



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 8TH NOVEMBER 2022

**SUBJECT: AUDIT WALES REPORT, SPRINGING FORWARD – ASSETS
 JULY 2022**

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Scrutiny with the 'Springing Forward – Assets' report July 22 written by Audit Wales following their review of how we manage our assets.
- 1.2 The Council has many assets, this report focus's specifically on building assets.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Audit Wales conducted a national review of how authorities were strategically using their experience post covid, to manage or transform their Assets. The full report is attached as Appendix A
- 2.2 Specifically Audit Wales wanted to review how councils were strengthening their ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services, including those delivered in partnership with key stakeholders and communities.
- 2.3 The overall finding was that "In driving forward its intended significant changes to assets, informed by its experiences of the pandemic, the Council requires a longer-term approach.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members review the attached document (Appendix A) and are invited to discuss, challenge and scrutinise the information contained within.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Scrutiny members are part of the Council Performance Framework and are a critical part of scrutinising, reviewing and being involved in making suggestions for further improvement activities.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Audit Wales provided the Council with a project brief which comprised of three aims for the review:

- to gain assurance that councils are putting in place arrangements to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services.
- to explain the actions that councils are taking both individually and collectively to strengthen their arrangements; and
- to inspire councils and other organisations to further strengthen their arrangements through capturing and sharing notable practice examples and learning and making appropriate recommendations.

5.2 The review sought to answer the question: “Is the Council’s strategic approach to its assets effectively helping the Council to strengthen its ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of its services in the short and longer-term?”

5.3 The review method was held through a combination of desk top assessments and document reviews and workshops with the relevant officers. This was carried out from October 21 to February 2022 with reports to individual councils between April and May 22 and following the standard management responses procedure the report was issued July 2022

5.4 The overall conclusion from Audit Wales was that “ in driving forward its intended significant changes to assets, informed by its experiences of the pandemic, the Council requires a longer-term approach. We reached this conclusion because:

- although the Council is planning to make significant changes to services and office accommodation, it does not have a fully integrated longer-term asset strategy.
- the Council’s understanding of longer-term trends and involvement of residents in shaping its strategic agenda is currently underdeveloped.
- the Council’s arrangements support active consideration of its statutory duties; however, insufficient staff capacity may constrain the delivery of its intended changes; and to reflect its increasing ambition the Council can strengthen its use of data to inform its understanding of performance.

5.5 The report (Appendix A) identifies three recommendations by Audit Wales to support the suggested improvements identified in para 5.4. The report attached (on page 18) shows the Councils response and intended actions in response to the recommendations.

5.6 Conclusion

The report recognises the council has ambition to make significant changes, and in doing so would benefit from a longer-term integrated approach.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions were thought to be required in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 There was no impact assessment completed for this report as it is a presentation on the work carried out by Audit Wales on the Council's approach to Asset Management.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 8.1 Asset Management activity contributes to the Well-being goals of
- A prosperous Wales
 - A resilient Wales
 - A healthier Wales
 - A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities
 - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language
 - A globally responsible Wales

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This report is for information and has no decision-making requests, so the Council full Equality Impact Assessment process does not to be applied.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no financial implications identified within this report

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no personnel implications within this report, however the Audit Wales report notes in its overall assessment that "insufficient staff capacity may constrain the delivery of its intended changes"

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 Any consultation responses have been included with in this report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Local Government and Elections (Wales) 2020 Act

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Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Kath Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Mark James, Estates Officer

Appendices:

Appendix A Springing Forward Assets (July 2022)
Appendix B Updated Management Response (Oct 2022)