



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21**

<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>  <b>12 May 2021</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 4</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>AUDIT WALES – ANNUAL AUDIT SUMMARY 2020</b>  <b>COUNCIL PROGRESS UPDATE</b>

**Author: Christian Hanagan** (Service Director for Democratic Services and Communication)

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To consider the Audit Wales 'Annual Audit Summary 2020' presented to Council on [10 March 2021](#) and Audit Committee on [26 April 2021](#), and the progress made to date by the Council in implementing proposals for improvement.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise the progress update (Appendix 1)
- 2.2 Consider the progress made by Council Services to date in implementing proposals for improvement/recommendations made by Audit Wales and determine whether further information and/or further progress updates are required.
- 2.3 Consider whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require referral to the Council's Audit Committee.

### **3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AUDIT WALES PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT/RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Council recognises the important role that Audit Wales plays in supporting on-going improvement to governance and service delivery and uses the oversight of Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committee to oversee the arrangements and the monitoring of progress. This work also forms part of the Council's Corporate and Service Self-Assessment processes which provide a robust reflection of the Council and its services. In 2022, as required by the [Local Government and Election Act \(Wales\) Act 2021](#), this work will also evidence the extent to which:

1. The Council is exercising its functions effectively.
2. The Council is using its resources economically, efficiently, and effectively; and
3. The Council's governance is effective for securing the above.

#### **Scrutiny Committees**

3.2 The Terms of Reference of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function is to, amongst other things, have responsibility for all Council cross cutting themes. In line with this, the Committee oversees reports issued by Audit Wales i.e. to review and challenge the progress the Council is making toward implementing agreed actions.

3.3 In addition, where the Committee determines there are matters of a 'governance', 'internal control' or 'risk management' nature that require further review, it is able to refer these to Audit Committee for consideration.

#### **Audit Committee**

3.4 Members will note that the Council's Audit Committee has a different, albeit, linked role in overseeing reports issued by the Audit Wales in line with its Terms of Reference i.e.

- 'To receive and consider reports of the External Auditor in relation to matters of financial probity and corporate governance and providing the opportunity for direct discussion with the auditor(s) on these' and
- 'Consider national reports, for example, from [Audit Wales](#), of relevance to the work of the Authority'.

3.5 To discharge the above requirement, the Council's Audit Committee has responsibility for:

- Providing independent assurance that there are adequate controls in place to mitigate key risks; and
- Determining whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further action or attention.

- 3.6 As part of discharging its Terms of Reference, Audit Committee should also take account of the conclusions and findings from each Audit Wales report when forming an opinion on the adequacy of internal control/governance arrangements in place.
- 3.7 Similar to the information set out above for Scrutiny Committees, where Audit Committee considers there are performance related matters that require further review, it is also able to refer these to the designated Scrutiny Committee for review.
- 4. AUDIT WALES – ANNUAL AUDIT SUMMARY 2020 (FORMERLY ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT)**
- 4.1 At the meeting of [Council held on 10 March 2021](#), Members received the Audit Wales [Audit Summary 2020](#). The Audit Summary contained proposals for improvement/recommendations from published reports that were specific to Rhondda Cynon Taf and national reports that relate to local authorities more generally, other public bodies and Welsh Government. Table 1 provides a list of the published reports covered by the Audit Summary together with electronic links to each of these reports.

**Table 1 – Published reports covered by the Audit Summary**

Type of Report	Report Title	Proposals for Improvement/ Recommendations reported
<b>Audit Wales - RCT Specific Reports</b>	Audit of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough <a href="#">Council's 2019-20 Accounts</a>	<b>No</b> Compliance confirmed
	Well-being of Future Generations Examination – Investment in Leisure Facilities ( <a href="#">published March 2020</a> )	<b>No</b>
	<a href="#">Annual Improvement Plan Audit of 2020/21 Plans</a> contained in the Council's annual Corporate Performance Report 2020/21	<b>No</b> Compliance confirmed
	Financial Sustainability ( <a href="#">published March 2020</a> )	<b>No</b>
<b>Reviews by other Inspectorates</b>		
<b>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)</b>	Local Authority Performance Review April 2019 – March 2020 ( <a href="#">published August 2020</a> )	<b>Yes</b> findings being used to inform service planning and delivery
<b>Estyn</b>	In January 2021, Estyn wrote to the Council's Chief Executive outlining the outcome of their review of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's work in supporting their learning	<b>Yes</b> recommendations being used to inform

	communities in schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) during the period from March to October 2020. Also relevant is Estyn's National report, ' <a href="#">Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19</a> '. Update report from June to November 2020, published in January 2021.	service planning and delivery
<b>National Studies for local consideration</b>	National Fraud Initiative 2018-20 ( <a href="#">published October 2020</a> )	Recommendations reported have been considered by Council Services, agreed in principle and where relevant to Rhondda Cynon Taf will be taken account of as part of service planning and delivery
	The 'Front Door' to Social Care ( <a href="#">September 2019</a> )	
	Review of Public Services Boards ( <a href="#">October 2019</a> )	
	Progress in implementing the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act ( <a href="#">November 2019</a> )	
	Rough Sleeping in Wales – Everyone's Problem; No One's Responsibility ( <a href="#">July 2020</a> )	
	Better Law Making ( <a href="#">September 2020</a> )	
	Commercialisation in Local Government ( <a href="#">October 2020</a> )	

- 4.2 An update of the progress made by Council services, to date, to implement the proposals for improvement/recommendations made by Audit Wales, where applicable to Rhondda Cynon Taf, is set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 In line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Terms of Reference, the Committee is requested to scrutinise the progress update and, in addition to Members own lines of enquiry:
- a) Consider the progress made and determine whether further information and / or further progress updates are required; and
  - b) Consider whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require referral to the Council's Audit Committee.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Audit Wales reports play an important role in supporting on-going improvement to the Council's governance and service delivery arrangements, and as part of this process, the Council utilises its Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committee in line with their Terms of Reference, to oversee the arrangements and the monitoring of progress.

- 5.2 In line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Terms of Reference, the Committee has responsibility for reviewing and challenging the progress the Council is making toward implementing agreed actions and forming a view on the adequacy of progress being made.
- 5.3 Lastly, where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider there are matters of a 'governance', 'internal control' or 'risk management' nature that require further review, these can be referred to Audit Committee for consideration.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972**  
**as amended by**  
**THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT, 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**12 May 2021**

**REPORT OF: Service Director for Democratic Services and Communication**

Author: Christian Hanagan

Item : 4. Council Progress Update: Audit Wales - [Annual Audit Summary 2020](#)

**Background Papers**

Report to [Audit Committee 26 April 2021](#)

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## [Audit Wales – Annual Audit Summary](#)

NB Audit Wales was formerly known as Wales Audit Office

### Local and National Reports – Recommendations/Proposals for Improvement

#### Progress to date

Compliance	
<b>Audit of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council’s 2019-20 Accounts</b>	The Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Council’s financial statements on 26 <a href="#">November 2020</a>
<b>Annual Improvement Plan Audit of 2020/21 Plans contained in the Council’s annual Corporate Performance Report 2020/21</b>	The Auditor General certified that the Council has met its legal duties for improvement planning and reporting, and believes that it is likely to meet the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 during 2020-21 in <a href="#">January 2021</a>
Other Regulators	
<b>Care Inspectorate Wales Local Authority Performance Review April 2019 – March 2020 - Annual Letter <a href="#">published August 2020</a></b>	
<b>Estyn</b> “In January 2021, Estyn wrote to the Council’s Chief Executive outlining the outcome of their review of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council’s work in supporting their learning communities in schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) during the period from March to October 2020. Also relevant is Estyn’s National report, ‘ <a href="#">Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19</a> ’ Update report from June to November 2020, published in January 2021”.	The findings from the Estyn report will form part of the ongoing Self Evaluation and the recommendations have been used to inform the 2021-22 Delivery Plan for the service.

## Local Reports

### Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 examination

*An examination the extent to which the Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle in the delivery of the priority investments for leisure facilities to increase participation in exercise and contribute to residents' health and well-being*

**Published: March 2020**

Proposals for Improvement	Next Steps
There are clear examples of how the Council is applying the sustainable development principle to its investment in leisure facilities, but there are opportunities to develop longer term planning and involve people in shaping future leisure provision. <a href="#">Report is here.</a>	The examination findings will be used to continue to ensure that the Council and its services are acting in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act including the Sustainable Development principles when developing and implementing its Service Delivery and Priority Plans and also plans for key projects. This includes the Council's new Leisure Strategy 2021- 2026 which is currently being developed.

### Financial Sustainability Assessment

*The project sought to assess the sustainability of councils' short to medium-term financial position. This included a focus on the financial strategy of each council as well as reviewing financial 'indicators' of each council's financial position in relation to Performance against budget; Delivery of savings plans; Use of reserves; Council tax and Borrowing*

**Published: 27 March 2020**

The Council is well placed to manage its financial sustainability over the short and medium term. <a href="#">Report is here</a>	<b>Noted</b>
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## National Report Recommendations

[The National Fraud Initiative in Wales 2018-20](#) This national report contained four recommendations for public bodies.

**Published: 12 October 2020**

Recommendations	RCT Comments
All participants in the NFI exercise should ensure that they maximise the benefits of their participation. They should consider whether it is possible to work more efficiently on the NFI matches by reviewing the guidance section within the NFI secure web application.	<b>Agreed</b> The guidance is always followed and is helpful in prioritising the match outcomes.
Where local auditors have identified specific areas where improvements could be made, the public bodies should act on these as soon as possible.	<b>Agreed</b> Any significant aspect of improving the internal control environment is prioritised and audit recommendations are also followed up. Audit Committee also receives regular updates in respect of the service progress in implementing Internal Audit recommendations. This includes the number of recommendations implemented, for those yet implemented a revised implementation date.
Audit committees, or equivalent, and officers leading the NFI should review the NFI self-appraisal checklist. This will ensure they are fully informed of their organisation's planning and progress in the 2020-22 NFI exercise	<b>Agreed</b> The checklist has been reviewed by the Council's Fraud Service. NFI updates are provided to Audit Committee at relevant intervals. The next update of the 2020/22 NFI exercise is scheduled to be provided to Audit Committee in the first half of 2021/22.
All participants should be aware of emerging fraud risks e.g. due to COVID-19 and take appropriate preventative and detective action.	<b>Agreed</b> The Council is signed up with the relevant fraud sharing bodies and has received and shared Covid and other related threats. These threats have been reviewed and disseminated to relevant Services and residents, to provide necessary mitigation.  At the outset of Covid, consideration was given to the potential for fraud to emerge as a result of Covid support measures e.g. Business Support Grants, Free School Meal payments etc.  Audit Committee is updated on Corporate Fraud at regular intervals throughout the year, which includes any Covid related matters.

## Local Government Studies

[The 'Front Door' to Adult Social Care](#) : This national report contained two main recommendations. These recommendations contained actions for Local Authorities and the Welsh Government.

Published: September 2019

Recommendations for Improvement	RCT comment
<p><b><u>Improving access to the front door</u></b></p> <p><b>R1</b> - Part 1 of the report sets out how authorities promote access to the 'front door' and provide information, advice and assistance to help people to improve their wellbeing and prevent their needs from deteriorating. To improve awareness of the front door we recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authorities:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- review their current approaches, consider their audience, and ensure that good-quality information is made available in a timely manner to avoid needs deteriorating and people presenting for assistance in 'crisis';</li> <li>- work in partnership with public and third-sector partners to help ensure people accessing via partner referrals, or other avenues, are given the best information to help them;</li> <li>- ensure that advocacy services are commissioned and proactively offered to those who need them at first point of contact; and</li> <li>- to take local ownership and lead on the co-ordination and editing of local information published on Dewis Cymru locally.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Welsh Government:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improve carers' awareness and understanding of their rights to be assessed for their own care and support needs, aimed at generating demand for local authorities' preventative services; and</li> <li>- undertake a full evaluation of the role of Dewis Cymru in the wider implementation of the Act and use the data gained to build on its potential as a national information sharing portal.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed.</b></p> <p>RCT continuously reviews its Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) service to improve access to the 'front door'. This includes what we offer, what, when and how best to communicate information so that people get the help they need to prevent their needs getting worse leading to a request for assistance in 'crisis'. Advice and Assistance is offered following assessment by the Single Point of Access (SPA) service. SPA is able to directly commission services from a range of preventative services available, this includes Advocacy services.</p> <p>Advocacy services are commissioned from a variety of sources including third sector. The offer of this service is repeated to ensure that those people in need of longer term care who have not previously needed advocacy can be identified and supported. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) recognised the work we have undertaken to improve our provision of advocacy services for older people in their <a href="#">Annual Letter</a> published in August 2020.</p> <p>The Council is the lead for <a href="#">Dewis Cymru</a> across the County Borough. To date, RCT has 617 resources registered on the Dewis website, a combination of both local authority and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations. Information on the resources that are available is required to be updated every 6 months to ensure information is up to date. Independent organisations update their own pages as designed by Dewis, but oversight is maintained with the Council.</p> <p>We agree with the recommendations for Welsh Government and welcome a national information sharing portal across a single online platform for all partners.</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	RCT comment
<p><b><u>Investing in prevention and understanding impact</u></b></p> <p><b>R2</b> - Part 2 of the report highlights weaknesses in authorities' assurance of the availability and quality of third-sector, preventative, community based services that they signpost people to. We recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- map the availability of preventative services in their area to better understand current levels of provision and identify gaps and duplication;</li> <li>- involve third-sector partners in co-producing preventative solutions to meet people's needs and ensure people have equitable access to these services;</li> <li>- work with third-sector partners to tailor and commission new services where gaps are identified; and</li> <li>- work with partners to improve data to evaluate the impact of preventative services on individuals and the population more generally.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Welsh Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improve the cost evaluation in relation to the impact of the Act in a national context, and support local authorities to ensure that the desired impact of prevention on overall social-care expenditure becomes a demonstratable reality.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed.</b></p> <p>The Council regularly maps the availability of preventative services across the RCT area to better understand current levels of provision and to identify gaps and duplication. This information is accessible via <a href="#">Dewis</a>.</p> <p>Interlink also maintains a database of local services across the County Borough and ensures connections between Social Care and Community Services.</p> <p>Interlink and third sector services are represented on various regional forums such as Regional Partnership Board and Transformational Leadership Board where new developments and funding of services to meet identified needs are discussed and agreed. This provides the forum for third sector representation to influence decision making across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.</p> <p>Over the last year organisations and volunteers have worked together to support those most in need in their communities during the pandemic which has been described in a <a href="#">Cabinet report</a> in May 2020 on the Council's response to the pandemic. This experience has strengthened joint working and has demonstrated that it is possible to identify vulnerable residents, refer them for support and provide ongoing input including befriending, preventing loneliness and isolation, that is available within the communities through voluntary sector and community groups. We will build on these positive experiences as a platform for sharing new service developments, highlighting pressure points and areas for further development, as we emerge from the pandemic.</p> <p>We agree with the recommendation for Welsh Government.</p>

**Review of Public Services Boards: This national report contained recommendations for Public Services Boards, Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association**

**Published: 7 October 2019**

Recommendations for Improvement	Cwm Taf PSB comment for information
<p><b>R1</b> - In Part 1 of the report we set out that understanding the impact of choices and decisions requires public bodies to fully involve citizens and stakeholders and undertake comprehensive Impact Assessments. However, we found that current practice is insufficient to provide assurance that the needs of people with protected characteristics are fully considered when reviewing choices and the voice of citizens is not sufficiently influencing decisions.</p> <p>We recommend that PSBs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conduct formal assessments to identify the potential impact on people with protected characteristics and the Welsh language and review agreed actions to ensure any adverse impacts are addressed;</li> <li>• improve transparency and accountability by making PSB meetings, agendas, papers and minutes accessible and available to the public;</li> <li>• strengthen involvement by working to the guidance in the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales; and</li> <li>• feed back the outcome of involvement activity identifying where changes are made as a result of the input of citizens and stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The Audit Report was considered by the Cwm Taf Public Services Board at its meeting on <a href="#">22 October 2019</a> and concluded that the PSB could do more to focus on ‘wicked’ issues and strengthen involvement with residents and communities.</p> <p>The recommendations will be addressed in more depth within the Well-being and Population Assessments.</p>
<p><b>R2</b> - In Part 2 of the report we review arrangements for PSB scrutiny and conclude that there are shortcomings and weaknesses in current performance and practice. To improve scrutiny, we recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PSBs and public bodies use the findings of the Auditor General for Wales’ Discussion Paper: Six themes to help make scrutiny ‘Fit for the Future’ to review their current performance and identify where they need to strengthen oversight arrangements and activity; and</li> <li>- PSBs ensure scrutiny committees have adequate engagement with a wider range of relevant stakeholders who can help hold PSBs to account.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee has taken steps to strengthen scrutiny arrangements and to bring scrutiny closer to communities and have held meetings in Hwb Glynrhedynog (Ferndale) and Calon Las (Gurnos)</p> <p>However, there is more that can be done including refreshing the Scrutiny Work Programme to support the closure of the current Well-being Plan and the development of the new Well-being Assessment and Plan.</p>
<p><b>R3</b> - In Part 3 of the report we summarise the difficulty of developing, implementing and resourcing PSBs and the challenges of managing multiple partnerships that can often have overlap and duplication.</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The PSB is keen to pursue opportunities to reduce overlap and duplication within the current legislative constraints. There is</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	Cwm Taf PSB comment for information
<p>To help build capacity, consistency and resourcing of activity we recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSBs take the opportunity to discharge other plan and strategy obligations through the Local Well-being Plan;</li> <li>• the Welsh Government enables PSBs to develop flexible models of working including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- merging, reducing and integrating their work with other forums such as Regional Partnership Boards; and</li> <li>- giving PSBs flexibility to receive, manage and spend grant monies subject to PSBs ensuring they have adequate safeguards and appropriate systems in place for management of funding; effective budget and grant programme controls; and public reporting, scrutiny and oversight systems to manage expenditure.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>developing and strengthening integration between the Cwm Taf and Bridgend Public Services Boards and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board which will enable resources to be maximised as far as possible.</p> <p>A joint Well-being Assessment produced for Cwm Taf and Bridgend is being developed to support the CTM footprint, which will lead to a single Well-being Plan for CTM. This work will be produced alongside the separate statutory requirement for a Population Assessment so that overlaps and duplication are minimised.</p> <p>The PSB would welcome increased funding flexibilities from Welsh Government with appropriate local oversight, controls and scrutiny.</p>
<p><b>R4</b> - To help build capacity, consistency and resourcing of activity we recommend that the Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association in their review of strategic partnerships take account of, and explore, the findings of this review.</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The <a href="#">Review of Strategic Partnerships</a> prepared jointly with Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association and Welsh NHS Confederation was shared at a meeting of the Public Services Board in July 2020 (<a href="#">Item 5 Governance item</a>)</p>

**[Progress in implementing the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act:](#) This national report contained recommendations for Local Authorities, other public bodies and partners.**

**Published: 21 November 2019**

Recommendations for Improvement	RCT comment
<p><b>R1</b> - Part 1 of the report highlights that despite public bodies having an increasing understanding of, and demand for, VAWDASV services, significant gaps remain and engagement with survivors and victims in reviewing and developing services is inconsistent. To address this, we recommend that needs assessment and mapping of service provision by public bodies are revisited and involvement widened and enhanced to include all relevant stakeholders to build a more accurate picture of current service provision and identify gaps.</p>	<p>A response to this report was prepared for consideration by the <a href="#">Overview and Scrutiny Crime &amp; Disorder Committee</a> at its meeting scheduled for 16 March 2020.</p> <p>As a result of the actions taken to respond to the pandemic, the committee meeting did not take place as scheduled.</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	RCT comment
	<p>During the pandemic, all the Council's VAWDASV support services continued and adjusted to operate remotely as a result of the Covid restrictions in place. We deployed regular <a href="#">social media campaigns</a> to highlight the issues of domestic abuse and how to report. Numbers of referrals remained constant throughout and are currently at the same level as pre-Covid.</p> <p>The Audit Wales Report is now scheduled to be presented to the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Crime &amp; Disorder Committee in Autumn 2021. The Council's response will be revised to reflect the work completed since March 2020 and the lessons learned from responding to the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>The recommendations arising from the Audit Wales report are already reflected in the priorities identified in the local Cwm Taf Morgannwg Implementation Plan 20/21 which is set out in the <a href="#">Cwm Taf VAWDASV Strategy Report</a> 2019-20.</p>
<p><b>R2</b> - Part 1 of the report describes how victims and survivors of VAWDASV often find it difficult to navigate a fragmented system of service delivery. To support victims and survivors to access and use services we recommend that public bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• produce comprehensive and relevant information in a variety of media on the full range of services available to protect and support victims and survivors; and</li> <li>• create a joint pathway to access services and support for both victims and professionals and advertise access arrangements widely</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>It is worth noting that the Audit Report highlights examples of good practice which includes development of the Council's Resilient Families Programme, which has drawn together a range of work streams to provide a single pathway for early intervention service for families.</p>
<p><b>R3</b> - Part 2 of the report notes that whilst it is important that organisations comply with relevant data protection legislation, they also need to share data with partners to better meet the needs of victims and survivors. We recommend that authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure staff who are likely to come into contact with victims and survivors have appropriate VAWDASV training;</li> <li>• provide refresher training to service managers to ensure they know when and what data they can and cannot share; and</li> <li>• review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>There are clear examples set out in the Cwm Taf Annual Report of how staff from all agencies are involved in meeting the needs of survivors of VAWDASV. The findings set out in the Audit Wales Report will be considered as part of our continual review of processes to strengthen our support to clients.</p>
<p><b>R4</b> - Part 2 of the report highlights that while some good progress has been made with regional working, there are not always appropriate levers in place to support service transformation in line with VAWDASV legislation. To ensure the benefits of regionalisation</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>VAWDASV is a complex agenda and this is recognised in the report above. The report also sets out the Council's</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	RCT comment
<p>are realised, we recommend that delivery agencies (local authorities, health bodies, the police, fire and rescue authorities and the third sector) review their approach to regional working to better integrate services and maximise the positive impact they can make on victims and survivors.</p>	<p>commitment to developing a new regional service model in the medium term and statement of intent.</p>
<p><b>R5</b> - Part 3 of the report highlights that the complex and short-term funding mechanisms, lack of data and insufficient consultation with stakeholders, are not supporting sustainable commissioning of VAWDASV services. To address this, we recommend that local authorities review their commissioning arrangements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remove duplication and overlap between different approaches within the authority and with partners;</li> <li>• rationalise administration arrangements to improve efficiency and value for money;</li> <li>• streamline and standardise commissioning arrangements to reduce the burden of administration on all parties; and</li> <li>• set appropriate performance measures, targets and benchmarks to judge the impact and outcome of commissioned services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>This will be part of the considerations for the new regional service model which will be developed in the medium term.</p>

**Rough Sleeping in Wales – Everyone’s Problem; No One’s Responsibility - This national report contained two recommendations with actions for Local Authorities, public bodies and partners**

**Published: 23 July 2020**

Recommendations for Improvement	RCT comment
<p><b><u>Intelligent use of data</u></b>                      R1 - Public bodies and third sector partners should ensure they use data to plan the right future services, and to put in place effective data sharing protocols to ensure they respond effectively and safely to people sleeping rough.                      We recommend that councils and their partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• invest in data analytical skills to better understand the current situation and predict future demand to prevent future homelessness;</li> <li>• review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities effectively; and</li> <li>• introduce a single data capture and risk assessment process for to help support safe decisions making in dealing with people sleeping rough</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed</b>                      The Council has put in place a Performance and Support Officer, which has significantly improved data capture and recording. This enables the production of weekly reports in respect of homeless people, rough sleepers and temporary accommodation placements. The data has improved our understanding of service demand and pressures.</p> <p>Through the use of ‘<a href="#">Abritas</a>’ the Case Management system for Homelessness and ‘<a href="#">Homefinder</a>’ we are able to better plan the right services for the future.</p> <p>Information in respect of the number of clients supported and the accommodation units available, among other things, is included in the RCT <a href="#">Housing Support Grant annual update</a> which sets out the support provided to prevent people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation.</p>
<p><b><u>Integrated services to tackle complex needs</u></b>                      R2 - Because public bodies are responding to people in crisis, they often deal with acute issues in isolation and rarely address the fundamental cause of the crisis. To do this requires public bodies to design and create service delivery models that are responsive.                      We recommend that public bodies use our complex needs self-reflection tool to improve how they can jointly address complex needs in the future</p>	<p>The Council has a strong track record of working with partners to support people in crisis.</p> <p>Our case management system, Abritas, and other referral pathways help us identify service users who present with complex needs.</p> <p>The identification of these needs led to the Council applying for Welsh Government Trail blazer funding to pilot a <a href="#">Housing First</a> project for offenders and an outreach project for those individuals deemed to have complex needs in partnership with <a href="#">Pobl</a> and our Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners who provide the support and accommodation.</p> <p>The outcomes from both these projects have been over and above what we expected. Some of our most complex and high-risk clients many of</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	RCT comment
	<p>whom have previously led extremely chaotic lives, have maintained their tenancies.</p> <p>Following the outcomes from the pilot projects. Housing First has been mainstreamed and these services can be commissioned to assist our clients who present with multiple support needs. These include chronic substance misuse, mental health needs, domestic abuse and offending backgrounds.</p> <p>Additional staffing resources have been secured through Housing Support Grant in 2021/22 to expand the Housing First project in RCT and to increase the number of service users who can be supported on the project.</p> <p>Funding for a project officer is also in place who will further develop the project including revising the referral form and putting in place an operational framework including an updated SLA and Information Sharing Protocol.</p>

[Better law making: the implementation challenge](#) – This national report sets out key findings and the four key questions that the Welsh Government and the Senedd should routinely address.

Published: 24 September 2020

Key Findings and Questions	RCT Comment
<p>Audit Wales considered some of the challenges faced by local authorities and other public bodies when trying to implement legislation on the ground.</p> <p>Key findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulatory Impact Assessments underestimate the costs associated with implementing legislation</li> <li>Local authorities struggle with capacity and find it difficult to implement new legislation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>Councils have over many years drawn the attention of Welsh Government to the local impact and implications of proposed changes to legislation, the changing partnership landscape and the potential resourcing requirements of the bodies/partnerships required to implement new laws.</p>

Key Findings and Questions	RCT Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of legislation often requires the Welsh Government to support local authorities and publish timely guidance, but this is not always provided nor is it sufficiently clear and aligned</li> <li>Different pieces of legislation and guidance are not sufficiently integrated to ensure public bodies are able to deliver their new responsibilities effectively and efficiently</li> </ul>	<p>Whilst the Council has a positive track record of allocating resources to meet and support new initiatives and laws, the key findings identified by the Auditor General reflect this Council's experience on the ground.</p>

## [Commercialisation in Local Government](#)

Published: 06 October 2020

Recommendation for Improvement	RCT Comment
<p><b>R1</b> - Undertaking commercialisation requires councils to have enough capacity, the right skills and robust but agile systems to be in place.</p> <p><b>We recommend that councils use our self-evaluation tools to develop a strategy for the extent to which they want to pursue commercialisation.</b></p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The Council has a good track record of using commercialisation as a tool to meet its business needs. This is explicate in our Corporate Priorities and our approach to delivering them as set out in our Corporate Plan 2020-24 – <a href="#">Making A Difference</a></p> <p>The Council's approach to Commercialisation was set out the Capital Strategy Report (sections 9.9-9.11), considered by <a href="#">Council</a> at its meeting on 10 March 2021.</p>