



GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 4TH JUNE 2024

**SUBJECT: REGULATOR RECOMMENDATION TRACKER PROGRESS
UPDATE**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE
SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on progress of recommendations that have been made by all regulators since the last Governance and Audit Committee update, and to advise on any new proposals that have been added since that time.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The register was last updated and presented to the Governance and Audit Committee February 2024. Since that time there has been one new report received and 3 new proposals added onto the register.

2.2 We have 15 recommendations on the register, with 3 new ones added. There is 1 that is now considered to be completed at this time.

2.3 We have received one new report since the last time an update was provided, called Use of performance information: Service User perspective and Outcomes.

2.4 The above does not include the improvement 'certificates' that come before Governance and Audit Committee, as these confirm compliance to our statutory duty so do not make proposals or recommendations. Nor does it include External Financial Audit outputs at this point as the Governance & Audit Committee receive updates on progress against recommendations in the next Audit Wales Audit of Accounts Report.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 We propose 1 recommendation be closed as completed and encourage members to view the specific recommendations attached within Appendix A and judge if they agree that these are now complete. It is recommended that Governance and Audit Committee vote on acceptance of the update and to close the proposals that are noted as 'completed' within Appendix A.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure members are aware of progress against the Council's actions for progressing regulator recommendations and proposals and have assurance that progress is being made through an opportunity to monitor and challenge content.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The table below provides a summary of recommendations and the numbers outstanding from each piece of work. Whilst the numbers give some scope the focus is on the quality of the output as some recommendations can take a long time to complete whilst others are shorter actions. We have added a new column to the table below to show a % completed from the last time the information was reported, so the reader can see if there has been progression. The key factor however, is the value of the recommendations and the difference they make. Paragraphs 5.2 to 5.8 and Appendix A expand on the pieces of work as noted below.

Name of Report	How many original recommendations outstanding	How many recommendations completed in this reporting period	How many are left to complete?	% increase in completion
Financial Sustainability Assessment 2021	2	0	2	10%
Springing Forward Workforce	0	1	0	30% (100%)
Springing Forward Asset Management	3	0	3	1 – 5% 1 – same 1 – 15%
Decarbonisation	2	0	2	1 – 5% 2 - 25%
Waste Services Review	2	0	2	5% 5%
Setting of Well-being Objectives	2	0	2	25% 30%
Performance Information and Service User perspective	3	New	3	New No comparator from last time
Total	15	1	14	

5.2 Financial Sustainability Assessment

One of the recommendations “The Council should develop and implement a more comprehensive MTFP” has been a long-standing recommendation in its development

due to changing financial climate, however this recommendation has almost come to the end of its improvement process and is part of business as usual. When the prioritised transformation projects inform the update of the Medium-Term Financial Plan in summer 2024, we will look to close this recommendation at the next update.

5.3 Springing Forward – Workforce

Springing Forward – Workforce. The pilots have been completed and the system will be rolled out after training. A workforce Planning Toolkit has been developed and pilots were undertaken by 3 Heads of Service in the Autumn 2023. Feedback from the pilots has been taken on board and the Toolkit will now be used across the Council and will support the work leading from Mobilising Team Caerphilly. Leadership Team attended Workforce Planning Training facilitated by LGA in February 2024. A suite of information will be available via the HR/Payroll system in Spring 2024 to support Managers with their workforce planning. Monitoring will continue of progress at the HR strategy and Mobilising Team Caerphilly (MTC) monitoring arrangements. We now believe this recommendation to be completed as it moves into day-to-day business.

5.4 Springing Forward – Asset Management

The development of the long-term strategy has been delayed allowing for more involvement and greater linkages with the Mobilising Team Caerphilly programme and this is reflected in the update on Appendix A. Recently the draft Strategy has just been completed and dates for consulting on the draft have now been put on the forward work programme, with the report to be presented to Scrutiny on 2024 September 2024 and Cabinet mid-October 2024.

5.5 Decarbonisation

This is a long-term piece of work; we have a Decarbonisation Strategy called 'Reduce, Produce, Offset and buy' and an agreed action plan to deliver the strategy'. The action plan was reviewed with Cabinet in November 2023 and approved. The new Mobilising Team Caerphilly reporting mechanism is being assessed to ensure the established metrics are reflected in the MTC process. Once this is completed this recommendation can be closed for the next update.

5.6 Waste Services

The Draft Waste Strategy is progressing through various committees and its consultation stages within the timelines of its project plan. The actions as suggested by Audit Wales have been addressed as the strategy was approved to go out to consultation. At the time of updating the register the recommendations the consultation results are being analysed so the action has been completed but we will wait till the next Governance and Audit committee reporting to recommend closure when the consultation has informed the strategy completion and formal adoption.

5.7 Setting of the Well-being Objectives

This report was about whether the Council complied with its statutory duty to set our Well-being Objectives. There were 2 recommendations that are both on track.

Performance Management arrangements are standard practise for monitoring Well-being Objectives. The actions here are about enhancements. Each Well-being Objective will have a new dashboard and their performance will be reported in the annual Self-Assessment and the new 'corporate performance assessment' dashboard. This recommendation will be completed this year.

5.8 Use of performance information: Service User perspective and Outcomes

This review was conducted across all authorities in Wales. The purpose of this review was to focus on the performance information provided to senior officers and senior members (senior leaders) about service user perspective and outcomes, and how this information is used. The report notes that Audit Wales did not undertake a full review of the Council's performance management arrangements or an in-depth review of the quality of the data that the Council collects. Neither did the review focus on engagement with service users on specific service changes or the development of policies and strategies. The overall summary statement was "*Overall, we found that the Council provides limited performance information to enable senior leaders to understand the perspective of service users and the outcomes of its activities and thus, effectively manage its performance activities*".

The 3 recommendations from this review are shown on Appendix A Issued in February 2024, the report was presented to Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny on 14th May 2024, who approved the recommendation that the subsequent recommendations will be monitored by Governance and Audit Committee.

Other Regulator work

- 5.9 There are no recommendations for improvement to include at this time from Education. A report went to Education for Life Scrutiny on 20th May 2024 that detailed the summary of Estyn Inspection outcomes under the new Common Inspection Framework. The schools included in the report were inspected from January 2022 onwards. Each of them was inspected under the arrangements for inspections that came into effect from 1st January 2022, with the first two terms being considered pilot arrangements. The report identified the schools and the dates on which the inspections took place, together with the follow up category and included outcomes already reported between January 2022 and March 2023.
- 5.10 There are no specific recommendations from the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) for Social Services currently. CIW held their Annual Review Meeting with the Director of Social Services on 16th April 2024, and progress was noted in all Regulatory area's. Regulator meetings with the two Heads of Service have taken place. No concerns have been raised. Thematic Assurance Checks and inspections for regulated services are continuing. Whole service inspections have been resumed and are published on the CIW website.

Future Audit Work Programme includes:

- 5.11 The Assurance Risk Audit, known as the ARA update, as at Quarter 4 in the 2023/2024 programme has the following update:
- Financial position - ongoing
 - Thematic review - Financial Sustainability

- Digital Review – A draft report has been received and is now going through factual checking and moderation process.
- Counter Fraud – The draft has been issued to the Council May 2024
- Cyber Security – project underway March – June 2024

5.12 For clarity, Audit Wales issue Recommendations for improvement for each individual outputs. Each Report completes a management response as to whether the council accepts those recommendations and how they will address them.

5.13 **Conclusion**

When monitoring progress against the recommendations, members are advised to consider what value the recommendations and actions to address them are making and what difference the activity makes for our citizens. The view of Audit Wales is that the decision on whether a recommendation is completed is an internal matter for the organisation to decide, (although it is within their remit to make more recommendations if they do not believe it has been addressed). Audit Wales receive this update as part of attendance at Governance and Audit Committee.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 It is a reasonable assumption that the financial and demand challenges facing the authority will continue. Alongside this, demand levels for key services will continue to increase with changing demographics and increased expectations placed on the local authority.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 This report does not relate to the development of a policy, strategy, practice or project so no specific Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken on this report, however the Sustainable Development principle would be considered as part of any action planning to address proposals.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, although Financial Sustainability is noted as one of the reviews and has proposals attached.

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no specific personnel implications directly resulting from this report although one of the proposals is in relation to workforce development.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 All consultation responses received have been included in the body of this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Local Government and Elections Act

11.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (2015) Act

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Consultees:

- Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
- Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services
- Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
- Cllr. Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance
- Mark. S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
- Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
- Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property Services
- Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
- Gareth Jenkins, Interim Corporate Director for Social Services
- Jo Williams, Assistant Director, Adult Services
- Doctor Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
- Paul Cooke, Decarbonisation Manager
- Sue Richards, Head of Education, Planning and Strategy
- Deborah Gronow, Internal Audit Manager

Appendices:

Appendix A Action Plan and Response to Regulator Proposals