of performance information.
Estyn – Pupil Referral Visit	Monitoring visit.
Delivering with Less – the Impact on Environmental Health Services and citizens	The first in a series of studies looking at how councils are managing to deliver with less, this study considers the impact of cuts in resources on the ability of council environmental health services to deliver their statutory obligations.
Children's Safeguarding	A review of the Council's assurance and accountability arrangements for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are being adhered to.
Review of Partnership working	Review how the Council assesses the benefits of a partnership for its citizens and itself.
Performance Assessment	To review whether the Council's public reporting of its performance is fair and balanced.
WLC	Review of the Council's approach to the Welsh language.

The Council delivered improvement in its priority areas during 2014-2015 but it has been distracted by governance challenges which if unaddressed have the potential to limit the Council's ability to secure improvement in the coming year

- 9 Based on, and limited to, the work carried out by the Wales Audit Office and relevant regulators, the Auditor General believes that the Council faces governance challenges which have the potential to limit the Council's ability to secure improvement in the coming year. The Auditor General has reached this conclusion because:
- a Despite the increasing financial pressures, there have been improvements in the Council's priority areas, including waste management, environmental health, safeguarding, social services and education.
 - b Whilst the Council has generally robust financial management arrangements, in September 2014 we received a formal objection to the accounting treatment for Cleddau Bridge which has delayed our ability to give an audit opinion on the 2013-14 accounts.
 - c Following a public interest report issued by the Appointed Auditor in January 2014, the Council negotiated a voluntary severance package for its Chief Executive; the process highlighted continued issues with governance and a lack of openness and transparency.

Headlines – a summary of key findings

- 10 The table below summarises the key findings of our follow-up and monitoring work as well as reports issued since the last AIR by the Wales Audit Office, the CSSIW, Estyn and the WLC.

Audit of accounts	In September 2014, we received a formal objection to the accounting treatment for Cleddau Bridge. The legal and accounting considerations required by us and the Council have delayed our ability to give an audit opinion on the 2013-14 accounts (see Appendix 4).
Improvement planning and reporting audits	We issued audit certificates stating that the Council had discharged its duties under the Measure (see Appendices 2 and 3).

<p>Use of resources</p>	<p>The Council has generally robust, if rather traditional, financial management arrangements that have served it well, and it is developing a longer-term strategic view although members are not sufficiently involved in the planning and monitoring of the cost reduction/income generation plans.</p> <p>Wales Audit Office, December 2014</p> <p>The Council is generally delivering environmental health services at above-minimum levels and stakeholders are mostly positive about the Council's management of services, despite significant cuts in resources. The Council will find it difficult to take on new statutory duties that protect the public and the environment.</p> <p>Wales Audit Office, December 2014</p>
<p>Governance</p>	<p>Following a public interest report issued by the Appointed Auditor in January 2014, the Council negotiated a voluntary severance package for its Chief Executive; the process highlighted continued issues with governance and a lack of openness and transparency.</p> <p>The Council's governance, accountability and management arrangements for overseeing safeguarding responsibilities for children are mainly fit for purpose and effectively managed, although there are opportunities to further improve policy, process and training in relation to whistleblowing.</p> <p>Wales Audit Office, December 2014</p> <p>The Council has appropriate governance arrangements in place to deliver its 21st Century Schools programme; whilst there has been slippage, external reviews indicate a good level of confidence in the Council's ability to deliver successful outcomes.</p> <p>The Council is reviewing and improving its approach to business risk management, but Audit Committee is not yet fully discharging its risk management responsibilities.</p>
<p>Performance</p>	<p>Estyn considers that the local authority is no longer in need of special measures.</p> <p>Estyn, Monitoring Report Pembrokeshire County Council 2014, June 2014</p> <p>Estyn judged the Pembrokeshire Adult Community Learning Partnership's current performance as good, and that its prospects for improvement were adequate.</p> <p>Estyn, Inspection Report Pembrokeshire Adult Community Learning Partnership, November 2014</p>

Performance

Estyn decided that the Pembrokeshire Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) had made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in March 2012, to enable it to be removed from the list of PRUs requiring significant improvement.

Estyn, Monitoring Visit Pembrokeshire Pupil Referral Unit 2014, December 2014

Whilst the Council has supported schemes to improve the viability and vitality of its six main towns, the lack of useful measures make it difficult for the Council to accurately evaluate its successes.

Wales Audit Office, Performance Assessment, January 2015

The Council has delivered on its ambitions for the environment by continuing to exceed national targets for the proportion of waste recycled and the amount of waste sent to landfill.

Wales Audit Office, Performance Assessment, January 2015

There has been sustained improvement in the Council's social services throughout the year helping it make progress towards achieving its ambition of delivering efficient and effective services to people based on their needs and wishes.

CSSIW, Performance Evaluation Report 2013-2014, October 2014

The Council's performance in administering Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) is poor.

The Council has established a working group to fulfil its duties under the 'More than Words' framework and successfully piloted a new Welsh language training package.

WLC, February 2015

Recommendations

- 11 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:
 - a 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;
 - b make formal recommendations for improvement – if a formal recommendation is made, the Council must prepare a response to that recommendation within 30 working days;
 - c conduct a special inspection and publish a report and make recommendations; and
 - d recommend to ministers of the Welsh Government that they intervene in some way.
- 12 During the course of the year, the Auditor General did not make any formal recommendations. However, lower-priority issues, known as proposals for improvement, are contained in our other reports but may be referred to later on in this report. We will continue to monitor proposals for improvement during the course of our improvement assessment work.
- 13 We make no new recommendations in this report as we have undertaken a full corporate assessment at the Council during April 2015. We will report the findings of this work in a corporate assessment report and should our work indicate the need, this report will include recommendations and proposals for improvement.
- 14 The Auditor General also makes recommendations that may be relevant to councils in his local government national reports. A list of relevant recommendations contained in reports issued in 2014-15 can be found in [Appendix 5](#).
- 15 Recommendations made by the CSSIW, Estyn and the WLC during the course of the year are set out below.

Recommendations

CSSIW – none

Estyn – Inspection of Pembrokeshire Adult Community Learning Network

- R1 Improve the planning and delivery of basic skills provision to make sure that the level of provision reflects the scale of basic skills need in the county and that learners successfully complete their courses at least in line with the national comparator.
- R2 Improve strategic planning to make sure that the network can measure progress against its strategic priorities.
- R3 Improve the use of benchmarking information to identify strengths and areas for improvement at sector subject area level, reduce the amount of provision recorded as 'other' or 'level unknown', and put improvement targets in place.
- R4 Improve quality development planning to identify specific actions for improvement and set clear timescales for monitoring progress.
- R5 Improve the working of the strategic group to manage and monitor the progress made against the strategic priorities of the network and the network's key areas for improvement.

WLC – none

Detailed report



Use of resources

Audit of the Council's accounts

- 16 In September 2014, we received a formal objection to the accounting treatment for Cleddau Bridge. The legal and accounting considerations required by us and the Council has delayed our ability to give an audit opinion on the 2013-14 accounts.
- 17 We have recently agreed a resolution to the issues raised and a report was presented and discussed at the Corporate Governance Committee on 6 July 2015. The report and updated accounts were approved at the meeting and an unqualified opinion, with an emphasis of matter paragraph, was provided on the accounts. The Annual Audit letter will follow in the autumn.

The Council has generally robust, if rather traditional, financial management arrangements that have served it well, and it is developing a longer-term strategic view although members are not sufficiently involved in the planning and monitoring of the cost reduction/income generation plans

- 18 The Council has a good track record in delivering identified cost reduction measures within year against the planned actions it approved, although it did not report against specific savings proposals making it difficult to identify areas that achieved the cost reduction targets and those that did not.
- 19 The Council's corporate framework for financial planning has served it well, although links between financial plans and improvement plans could be clearer; the Council is now extending its approach providing a more strategic view better suited to the escalating financial challenges that it faces.
- 20 The Council's financial management and control arrangements are being effectively managed, although a number of issues have arisen this year which delayed our ability to sign off the accounts. We will undertake further work in this area in 2015.
- 21 The Council's financial governance arrangements to review and challenge performance are adequate but links between financial and service performance are not clear. This makes it difficult to assess the value for money being provided by the Council's services.
- 22 Members are not involved enough in monitoring progress towards achieving planned cost reductions. They are also not provided with enough information about poorly performing areas limiting their ability to challenge services. However, the Council's current savings plans for 2014-15 are fit for purpose and are generally being effectively managed.
- 23 The Council has efficiency savings plans in place for 2015-16 and 2016-17 but new funding cuts have placed additional pressure to identify further savings and some difficult decisions will need to be made.

The Council is generally delivering environmental health services at above-minimum levels and stakeholders are mostly positive about the Council's management of services, despite significant cuts in resources; however, the Council will find it difficult to take on new statutory duties that protect the public and the environment

- 24 Councils have many statutory environmental health duties but spending is not being protected during the current period of financial austerity, which is making it more difficult for the service to deliver national strategic priorities.
- 25 The Council is delivering most of its environmental health services at above-minimum levels as judged against the best practice standards despite the fact that it has since 2011-12, made significant cuts in both environmental health budgets and staff numbers. New environmental health statutory duties are being introduced which the Council will find difficult to deliver.
- 26 A staff survey indicates that respondents are mostly positive about the current standard of environmental health service but there is a low awareness of current performance or future plans amongst citizens.

Governance

Following a public interest report issued by the Appointed Auditor in January 2014, the Council negotiated a voluntary severance package for its Chief Executive; the process highlighted continued issues with governance and a lack of openness and transparency

- 27 A voluntary severance package for the Chief Executive was negotiated by the Leader at the same time that a Disciplinary Investigation Committee was set up to investigate 'all matters of conduct, trust and confidence in the Chief Executive'. The package initially included sums calculated on a salary including the pension fund opt out. The Council's external legal advice indicated that the Chief Executive was contractually entitled to these payments and not including them in the severance package could leave the Council vulnerable to further legal action. The package was approved by full Council after a lengthy debate in private. Information was only provided to members at the meeting; in some cases, the information was only in verbal form.
- 28 The Appointed Auditor issued an advisory notice as in his view the element of the severance package relating to the pension opt out was unlawful. The Council then excluded this element (£53,000) from the severance package and the Chief Executive left the Council's employment at the end of October 2014.
- 29 The Council withheld information about the Chief Executive's company car on the grounds that the information was personal. Whilst acknowledging this view, the Information Commissioner determined that the information should be released as the need for transparent public disclosure was greater.
- 30 Officers also withheld information from members in a number of other areas. Whilst, as officers state, withholding information provides officers with some assurance that the information will not get inappropriately released into the public domain by members, there are formal mechanisms available to hold members to account for inappropriate behaviour such as this. The Council's approach inhibits members' ability to undertake their challenge role and limits their ability to take properly informed decisions, putting at risk the Council's ability to secure improvement.

The Council's governance, accountability and management arrangements for overseeing safeguarding responsibilities for children are mainly fit for purpose and effectively managed, although there are opportunities to further improve policy, process and training in relation to whistleblowing

- 31 The governance, accountability and management arrangements for overseeing whether the Council is meeting its safeguarding responsibilities to children are fit for purpose and effectively managed, although Audit Committee could do more to signpost service-based risks to scrutiny committees.
- 32 The Council's arrangements for monitoring and evaluating its safeguarding responsibilities to children are mainly fit for purpose and effectively managed. The Council also has effective processes to identify learning and enable it to act on this to drive improvements in its safeguarding arrangements. Internal Audit selects audit areas using a risk-based model. Several safeguarding topics continue to be included in its work programme annually. The outputs from Internal Audit reviews are reported to the Audit Committee. However, these are not sent on to overview and scrutiny committees for more specialist challenge. In general, scrutiny committees are not aware of the Internal Audit work programme and therefore unable to take it into account as they develop their forward work programmes.
- 33 Whistleblowing arrangements are generally sound, but some weaknesses in policy, process and training need to be addressed. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy is well structured, concise and supportive. However, in some places, the policy would benefit from greater clarity and additional detail; for example, clarifying the procedure for investigations and being explicit about raising concerns rather than ignoring wrongdoing. The Council is clearly committed to ensuring that its whistleblowing arrangements work well, the policy provides reassurance to individuals, and clear and effective guidance is available to those who need it. However, neither the arrangements nor the trends/outcomes have been reported to members or subjected to member challenge and scrutiny.
- 34 There are weaknesses in the training provision for whistleblowing and whilst the Council has made the Whistleblowing Policy available on the intranet and publicised it through other means, it has not followed this up to check awareness and provide training where necessary.

The Council has appropriate governance arrangements in place to deliver its 21st Century Schools programme; whilst there has been slippage, external reviews indicate a good level of confidence in the Council's ability to deliver successful outcomes

- 35 The Council, along with other councils in Wales, has a large and complex programme to improve its school buildings. The aim is to improve the infrastructure and create a better learning environment fit for the 21st century. It is hoped that this in turn improves attendance and attainment of students. This programme runs alongside the Council's schools reorganisation programme. The governance model for these two programmes is appropriately different. Full Council takes the decisions relating to schools reorganisation, whilst a formal programme management structure provides the governance for the 21st Century Schools programme.
- 36 The programme is governed effectively with senior officer and member involvement. They are supported by a range of knowledgeable officers from across the Council, all of whom are committed to a successful outcome.
- 37 Despite the effective management, the programme of work has slipped by about 12 months. This is due to a number of factors not all within the Council's control. For example, the linkages with schools reorganisation and the dependency on the Welsh Government for business case approval. The slippage has not yet meant that elements of the programme have had to be abandoned, but the Welsh Government has indicated a need to draw the funding against an agreed schedule going forward.
- 38 The Council has had two Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway delivery confidence reviews; the last was in November 2014. This review rated the Council as amber/green, indicating that 'successful delivery appears probable however constant attention will be needed to ensure risks do not materialise into major issues threatening delivery'. The review team also stated that 'a developing relationship between the Authority and Welsh Government is encouraging and demonstrating a growing maturity in approach and willingness to find solutions to emergent challenges. Even the most complex of the Phase 1 Projects appears to be in good shape and there is no reason to suspect that successful delivery should not be achieved. The success to date is a credit to a strong and motivated Pembrokeshire Team.'
- 39 Phase 2 projects are at an earlier stage and recent Council decisions have moved this group of projects forward so that their detailed business cases can be considered by the Welsh Government.

The Council is reviewing and improving its approach to business risk management, but Audit Committee is not yet fully discharging its risk management responsibilities

- 40 The Council's Business Risk Strategy was approved by Audit Committee in 2013; however, this strategy is being updated to strengthen the risk management framework and to establish an approved view of the acceptable level of risk. To drive the changes, the Council has set up a business risk management action plan and assigned responsibilities to officers. The Council has also appointed a qualified Business Risk Manager to provide additional expertise and capacity.
- 41 A Corporate Risk Management Group is in place and training for this group has taken place. This group is attended by representatives from each department, normally a head of service, and meets quarterly. This group reviews the corporate risk register and feeds questions and actions up to Corporate Management Team and down to departmental managers. In addition, the Cabinet Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services and the Welsh Language now attends the Corporate Risk Management Group, thus providing member oversight of all major risks.
- 42 Whilst there are established processes in place for consideration of corporate and departmental risks, there is an acknowledged need to drive the process down into services to better identify service-level risks and to raise awareness of the need for effective risk management throughout the Council. To deliver this, an operational risk group has been set up. Members of this group, generally more junior managers, are tasked with championing risk management as a subject and provide departmental support. Members of the operational risk group demonstrated a clear understanding of the revised risk process and their role in championing risk within their service areas.
- 43 A business risk management workshop has been held with Audit Committee; however, Audit Committee is not yet fully discharging its responsibilities in relation to risk management as it is not reviewing the corporate risk register regularly enough and is not challenging its content or identifying other risk areas for inclusion. There are also no clear mechanisms in place to inform overview and scrutiny committees of risks that affect their service area; this again limits their ability to consider risk areas as they develop their forward work programmes. The Council is taking this forward as a priority action.

Performance

Estyn considers that the local authority's education service is no longer in need of special measures

- 44 In June 2014, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn) undertook a follow-up review of the progress the Council had made since its last visit. The following paragraphs summarise the Estyn letter.
- 45 Estyn state that since October 2012, the Council has made excellent progress to transform arrangements for safeguarding in all its education services and schools. The strong leadership and clear vision of key elected members and senior officers ensure that the needs of children and young people are central to the Council's now robust safeguarding arrangements.
- 46 The Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides good support and challenge to the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding and to officers. The committee has overseen the establishment of a task and finish group to look at safe recruitment. This is enabling the Council to take a lead role in a Welsh Local Government Association working group to produce good practice guidance on safe recruitment for use by other local councils across Wales.
- 47 The Council's commitment to the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board provides helpful opportunities for the Council to compare its safeguarding practice with others across the region through peer challenge and the use of benchmarks. The Council has also recently established a junior Local Safeguarding Children's Board. This is giving children and young people, including those who are vulnerable, a greater say in issues of particular concern to them. The voice of children is highly valued within the Council and the Council has formally adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, only the second council in Wales to do so.
- 48 After the inspection in 2012 the Council, in collaboration with partners across the region, developed a coherent strategy to improve outcomes for learners in its schools. There is now a culture of openness and transparency between the Council and its schools, and a greater willingness to challenge and be challenged.
- 49 The Council has increasingly rigorous arrangements to hold schools to account for improvement and senior officers appropriately recognise that the quality of teaching must improve in many schools. Officers have introduced a range of actions to challenge and support senior leaders and classroom teachers.
- 50 Within the last year, the Council has redefined its principles for school reorganisation; this has led to a more robust evidence-based rationale for change enabling the Council to reach informed conclusions about the quality of provision and the need to add, remove or relocate school places. Elected members and senior officers have been taking difficult decisions that have resulted in a number of school organisation consultations, and approval for school amalgamations, closures, and the building of new schools.

- 51 Through the revision of its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, the Council's strategy to secure sufficient provision for Welsh-medium education in the long term is more robust. Progress has been made in the primary sector but generally, the implementation of the strategy has been slower in the secondary sector.
- 52 There has been significant improvement in the effectiveness of scrutiny by elected members in both the Safeguarding Committee and the Children and Families Committee. Members bring a robust challenge to the Leader and the Cabinet and hold them to account well. They are well informed and rigorous in their questioning of officers and executive members. Meetings are more focused, with fewer presentations and more time for analysis and debate.
- 53 The work of the central Partnership and Scrutiny support team brings a clear and consistent approach to all corporate and partnership planning. The single integrated plan has been reviewed and partnership activity is now more focused. As a result, partnership work concentrates appropriately on four areas where organisations can have the greatest impact by working together; for example, reducing the proportion of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).
- 54 There is now a clear hierarchy of plans from the Local Service Board's single integrated plan, through the Council's improvement plan, service improvement plans and team plans. The single integrated plan also aligns well with the regional education consortium business plan. These plans provide a coherent structure for setting objectives and targets that contribute to the new performance management system for monitoring progress. Individual performance appraisal objectives link well to the objectives outlined in service improvement plans. However, team plans do not always contain suitable measurable targets and success criteria.
- 55 The Council has started a new annual cycle of self-evaluation and has drafted a useful evaluation of all aspects of education services for children and young people. Even in its current draft form, it is a clear improvement on previous reports that the Council produced; however, the Council recognises the need for the report to be refined further, including taking account of the views of stakeholders, in the next phase of its development.

Estyn judged the Pembrokeshire Adult Community Learning Partnership's current performance as good, and that its prospects for improvement were adequate

- 56 Estyn undertook a review of Pembrokeshire's Adult Community Learning Partnership's performance in November 2014. The following paragraphs summarise its work.
- 57 The current performance of the Pembrokeshire Learning Network is good because:
- a Learners in Pembrokeshire achieve better success rates than adult community learners in other parts of Wales.
 - b Many learners improve their health and well-being. Almost all learners gain confidence as a result of taking part in learning. They benefit from the mental stimulation. Almost all learners are self-motivated, attend well and contribute positively in class.
 - c The learning network addresses most local and national priorities well.
 - d Teaching is good.
- 58 However, despite an upward trend in the rates that learners successfully achieve their adult basic education qualifications, the overall success rate is below the national comparator. The network does not have a good enough understanding of the scale of basic skills need in the county. Eleven per cent of working age adults in Pembrokeshire have no qualifications. Provision for adult basic education and essential skills has increased over the last three years, to eight per cent of provision, but is still too small a proportion of overall delivery.
- 59 The Pembrokeshire Learning Network Strategic Group, through its strategic plan, sets an effective vision and direction for the network.
- a The network takes good account of learners' views through Learner Voice Wales and a variety of other processes.
 - b The network's curriculum group works well, at operational level, to share partners' proposed timetables and reduce duplication. Learning Pembrokeshire's centre co-ordinators work well to review classroom sizes and make decisions on their continued viability.
- 60 However, the following issues have been identified, which limit the network's ability to improve:
- a The network's strategic plan lacks a focus on specific targets. As a result, the network cannot robustly measure progress in order to determine how well it has achieved its objectives. The network's strategic group does not manage and monitor the progress made against the priorities of the network closely enough.

- b Managers do not use benchmarking information well enough to challenge performance at programme level. As a result, managers do not identify strengths and areas for improvement at programme level well enough or put improvement targets in place.
- c The quality development plan is not clear enough on the specific actions required to enable improvement and the required timescales for reviewing the action. The strategic group does not review progress against key areas for improvement well enough.

Estyn decided that the Pembrokeshire Pupil Referral Unit had made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in March 2012, to enable it to be removed from the list of pupil referral units requiring significant improvement

- 61 In December 2014, Estyn undertook a follow-up review of the Pembrokeshire Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). The following paragraphs summarise its findings.
- 62 The PRU has made very good progress in improving its analysis of performance data, enabling it to plan with more rigour. This performance data is used effectively in key stages 1, 2 and 3; however, targets for pupils in key stage 4 are less detailed and do not contain enough information concerning strategies to secure the desired improvements.
- 63 Attendance and exclusion data is collected and used to determine appropriate support strategies for individual pupils. Managers analyse this data carefully to identify patterns and inform planning. However, overall attendance at key stage 4 is 70 per cent, which is well below the rate expected.
- 64 The PRU has taken valuable steps to support individual pupils' emotional needs. For example, it seeks information on pupils' attitudes towards themselves and their school, and uses this information to plan behaviour management interventions.
- 65 Managers now present a wider range of data to the management committee. This includes data on attendance, exclusions and academic performance. The data identifies the performance of groups of pupils including those eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. The management committee uses this data to provide appropriate challenge for managers.
- 66 Since the Estyn monitoring visit in July 2013, there have been significant changes at a strategic level in relation to the PRU. The Council involved the management committee in planning the strategic direction and vision for the PRU. As a result, the committee members understand their role and support the vision for the service. This new strategic direction includes an appropriate focus on providing fast-track provision and the reintegration of pupils into mainstream schools.

- 67 The management committee meets regularly and has appropriate representation. This includes elected members, head teachers, Council officers and parent representation. The committee has agreed a new school improvement plan that identifies appropriate priorities for development. However, there is not enough focus on setting targets to improve overall pupil standards. The plan identifies the actions to be taken to secure the planned improvements, resources to be allocated, appropriate timescales for their delivery and clear success criteria.
- 68 The subcommittees receive useful and detailed reports from each of the provisions that make up the PRU. Members of the committee scrutinise these reports and are beginning to provide appropriate challenge to managers. However, there has been insufficient focus on improving standards and the attendance of learners at key stage 4.
- 69 Since the Estyn monitoring visit in July 2013, the Council has made good progress in providing all pupils with access to accommodation of good quality. The Council has revised its strategy in relation to the PRU. As a result, the PRU has moved into refurbished accommodation on the Neyland site. The facilities, décor and standard of accommodation have improved considerably. Each of the classrooms and all circulation areas have been decorated and carpeted to a high quality. The site is secure and is well maintained.
- 70 Provision for key stage 4 pupils transferred to a local youth centre in September 2014. Teaching rooms are generally small. The curriculum on offer to the pupils has reduced since the move and the resources available to them are limited. The Council's developing strategy is that the key stage 4 provision will not be in existence from the end of the academic year 2015.

Whilst the Council has supported schemes to improve the viability and vitality of its six main towns, the lack of useful measures make it difficult for the Council to accurately evaluate its successes

- 71 As part of our performance assessment, we looked at the Council's improvement objective aimed at improving the viability and vitality of its six main towns. Part of this assessment was whether the Council's annual public performance report was fair and balanced in the way it portrayed the Council's progress.
- 72 The Council has supported the development of a town team in each of its six main towns. The town teams are partnerships between organisations such as town councils, chambers of trade and the county council. Each town team has developed an action plan focused on improving the built environment of the towns themselves and supporting local shops and encouraging enterprise, using the 'Portas Review'² as a framework. Each of the town teams has made different progress; the Council reports that the Fishguard and Goodwick Town Team has made the most progress. This team has been successful in attracting approximately £350,000 in grants which should help it deliver improvements and raise the area profile through branding initiatives.

2 The Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our high streets, Mary Portas 2011

- 73 Whilst the Council and the town team have common goals, good communication between the partners in the partnerships is vital to their success. We believe that communication should be improved, otherwise barriers can arise which have the potential to limit the success of the initiative.
- 74 The evaluation of progress of the town team is limited by a lack of measures and a clear picture of achieved outcomes. The Council has also not engaged with the town teams to gain a joint view of progress; as such, the Council's public reporting of performance only contains the Council's perspective on the success of these schemes.
- 75 The Council has been effective in gaining a number of European, Welsh Government and Heritage Lottery grants. Heritage Lottery grants require an educational/training component to be included, and for the Haverfordwest Townscape Heritage Initiative, the Council has linked up with Pembrokeshire College. During Phase 1 of the Townscape Heritage Initiative, four students benefited but this has not prevented Pembrokeshire College from working with the Council again on Phase 2 of the project. Again, in this area, the Council has not engaged with Pembrokeshire College to develop a joint evaluation of success and service-based staff need to ensure that they participate fully in the writing of the performance report to ensure that it is accurate.
- 76 The Council has used approximately £50,000 of the external funding to support a scheme to paint the facades of buildings in the county's six main towns. Over two years, this scheme has enabled the painting of 88 buildings, 23 in Pembroke and 18 in Fishguard being the top two locations.
- 77 Overall the Council's programme to enable, facilitate and deliver schemes to improve the viability and vitality of town centres is complex and varied. It is acknowledged that the Council's ambitions are long term and made more difficult as a result of the financial climate. Whilst assessing its own progress in this area as variable, the Council lacks an effective way of measuring progress towards its outcomes and this weakens its evaluation. In turn this, together with the lack of effective engagement with partners and insufficient participation by service-based staff, weakens its public reporting of performance against this improvement objective.

The Council has delivered on its ambitions for the environment by continuing to exceed national targets for the proportion of waste recycled and the amount of waste sent to landfill

- 78 As part of our performance assessment, we looked at the Council's improvement objective aimed at improving the environment. Part of this assessment was whether the Council's annual public performance report was fair and balanced in the way it portrayed the Council's progress.

- 79 The Council has worked hard to improve public participation in recycling. Recognising the need to be proactive to prevent recycling performance declining, the Council has undertaken a range of public contact activities including direct contact and meeting people at public events. The Council has researched the most effective way of achieving a positive impact on the public and the result of this work can be seen in the three to five per cent increase in the number of people recycling food waste.
- 80 The Council reduced the frequency of black bag collections during the year and this in turn has also encouraged people to recycle more although there was also an increase in the volume of black bag waste taken to civic amenity sites.
- 81 The Council has been rationalising the number of recycling bring sites as it has extended its kerb side collections. Its plans for a new civic amenity site in the south-east of the county had been delayed, but the new facility is now operational.
- 82 As a result of its initiatives, the Council only used 72 per cent of its landfill allowance in 2013-14 and the Council is now ranked third in Wales as it reuses, recycles or composts 60 per cent of waste, exceeding the national target of 52 per cent. Continuing with this level of improvement in performance will help the Council avoid any fines imposed by ministers for failing to meet national targets in the future.
- 83 The Council has recently started exporting residual waste by ship to Scandinavia where it is burnt and provides heat for community heating schemes. This scheme has been set up with a framework contract that allows all other councils in Wales to participate if they wish. There is interest from a number of other councils.
- 84 The Council has a good selection of measures to support its waste management performance. These measures and the underlying data are actively used to manage the service and design mechanisms for effective public contact. This data provides the Council with a valuable resource supporting both an accurate evaluation of its progress and a fair and balanced portrayal of performance in this area within its public report.

There has been sustained improvement in the Council's social services throughout the year, helping it make progress towards achieving its ambition of delivering efficient and effective services to people based on their needs and wishes

- 85 The CSSIW published its [Performance Evaluation Report 2013-2014](#) in October 2014. [Paragraphs 86 to 91](#) summarise this report.
- 86 The CSSIW reported that there has been sustained improvement in the Council's social services during the year. The Council has continued to invest in the social services workforce in line with its recruitment and retention strategy for social work.

- 87 People in receipt of adult services continued to benefit from the emphasis on supporting people in the community through the 'care closer to home' project and progress on this is being maintained. Making progress with the integration of health and social services is pivotal to helping people remain independent and getting the most from community based services. There is commitment from all partners to achieve this.
- 88 Children's services have sustained the improvement noted in 2012-13. The investment in the workforce has had the effect of developing professional practice resulting in improved outcomes for children.
- 89 In response to the Welsh Government's strategic framework 'Mwy na Geiriau', 'More than Just Words' the strategic framework for the use of the Welsh language within the social care workforce, the Council increased the availability and flexibility of Welsh language training for staff. It intends that the Welsh language becomes a core component of the care services delivered.
- 90 While there has been considerable investment in the social services workforce over the past two years, the Council has now set savings targets for the next two years of £1.1 million, which equates to a 2.6 per cent reduction in spend. It is confident that this can be achieved through effective and improved commissioning and procurement. The Council is reviewing its high-cost, out-of-county placements and the future shape of its in-house domiciliary care and reablement services.
- 91 The Council demonstrates, both in the director's report and the heads of service reports, that it has a clear vision of how social care is going to be delivered over the coming years. The strategic intentions are described in the single integrated plan, and this translates across to the improvement plan for social services. There is a clear direction and a commitment to ensure that service remodelling will deliver efficient and effective services to people based on their needs and wishes. This ambition – if achieved – will support the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014.

Safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviour

- 92 During 2014-15, the CSSIW undertook an inspection of: Safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviour. The inspection was carried out as part of the CSSIW national thematic inspection programme. The methodology for the review included three and a half days' fieldwork in each local authority across Wales, between January and May 2014. The aim of the national inspection was to assess the quality of care planning across Wales and whether it effectively:
- a supports and protects looked after children and care leavers;
 - b identifies and manages the vulnerabilities and risky behaviour of looked after children and care leavers;

- c promotes rights-based practice and the voice of the child;
 - d promotes improved outcomes for looked after children and care leavers; and
 - e promotes compliance with policy and guidance.
- 93 Findings from the individual local authority inspections and the CSSIW national overview report can be found on the [CSSIW website](#).

The Council's performance in administering discretionary housing payments is poor

- 94 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 heralds a significant change to the administration and distribution of benefits and will have a major impact on many citizens. In April 2011, the UK government embarked on a programme of reform, which will culminate with the phased introduction of universal credit between October 2013 and 2017. A major focus of the UK government's plans are changes to housing benefit, which are aimed at reducing annual expenditure by around £2.3 billion. These changes will mean that millions of households in Great Britain will receive less in benefits, creating hard choices for them about how they use their money and manage financially on a day-to-day basis.
- 95 In January 2015, the Auditor General published his report on how well councils are managing the impact of welfare reform changes on social housing tenants in Wales. His report reviewed the management and use of DHP by councils in Wales and concluded that the allocation, distribution, administration and use of these payments have significant inconsistencies and weaknesses. We followed up this work at individual councils.
- 96 Our review found that the Council does not have appropriate systems in place to support vulnerable customers to apply for DHP. The information on the Council's website regarding DHP, including the Council's housing benefit website pages, is very limited. The search facility on the website did not provide a result for either discretionary housing payments or DHP. Whilst the Council provided us with links to a number of cabinet reports, these only related to some limited service performance data and some DHP applicant priorities. This falls well short of the key information applicants and partners require to enable them to utilise DHP and is not a public-facing document. Given these weaknesses in public information, it is difficult for the Council to ensure it is helping vulnerable people claim.
- 97 There is no published strategy or policy statement setting out how DHP assists people to either reduce the impact of welfare reform changes such as the spare room subsidy or the benefit cap, or help other families in housing need. The Council does review its DHP scheme annually and there is a regular report to members about the progress in implementing the scheme. However, the policy information reviewed by members is limited in coverage and does not afford priority to key groups of applicants in housing need; for example, potentially homeless people.

- 98 The Council has a process in place to monitor the level of expenditure against the money provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, the impact of DHP payments with reference to the level of Council tenant arrears (but not housing association tenancies) and the number of customers it has helped. The Council also monitors how many people have been paid according to the level of priority set in its DHP scheme. However, the Council does not monitor the number of landlords assisted to ensure there is good coverage across all sectors and areas, nor does it report on how long it takes to make a decision for an application.
- 99 The Council had paid out £159,000 of its Department for Work and Pensions allocation of £204,952 by 4 December 2014 and assisted 333 people. This represents 77 per cent of its allocation. However, because of weaknesses in the quality, range and availability of the Council's public information and the monitoring arrangements it has introduced to evaluate its performance on delivering DHP, the Council cannot know whether the payment of DHP is having the right impact.

The Council has established a working group to fulfil its duties under the 'More than Words' framework and successfully piloted a new Welsh language training package

- 100 The role of the WLC was created by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. New powers to impose standards on organisations came into force through subordinate legislation on 31 March 2015. The WLC will continue to review Welsh language schemes by virtue of powers inherited under the Welsh Language Act 1993.
- 101 The WLC works with all councils in Wales to inspect and advise on the implementation of language schemes. It is the responsibility of councils to provide services to the public in Welsh in accordance with the commitments in their language schemes. Every council is committed to providing an annual monitoring report to the WLC outlining its performance in implementing the language scheme. The WLC analyses every monitoring report, provides a formal response and collects further information as required.
- 102 The WLC reported that the Council has established a working group to fulfil the duties that stem from the 'More than Words' framework. The group's aim is to strengthen and develop the active offer through its recruitment processes and staff training.
- 103 A new language training package which introduces basic Welsh terms and phrases to leisure centre reception staff has been successfully piloted. The training will be rolled out to more staff in the coming year.
- 104 Departmental business plans do not refer specifically to the Welsh language scheme, but reforming the business planning process should allow the Council to respond to the requirements of the forthcoming Welsh language standards.
- 105 The Council's Integrated Impact Assessment Tool includes guidelines on measuring the impact of proposed projects and initiatives on the Welsh language, with each completed assessment published on the website.

Appendix 1 – Status of this report

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) requires the Auditor General to undertake an annual improvement assessment, and to publish an annual improvement report, for each improvement authority in Wales. This requirement covers local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue authorities.

This report has been produced by staff of the Wales Audit Office on behalf of the Auditor General to discharge his duties under section 24 of the Measure. 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.

Improvement authorities are under a general duty to ‘make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of [their] functions’. Improvement authorities are defined as local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue authorities.

The annual improvement assessment is the main piece of work that enables the Auditor General to fulfil his duties. The improvement assessment is a forward-looking assessment of an authority’s likelihood to comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. It also includes a retrospective assessment of whether an authority has achieved its planned improvements in order to inform a view as to the authority’s track record of improvement. The Auditor General will summarise his audit and assessment work in a published annual improvement report for each authority (under section 24).

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 – Audit of Pembrokeshire County Council’s 2014-15 Improvement Plan

Certificate

I certify that I have audited Pembrokeshire County Council’s (the Council) Improvement Plan in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) and my Code of Audit Practice.

As a result of my audit, I believe that the Council has discharged its duties under section 15(6) to (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Auditor General

Under the Measure, the Council is required to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan describing its plans to discharge its duties to:

- make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions;
- make arrangements to secure achievement of its improvement objectives; and
- make arrangements to exercise its functions so that any performance standard specified by Welsh Ministers is met.

The Measure requires the Council to publish its Improvement Plan as soon as is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year to which it relates, or after such other date as Welsh Ministers may specify by order.

The Council is responsible for preparing the Improvement Plan and for the information set out within it. The Measure requires that the Council has regard to guidance issued by Welsh Ministers in preparing and publishing its plan.

As the Council’s auditor, I am required under sections 17 and 19 of the Measure to carry out an audit of the Improvement Plan, to certify that I have done so, and to report whether I believe that the Council has discharged its duties to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 15 and statutory guidance.

Scope of the Improvement Plan audit

For the purposes of my audit work I will accept that, provided an authority meets its statutory requirements, it will also have complied with Welsh Government statutory guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

For this audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information, or whether the Improvement Plan published by the Council can be achieved. Other assessment work that I will undertake under section 18 of the Measure will examine these issues. My audit of the Council’s Improvement Plan, therefore, comprised a review of the plan to ascertain whether it included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the plan complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing its plan.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Measure cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.

I make no recommendations under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009

Huw Vaughan Thomas

Auditor General For Wales

CC: Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Local Government and Government Business

Colin Davies, Manager

Jeremy Evans, Performance Audit Lead

Appendix 3 – Audit of Pembrokeshire County Council’s assessment of 2013-14 performance

Certificate

I certify that I have audited Pembrokeshire County Council’s (the Council) assessment of 2013-14 performance in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) and my Code of Audit Practice.

As a result of my audit, I believe that the Council has discharged its duties under section 15(2), (3), (8) and (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Auditor General

Under the Measure, the Council is required to publish an assessment of its performance during 2013-14 describing its performance:

- in discharging its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions;
- in meeting the improvement objectives it has set itself;
- by reference to performance indicators specified by Welsh Ministers, and self-imposed performance indicators; and
- in meeting any performance standards specified by Welsh Ministers and self-imposed performance standards.

The Measure requires the Council to publish its assessment before 31 October in the financial year following that to which the information relates, or by any other such date as Welsh Ministers may specify by order.

The Measure requires that the Council has regard to guidance issued by Welsh Ministers in publishing its assessment.

As the Council’s auditor, I am required under sections 17 and 19 of the Measure to carry out an audit to determine whether the Council has discharged its duty to publish an assessment of performance, to certify that I have done so, and to report whether I believe that the Council has discharged its duties in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 15 and statutory guidance.

Scope of the audit

For the purposes of my audit work I will accept that, provided an authority meets its statutory requirements, it will also have complied with Welsh Government statutory guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

For this audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information. Other assessment work that I will undertake under section 18 of the Measure may examine these issues. My audit of the Council's assessment of performance, therefore, comprised a review of the Council's publication to ascertain whether it included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the assessment complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing it.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Measure cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.

I make no recommendations under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Huw Vaughan Thomas

Auditor General For Wales

CC: Leighton Andrews, Minister for Public Services

Colin Davies, Manager

Jeremy Evans, Performance Audit Lead

Appendix 4 – National report recommendations 2014-15

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
May 2014	Good Scrutiny? Good Question!	R1 Clarify the role of executive members and senior officers in contributing to scrutiny.
		R2 Ensure that scrutiny members, and specifically scrutiny chairs, receive training and support to fully equip them with the skills required to undertake effective scrutiny.
		R3 Further develop scrutiny forward work programming to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a clear rationale for topic selection; • be more outcome focused; • ensure that the method of scrutiny is best suited to the topic area and the outcome desired; and • align scrutiny programmes with the council's performance management, self-evaluation and improvement arrangements.
		R4 Ensure that scrutiny draws effectively on the work of audit, inspection and regulation and that its activities are complementary with the work of external review bodies.
		R6 Ensure that the impact of scrutiny is properly evaluated and acted upon to improve the function's effectiveness; including following up on proposed actions and examining outcomes.
		R7 Undertake regular self-evaluation of scrutiny utilising the 'outcomes and characteristics of effective local government overview and scrutiny' developed by the Wales Scrutiny Officers' Network.
		R8 Implement scrutiny improvement action plans developed from the Wales Audit Office improvement study.
		R9 Adopt Participation Cymru's 10 Principles for Public Engagement in improving the way scrutiny engages with the public and stakeholders.

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
July 2014	Young people not in education, employment or training - Findings from a review of councils in Wales	R1 Together with partners, map and review expenditure on NEETs services to better understand the resources required to deliver the Framework.
		R2 Clarify their strategic approach to reducing the proportion of 19 to 24 year olds who are NEET as well as their approach for 16 to 18 year olds.
		R3 Focus on young people with significant or multiple barriers to engaging with education, employment or training rather than those who are more likely to re-engage without significant additional support.
		R4 Develop their objectives and targets for reducing the number of young people NEET so that they can be held to account and their work aligns with the Welsh Government's targets and objectives.
		R5 Ensure that elected members and partners fully understand that councils have a clear responsibility for leading and co-ordinating youth services for 16 to 24 year olds.
		R6 Improve the evaluation of the effectiveness and relative value for money of the services and interventions in their area that are intended to reduce the proportion of young people who are NEET.

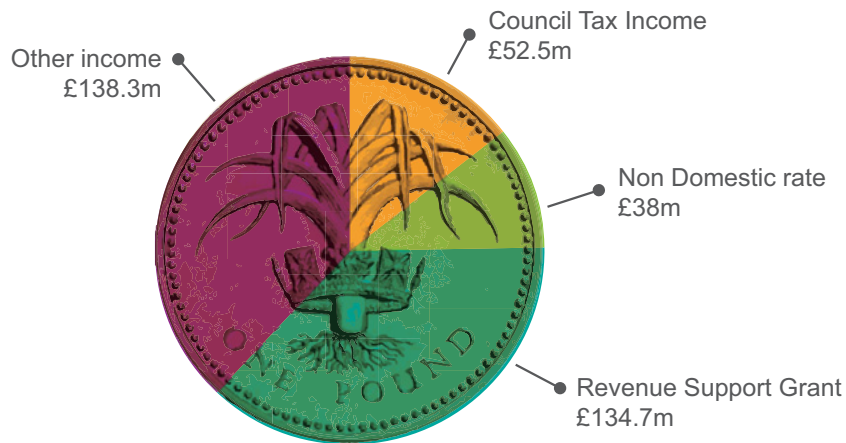
Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
October 2014	Delivering with less – the impact on environmental health services and citizens	<p>R1 Revise the best practice standards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • align the work of environmental health with national strategic priorities; • identify the wider contribution of environmental health in delivering strategic priorities of the Welsh Government; and • identify the benefit and impact of environmental health services on protecting citizens.
		<p>R2 Provide scrutiny chairs and members with the necessary skills and support to effectively scrutinise and challenge service performance, savings plans and the impact of budget reductions.</p>
		<p>R3 Improve engagement with local residents over planned budget cuts and changes in services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consulting with residents on planned changes in services and using the findings to shape decisions; • outlining which services are to be cut and how these cuts will impact on residents; and • setting out plans for increasing charges or changing standards of service.
		<p>R4 Improve efficiency and value for money by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the statutory and non-statutory duties of council environmental health services. • Agreeing environmental health priorities for the future and the role of councils in delivering these. • Determining an 'acceptable standard of performance' for environmental health services (upper and lower) and publicise these to citizens. • Improving efficiency and maintaining performance to the agreed level through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – collaborating and/or integrating with others to reduce cost and/or improve quality; – outsourcing where services can be delivered more cost effectively to agreed standards; – introducing and/or increasing charges and focusing on income-generation activity; – using grants strategically to maximise impact and return; and – reducing activities to focus on core statutory and strategic priorities.
		<p>R5 Improve strategic planning by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying, collecting and analysing financial, performance and demand/need data on environmental health services; • analysing collected data to inform and understand the relationship between 'cost: benefit: impact' and use this intelligence to underpin decisions on the future of council environmental health services; and • agree how digital information can be used to plan and develop environmental health services in the future.

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
January 2015	Managing the Impact of Welfare Reform Changes on Social Housing Tenants in Wales	<p>R1 Improve strategic planning and better co-ordinate activity to tackle the impact of welfare reform on social-housing tenants by ensuring comprehensive action plans are in place that cover the work of all relevant council departments, housing associations and the work of external stakeholders.</p>
		<p>R2 Improve governance and accountability for welfare reform by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appointing member and officer leads to take responsibility for strategic leadership on welfare reform and be accountable for performance; and • ensuring members receive adequate training and regular briefings on welfare reform to be able to challenge and scrutinise performance and decisions.
		<p>R3 Ensure effective management of performance on welfare reform by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting appropriate measures to enable members, officers and the public to judge progress in delivering actions; • ensuring performance information covers the work of all relevant agencies and especially housing associations; and • establishing measures to judge the wider impact of welfare reform.
		<p>R4 Strengthen how welfare-reform risks are managed by creating a single corporate-level approach that co ordinates activity across the Council and the work of others to provide adequate assurance that all the necessary and appropriate actions to mitigate risk are taking place.</p>
		<p>R5 Improve engagement with tenants affected by the removal of the spare-room subsidy through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provision of regular advice and information on the options open to them to address the financial impact of the change in their circumstances; • the promotion of the 'Your benefits are changing' helpline; and • the provision of support to tenants specifically affected by the removal of the spare-room subsidy to participate in regional/national employment schemes.

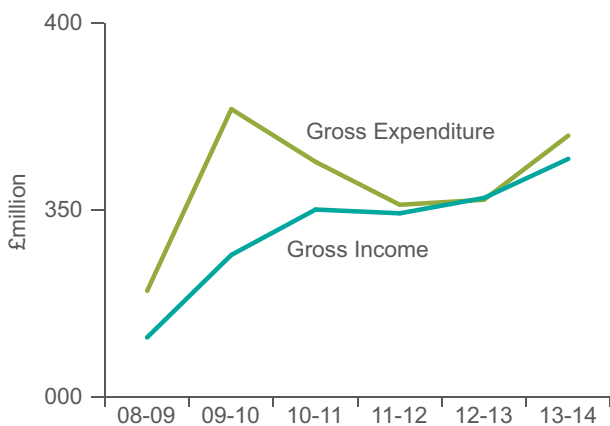
Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
January 2015	<p>Managing the Impact of Welfare Reform Changes on Social Housing Tenants in Wales</p>	<p>R7 Improve management, access to and use of Discretionary Housing Payments by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing a clear policy or guide that is available in hard copy and online to the public that sets out the Council's policy and arrangements for administering Discretionary Housing Payments; • clearly defining eligible and non-eligible housing costs covered by Discretionary Housing Payments in application forms, policy documentation and applicant guidance leaflets; • clearly setting out the maximum/minimum length of time that such payments will be provided; • setting and publishing the timescale for the Council making a decision on Discretionary Housing Payments applications; • including information within public literature on the Council's policy for right to review or appeal of a decision and the timescales and process to be followed in deciding on these; and • clearly define the priority groups for Discretionary Housing Payments in public literature to ensure that those seeking assistance, and those agencies supporting them, can assess whether such payments are a viable option to address their housing and financial needs.

Appendix 5 – Useful information about Pembrokeshire County Council’s resources

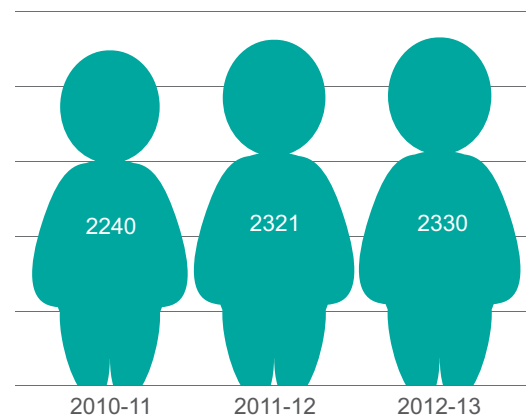
Total Gross Income 2013-14



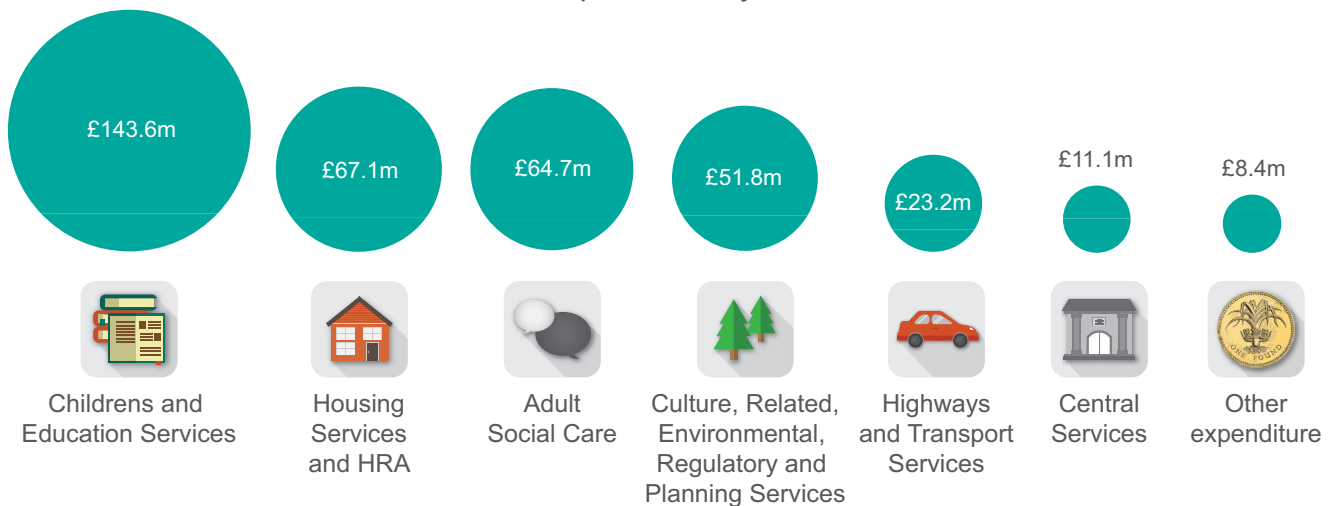
Total Income and Expenditure



Number of whole time equivalent staff 2010-11 to 2012-13



Total Gross Expenditure by service area



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