

Improvement Proposals in External Audit Reports 2018-2021

PART 1 - Local or regional reports that assess the work of Gwynedd Council

Key to the conclusions –

1. **Not commenced** - the report not yet considered.
2. **In the planning stages** - hold discussions in order to determine how to respond to the recommendations and plan if/how to implement.
3. **On-going** - agreement or action plan in place in order to respond to the recommendations and work has commenced.
4. **Completed** - action plan to respond to the recommendations being realised but it can be argued that the work of achieving the recommendations will never end as it is continuous work / or: the recommendations have been realised.

1. **Gwynedd Council - Overview and Scrutiny - Suitable for the Future?** - Local report to Gwynedd published June 2018
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Further develop scrutiny forward planning processes in order to:
 - provide a clear logic for selecting subjects;
 - focus more on outcomes and explain this to the public; and
 - ensure that the most suitable scrutiny method for the subject field and the desired outcome is used, and explain this to the public, and consider more innovative methods to undertake scrutiny activities
2. Review the type of scrutiny support needed to enable the scrutiny function to respond to current and future challenges.
3. Explain the role of scrutiny committee members and officers at service performance review meetings, ensure that committee members challenge the performance of services appropriately and hold officers to account.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

Scrutiny arrangements were reviewed before the start of this Council's term back in March 2017, and a thorough review of the efficiency of the arrangements was undertaken during 2019/20. A small working group of members and officers was established to undertake the review and as part of the work, workshops were held to consult with all elected members, Scrutiny Forum members, reporting to the Audit

and Governance Committee before the Full Council adopted the recommendation on 19 December 2019.

Progress against improvement proposals

1. Annual workshops are held to identify scrutiny forward programmes, prioritising the matters that genuinely need to be addressed. All members are given an opportunity to identify any matters that need to be scrutinised, and then the work is prioritised during the workshops ensuring a rational work programme for the coming year.
2. Our arrangements in terms of ensuring scrutiny support was reviewed during 2019/20 and the posts of Scrutiny Advisor and Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor were established to support the scrutiny work on a joint basis with the Democracy and Language Manager. Training for scrutiny members was developed as part of the workshops noted above, along with specific training for prospective scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs when undertaking virtual meetings.
3. Representatives from the scrutiny committees have attended internal performance challenge meetings since 2017, and they continue to attend under new arrangements that came into force since summer 2021. Scrutiny members are regularly reminded of the duty placed on them to challenge the work of officers and Cabinet Members, and they are supported to do so by members of the Democracy and Language Service. Scrutiny members, in turn, can report back to the scrutiny committees on any matters of concern they believe need further attention.

Conclusion

Completed.

2. **Gwynedd Council - Human Resources Information System** - Local report to Gwynedd published November 2018
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

- (i) Establish a formal benefit verification programme to be able to appropriately evaluate the aims of the development project.
1. Review technology options within the project:
 - (i) Improve access to enable more staff (for example, those who are in a remote location) to engage with the system.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

The Project Board is monitoring the benefits of the project in order to assess whether the resolution offers value for money to the Council. As a result, it is intended to undertake a market assessment in the near future in order to carry out a desktop comparison of what the Council is developing internally against what is available by commercial providers.

Progress against improvement proposals

A project has been established that is involved with finding out the IT skills level of staff who work in remote locations to see if they are making the best use of the Staff Self-service System. After the results are published, it is intended to draw up a work programme in order to address any gaps in terms of skills and also the availability of equipment.

Conclusion

On-going

3. The use of data by Local Government: Gwynedd Council

Local report for Gwynedd from Audit Wales published in January 2019

[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

The Authority needs to develop a more unified and corporate method to use data. Therefore, a change in culture and a stronger leadership in relation to data is essential in Gwynedd, and it will support the work of creating an environment that deals with data as a key resource. This will help to extend the advantages of making decisions under the guidance of data to every service area, and help to improve transparency and democracy.

Updating the data sharing protocols and providing refresher training sessions, focusing on what people can do instead of what they cannot do, will help to ensure that service managers know what they can share and at what times they can do so and, therefore, will help to avoid any case of evading from unnecessary and incommensurable risks in relation to data sharing.

The Authority should build on the work undertaken by its research and analytics unit in order to review the range and quality of information that is required by decision-makers, along with the format to submit that information. This will enable the Authority to determine standards in terms of reporting on data in order to ensure that the data submitted to senior officers and Elected Members is

accessible, easy to understand and supports decision-makers to exercise their responsibilities in a way that is as effective as possible.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

The report and improvement recommendations were discussed at the Information Governance Operational Panel, and the matter is included in the Council's Risk Register (Governance level): "Fails to maximise the potential of information when supporting the business of the Council and fails to meet statutory standards".

Progress against improvement proposals

The Council's Information Plan 2021-26 was adopted by the Cabinet in January 2021. Along with the associated action plan, this sets out the Council's direction in the field of information over the coming years and includes the matters noted in the report.

Conclusion

On-going

4. **Inspection Report: Gwynedd Domiciliary Care Services** - Local report for Gwynedd from Care Inspectorate Wales published in January 2019

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Staff training (Regulation 16 (2)(a)). We saw that the frequency of staff training was inconsistent and staff training records had not been updated. The idea of providing a consistent and equal level of training for staff had also been recommended in the previous inspection. We have not served a notice on this occasion as we did not see that this had had a negative impact on the well-being of people or on staff development. Every staff member we spoke to stated that they believed the training provision could be improved and this was acknowledged by the management team.
2. Report on service quality (Regulation 23 (1), (2) and (3)). We saw that the service had not completed an annual report on the quality of the service and it had not consulted with those using the service or their representatives. We have not served a notice on this occasion as we did not see that this had had a negative impact on the well-being of people or on the care and support provided.
3. There is a need to review service delivery plans and risk assessments in a timely manner.

4. The service needs to improve the way it documents and records formal and informal discussions with families/representatives and staff. This will ensure that a clear audit direction can be followed.
5. Ensure that staff receive timely and regular formal supervision sessions and an annual evaluation, and keep an up-to-date record of the meetings held.
6. There is a need to update the service's information sheet and it needs to include the correct CIW contact details.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

All of these matters have been addressed at internal and external meetings with partners to discuss the proposals of the Domiciliary Care Project. These meetings continue and they include one-to-one and group conversations with providers, conversations with staff and unions and of course presentations to Council members on the project via the Care Scrutiny Committee and other forums. Another cycle of conversations with members on the progress of the project will be held during September/October this year.

Progress against improvement proposals

The Department has responded to all recommendations based on seeking short-term resolutions to improve services. Also, priority was given to learn lessons and ensure that all matters that needed to be addressed are considered in the Domiciliary Care Project, which reshapes the domiciliary care provision and the working model/method in the field of domiciliary care for the next few years. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 situation has been given priority over this work programme and the Department has now restarted the work. It is hoped that the new arrangements will be in place by spring 2022 and that outcomes will be realised at that time for county residents and of course care staff. It should be noted that the Domiciliary Care Project aims to achieve outcomes across all provision, whether internal or external.

Conclusion

On-going.

5. **The Well-being of Future Generations: Audit of 'Establishing a New Youth Service to Support Young People' - Gwynedd Council** - Local report for Gwynedd from Care Inspectorate Wales published in September 2019

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Although it had responded to the opinion of service users, the Council's method is mainly reactive and it is steered by a changing operational context - specifically, financial constraints. The Council's perception of the advantages of establishing an implementation model that can be increased or reduced in response to needs, is mainly involved with helping to respond easier to budgetary pressures.
2. Data sources used to enlighten the new model mainly focused on understanding the needs of current service users and not much use of data was made to model the service demand in future.
3. The newly remodelled mobile service is more able to be present on a temporary basis, as and when required and it has more ability to be more dynamic in terms of responding to social matters, helping to prevent them from exacerbating.
4. Increasing the effective use of data will give the Council a better understanding of fundamental cases, matters and service demand. This will help the Council to think more widely and use a more integrated method in terms of early intervention and prevention.
5. There is limited evidence to reflect that the Council has considered how this step contributes towards its wider well-being objectives, those of its partners or the seven national well-being aims. The Council did not use an integrated method when remodelling its youth service. Although the well-being objectives of the Council and partners had not been confirmed when the remodelling process commenced, its reactive method in nature, which was stimulated by financial considerations, meant that wider priorities were not considered effectively.
6. The Council places a large emphasis on applying a 'citizen-focused' method, namely 'Ffordd Gwynedd', when implementing the action. However, in the action reviewed, the Council could not fully show that 'Ffordd Gwynedd' incorporated the sustainable development principle and the five ways of working. Doing so would facilitate more integration.
7. Although it created more opportunities to collaborate on an operational level, the Council cannot show that it has considered how to work strategically with partners to achieve the step. This reflects our findings in relation to integration.
8. One partner stated that a negative change had been seen in terms of engaging with the Council's youth service after it was newly remodelled, as this had unfavourably affected the preventative objectives and activities of the partner. Again, this reflects our findings in relation to integration.

9. The absence of a clear message stating the intention to close all the existing youth clubs in the 'Gwynedd Youth Service for Tomorrow' video is a key weakness in terms of how the Council conveyed potential changes to service users and citizens.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

In the report to the Audit Committee on 18 November 2019, it was noted that the Council had noted a desire to seek a further discussion with Wales Audit Office on the outcomes and improvement proposals of the Youth Service audit. See the minutes of the Full Council dated 3 October 2019.

A Progress Report on remodelling the Youth Service was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 23 January 2020. This report did not refer to the improvement recommendations as the discussion with the Audit Office continued.

Progress against improvement proposals

Audit Wales agreed to undertake a follow-up review of the implementation of the new youth service model as a response to the concerns of the Full Council that their original report had not considered the quality of the new youth model.

It had been intended to complete the review during 2020-21 but due to the Covid-19 crisis, the work had been postponed. An agreement was made on a brief for the review in January 2021 but a completion timetable is yet to be confirmed. The review intends to examine the quality of the provision under the arrangements of the new model. The Youth Service has not implemented the new model since the beginning of the crisis due to the need for them to adapt to respond to the needs of young people, and due to the fact that pandemic restrictions prevented them from providing some elements of the service entirely. Remedial work is already afoot but we do not anticipate that the Youth Service will fully restore to the new model for some time yet.

Conclusion

On-going.

6. **Gwynedd Council - The Well-being of Future Generations: Audit - Presenting Care Services with Five Area Teams** - Local report for Gwynedd from Audit Wales published in January 2020
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Long-term - The Council celebrates the functional differences seen in each area, but it is unclear whether the differences are intended or not or can the Council be certain that citizens across the county have fair access to services.
2. Long-term - Without the analysis of rational data to understand the demand and impact in terms of current and future need, the Council uses verbal imagery and case studies to capture individuals' stories. A better use of data would improve the Council's ability to formulate the service and to determine whether or not it was successful.
3. Long-term - Time-out and a review while considering the effectiveness, the economy and efficiency of current resolutions in each of the area teams, assessing what works well and not as well, would assist the Council to note the next steps for every location.
4. Long-term - The Council needs to develop a sustainable resources model for the Area Teams (people, place, funding) in the medium-term to the long-term, which would reduce uncertainty.
5. Prevention - Although the preventative agenda is an inherent part of the operation of the five area teams, the Council and its partners could:
 - a. do much more to encourage people to present earlier and benefit from the advantages of preventative/earlier intervention.
 - b. further examine the potential of data analytics to move forward with the preventative agenda. For example, demand/size, the types of services required and a deeper understanding of the fundamental causes of issues the service seeks to address.
6. Integration - Council officers we spoke to verbally expressed an awareness of the impact of their activity on the Council's other well-being objectives and the national well-being aims, but this is not formally recognised or recorded.
7. Integration - The Council is aware of the impact of its activity on BCUHB well-being objectives, but it can do more to engage and integrate with other stakeholders and potential partners.
8. Integration - Moving forward to search for and develop a full range of internal and external partners and helping to support the action to provide a genuinely joined-up service would bring benefits.

9. Collaboration - Third sector bodies expressed a desire to engage more with the Council, and they were eager to develop more opportunities to contribute to the well-being agenda;
10. Collaboration - Although it is not intended for hubs to be a physical location for individuals to present themselves, the result of the hubs potentially is that people will be present at those locations, therefore, the Council needs to consider how it would manage this situation as it appears that there is no formal presence in some of the hubs.
11. Collaboration - Staff recognises the additional value of proactive cooperation with groups such as general practitioners and the third sector, but the Council needs to do more to ensure that such benefits are provided in every community.
12. Contents - Community connectors map opportunities for individuals to undertake activities and support in the community. Although there are plans to publish the information in booklets, the Council needs to make the best use of other outlets such as social media and on-line content.
13. Contents - Some representatives from the third sector suggested that engaging with the Council had become difficult, and that opportunities to contribute were more limited, mainly due to concerns that the third sector collaborative body is not entirely independent in providing services any more, and there could be a conflict when representing the range of third sector viewpoints.
14. Corporate - The Council places a large emphasis on applying its 'citizen-focused' approach, 'Ffordd Gwynedd'. When managing the messages that relate to its way of working, the evidence or examples of Council officers who are educated in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are scarce. As a result, a number of officers could not show that they had given consideration to the principle of sustainable development or the five ways of working. The Council could better demonstrate that 'Ffordd Gwynedd' fully incorporates the five way of working by using key phrases within its general vision. This would show more clearly how these aspects are included as part of the Council's decision-making process.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

A number of the improvement proposals highlighted by Audit Wales in this report are observations rather than clear recommendations. The report was published in January 2020 and the Department recognises that the response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been a priority in the period since then. A number of the improvement

proposals are very similar to actions taken under other work programmes within the Department such as developing the arrangements of the Community Resource Teams, integrating with the Health Board, supporting carers, promoting preventative work and co-production with service users, carers and providers. They are also relevant to priorities such as Ffordd Gwynedd and the Department continues to strive to root these principles in every aspect of its work.

Progress against improvement proposals

Improving arrangements to gather and use data and information is addressed within the Department in order to facilitate the day-to-day work and also to feed the corporate performance challenge system. Whilst good data is gathered in some fields, gaps remain in other fields due to historical arrangements, the weaknesses of systems or a lack of multi-agency arrangements. Steps are in the pipeline to try to overcome some of these problems and to ensure that data in future will be a more solid foundation to shape and provide care services.

It is intentionally attempted to shape services based on very local needs, while also reflecting the support and supporting and preventative provision that are in those local areas. The Department does not believe that a 'one size fits all' system is suitable due to the differing circumstances between communities. The Department reflects on progress on a regular basis and provides an opportunity to adapt where appropriate.

The improvement proposals made in relation to integration and collaboration reflect the observations of Department officers during the work of preparing the report. The wider work programmes of the Department already include measures that will contribute to the delivery of the proposals presented by Audit Wales. Whilst elements are adapted as we reflect and learn, it is not considered that a separate work programme is needed to respond to the matters raised here.

The Department gives high priority to establish a strong working relationship with partners across the sectors and seeks to include them when reviewing work processes and plans and when redesigning those arrangements where practically possible. It is recognised that there is always room to strengthen this as we emerge from the Covid-19 period, there will be an opportunity again to consider how we could build on what is already in place, whether it be adaptations to the work arrangements of the Department or among the partners.

It is believed that the Council is very aware of the possibility that the relationship and correlation between Ffordd Gwynedd and the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations Act is not entirely clear to all. However, the basic principles in both are pretty constant and are moving us in the right direction. Over time, as arrangements will mature further, communicated messages will be able to make the connection

more apparent with the hope that this will increase momentum to deliver the joint-objectives.

Conclusion

Completed.

7. **Review of the work of local authorities to support their learning communities in schools and pupil referral units (PRUs)** - Local report (letter) for Gwynedd from Estyn dated 18 January 2021.

This letter is a follow-up to a national thematic report published on 15 January 2021 - [Support for local authorities and regional consortia for schools and PRUs to respond to COVID-19](#)

A letter was received from the Chief Inspector of Estyn describing the work undertaken by Gwynedd Council between March and October 2020 to respond to learning challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic. There are descriptions of the work undertaken and a few observations on the success of the work; there are no firm recommendations for future implementation. To summarise; the letter does not highlight matters of concern that require action.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

The letter was shared with the Chief Executive, the Cabinet Member for Education, the Head of Education Department and members of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

The annual report of the Education Department was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 4 February 2021, and sections of the contents of the letter are quoted in this report.

Progress against improvement proposals

The observations made in the letter are receiving consideration from the Department and the Cabinet Member whilst planning how to support schools and learners during the next phase as the pandemic fades.

Conclusion

On-going

8. **Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Assurance Audit 2021: Social Services, Gwynedd Council** - Local report for Gwynedd from Care Inspectorate Wales published in March 2021

[Link to the letter on the Gwynedd Council website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

As there is no list or summary of improvement proposals within the letter, but instead observations that need to be read within their contexts, there will be a need to read the letter in its entirety by following the above link.

The letter states - "The main purpose of this assurance audit was to see how well the social services of the local authority continue to help and support adults and children, focusing on safety and well-being."

The letter, along with a supporting report, was submitted to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet in May - [Report to a meeting of the Cabinet 18 May 2021](#) - asking them to accept the contents of the letter. The report that accompanied the letter summarises the main matters the Council believe that should be addressed in future.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

An agreement was reached on the response of the Council to the improvement proposals in the letter following discussions:

- Social Services Statutory Team (Corporate Director, Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department, Head of Children and Supporting Families Department)
- Strategic Safeguarding Panel
- Cabinet

The letter was also shared with the Chair of the Care Scrutiny Committee.

Progress against improvement proposals

The proposals to improve elements of all services are addressed within the work programmes of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Children and Supporting Families Department. Some of these matters were already being addressed when the letter was received, and others have been newly added.

The progress in performance on all of these matters is addressed in performance challenge meetings (where members of scrutiny committees are present) and in the Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services.

Conclusion

Completed.

PART 2 - national or general reports that are relevant to Local Government

1. **How does Local Government Manage Demand - Homelessness** - National Report by Audit Wales published in January 2018
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. We recommend that local authorities should do the following:
 - ensure that their staff are sufficiently able to deal with the new requirements of mediation, problem-solving, negotiating and influencing with homeless people; and
 - review and reorganise their services to engage more effectively with homeless people and those who could be homeless in order to prevent homelessness.
2. We recommend that local authorities should do the following:
 - draw up services to ensure that there is early contact with service users;
 - use triage methods to note and filter individuals who ask for help in order to determine the most appropriate response to address their needs; and
 - test the effectiveness of first point of contact services in order to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
3. We recommend that local authorities publish service standards that clearly note what their responsibilities are and how they will provide services in order to ensure that people know what they have the right to receive and what they have to do for themselves. Service standards should:
 - be written in accessible and simple language.
 - be accurate in terms of what applicants can expect and not expect, and when they can expect it to be resolved.
 - note clearly the role of the applicant in the process and how they can help the process to run more smoothly and quickly.
 - be drawn up on a joint basis with experts in the field and include people who use the service(s).
 - integrate effectively with the individual assessment process.
 - offer viable alternative options to authority services.
 - note the appeals and complaints processes. These should be based on fairness and equality for everyone in question and they should be available for all.
4. In order to improve current performance, we recommend that local authorities make better use of their websites in order to help manage demand by:

- testing the usefulness and effectiveness of existing information on websites by using our enquiry phone lines noted in Appendix 5;
 - increase and improve the range, quality and scope of on-line information; make better use of on-line programmes; and
 - link more effectively with information from specialist providers and advice experts, such as Citizens' Advice Bureau.
5. We recommend that local authorities note and agree on what they expect from partners, noting how they will collaborate in order to alleviate homelessness. This agreement should be reviewed regularly and the performance of partners should be reviewed in order to note fields for improvement.
6. We recommend that local authorities address weaknesses in their equality monitoring method and ensure that their homelessness service records and evaluates appropriate data correctly in order to show equal access for service users of which the local authority has a duty towards.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

Our working arrangements in relation to homelessness have been the subject of many internal and public meetings recently including the Care Scrutiny Committee in March 2021 and the Cabinet on 20 April 2021. The recommendations of the report have underpinned the restructuring within our Homelessness units, which are currently being implemented following the Cabinet's approval in April.

The number of homelessness presentations has substantially increased during the pandemic and the restructuring will enable us to respond and increase our capacity to provide support and early intervention to those who present as homeless.

Progress against improvement proposals

In July 2019, the Cabinet approved our Housing Strategy. Furthermore, our Housing Action Plan was approved by the Cabinet at its meeting on 15 December 2020 noting how we would proceed to achieve the objective that no one is homeless in Gwynedd. Collaborating with partners is a key part of realising this objective.

We have planned on a joint basis with experts to ensure that our service standards and the information we provide, which includes our responsibilities, is understandable.

One of the projects of the Housing Action Plan, which is currently being developed, is the establishment of a 'One Stop Shop' for housing issues and, as a result, our website and engagement arrangements will further evolve over the next few months.

Conclusion

On-going.

2. **Housing Adaptations** - National Report by Audit Wales published in February 2018

[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. We recommend that local authorities should work with partner authorities (health bodies, housing associations and Care and Repair) to reinforce their strategic focus when providing adaptations by:
 - setting appropriate strategic objectives for adaptations that focus on well-being and independence;
 - improve the quality of information on the demand for adaptations by using a wide range of data to assess need, including seeking and using information by partners working in the local authority area; and
 - connect the system to manage and deliver adaptations with policies and adapted housing registers in order to make the best use of homes already adapted.

2. We recommend that supply organisations should provide information on housing adaptation in Welsh and English, in accessible forms including Braille, large fonts, audio versions and other languages. Information should be promoted widely via a range of media, including social media, websites, and published information, and also through key partners. Ideally, information should be produced on a joint basis and policies should be aligned between supply bodies in order to extend their scope and increase their use.

3. As there is a vast number of pathways to follow in order to access services, supply organisations need to ensure that they have robust systems to deal with applications quickly and effectively. However, we saw that the processes used by supply organisations varied greatly, and that they often created difficulties for disabled people and older people who seek support (paragraphs 2.16 to 2.19). We recommend that supply organisations should simplify the application process by creating one comprehensive application form for every organisation within a local authority area. The form should be available via partners and on-line.

4. A variety of factors can cause delay when undertaking adaptations (paragraphs 2.20 to 2.33). In order to improve the timeliness of supply, we recommend the following:
 - that local authorities provide or use home improvement agency services to assist disabled and older people to pursue their DFG applications efficiently;

- that supply organisations work with planning authorities to speed up and simplify the process for adaptations that require approval;
- that supply organisations use Trusted Assessors to undertake assessments for adaptation work of a simpler nature.

5. We recommend that supply organisations:

- introduce formal systems to accredit contractors to deliver adaptation work.

These should include:

- customer care standards such as keeping appointments, keeping the site tidy, noise control etc.;
 - audit financial position, tax status and VAT;
 - promote good health and safety practices;
 - a requirement to use guarantee schemes;
 - ensure sufficient insurance cover; and
 - request references.
- use framework agreements and contracts through a partnership to deliver adaptations;
 - address weaknesses when issuing adaptations on a contract, update the Rates List used to tender out work and undertake competitive tendering exercises in order to support value for money when tendering work out in a contract;
 - develop effective systems to manage and evaluate the performance of contracts by:
 - determining an appropriate range of information in order to determine the performance and achievement of the work, including the timeliness of the work; quality of the work; feedback of applicants/tenants; cost of the work (including variations); record in terms of health and safety; and customer feedback.
 - evaluate and report on performance regularly in order to find opportunities to improve services; and
 - provide formal feedback to contractors on their performance, discussing key matters such as client satisfaction, the level of any variation and how acceptable it is, work that is accurate the first time, post-inspection assessment and completing on time in accordance with the budget.

6. We recommend that local authorities should collaborate with partner authorities (health bodies, housing associations and Care and Repair) to develop and improve collaboration arrangements. The aim will be to increase the maximum use and benefit associated with adaptations in terms of supporting independence by merging resources, co-locating staff and creating integrated delivery teams.

7. In order to improve the use and number of people who take advantage of adaptations with health bodies, we recommend that supply organisations should jointly agree on joint service standards to deliver adaptations in every local

authority area, and publish those joint-standards. It should be clearly noted in the service standards how every agency will go ahead to deliver adaptations, and provide services to ensure that people know what they have the right to receive.

Service Standards should:

- be in an accessible and comprehensible language;
- be accurate in terms of what people can expect/not expect to receive;
- be drawn up on a joint basis to include all adaptation services within an area;
- note eligibility for the different funding streams, the application and assessment processes, time-scales and review processes; and
- offer the potential options and the alternative choices to adaptation, which include linking with adapted housing registers to make the best possible use of homes that have already been adapted.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

The Housing Action Plan was submitted to Gwynedd Council Cabinet in December 2020, which includes our commitment to housing adaptations over the coming years. It was also discussed in detail at the Scrutiny Committee in January 2020.

We hold quarterly meetings with partners (Council departments, Health Board, Care and Repair) that encompass those recommendations.

Progress against improvement proposals

In December 2020, the Housing Action Plan was approved by Gwynedd Council Cabinet with £7.2m earmarked for 6 years for DFG and £600k for smaller adaptations (Enable).

The recommendations have been considered when drawing up our working arrangements. We are collaborating with partners such as Care and Repair, other Council departments, and the Health Board, with referrals being made via the Authority's Occupational Therapists.

We have appropriate systems in place to administrate the housing adaptations. Our contractors have been verified through a robust process and we are currently in the process of establishing a new framework of qualified and accredited contractors to undertake the adaptations. We are appointing agencies to facilitate the process for applicants of cases that require substantial adaptations.

One of the projects of the Housing Action Plan, which is currently being developed, is the establishment of a 'One Stop Shop' for housing issues and, as a result, access to this service via our website and engagement arrangements will further evolve over the next few months.

Conclusion

On-going.

3. Speak my language: Overcoming language and communication barriers in public services - National Report by Audit Wales Audit published April 2018

[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Public bodies must ensure that everyone can get the services they need. To be mindful of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and other legislation, we recommend that public bodies should undertake regular reviews to ascertain how they make services available to people who do not speak Welsh or English as their main language, including deaf people who use sign language. Our checklist can be used as part of this assessment.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

The improvement proposal has been addressed in developing the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 and the Equality and Inclusion Policy.

Progress against improvement proposals

The following work has been achieved in the field since April 2018:

- In the Annual Report 2017-18, Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20 (accepted by the Cabinet in September 2018) an Objective was added namely "Improve our information provision for people who do not use Welsh or English as a first language".
- In preparing Objectives for the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 (adopted by the Cabinet in September 2020) it was decided that the best way forward would be to work on an Objective to gather information about local needs and aspirations (namely Objective 2 in the Plan). A public consultation was planned to collect the information but the work had to be delayed slightly due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as it was not possible to meet face to face, which made it much more difficult for us to target user groups such as those who do not speak Welsh or English as a main language, and deaf people.
- An on-line questionnaire was held between February and May 2021 to find the obstacles our service users face when dealing with the Council and we will continue to do this consistently in the future. There is also an intention to carry out further work between September and December and target specific groups using different methods of engagement.

- The Equality and Inclusion Policy was adopted by the Cabinet on 6 July 2021. It includes the principle of providing information in alternative formats and we will be raising awareness on the contents of the Policy between September 2021 and August 2022. To help to realise this we are updating information on how to provide alternative formats on the Council's intranet, and the work will be completed between August and October 2021.

Outcome

Completed.

4. **Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities** - National Report by Audit Wales published in May 2018
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. We recommend that local authorities should continue to focus on preventing people from becoming dependent on more expensive placements in care homes by providing effective support at home and a range of step up accommodation by doing the following:
 - improving the evaluation of prevention activity so local authorities understand what works well and why.
 - utilising the mapping of prevention services under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 that covers other agencies and service providers;
 - improving the signposting of additional help so carers and support networks can be more resilient and self-reliant. This should include encouraging carers to make long-term plans for care to maintain and protect their dependant's wellbeing.
 - sharing risk analysis and long-term planning data with other local authorities, service providers, and partners to agree a shared understanding of the range of options.
2. We recommend that local authorities improve their approach to planning services for people with learning disabilities by building on the Regional Partnership Boards population assessments for people with learning disabilities and agreeing future priorities.
3. We recommend that local authorities do more to integrate commissioning arrangements with partners and providers and take account of the work of the National Commissioning Board by:

- understanding the barriers that exist in stopping or hindering further integration;
 - improving the quality of joint strategic plans for learning disability services (see also paragraphs 3.11 to 3.14);
 - establishing investment models and sustainable financial structures, joint workforce planning and multi-year budgeting; and
 - developing appropriate governance and data sharing frameworks with key local partners that include a clear process for managing risk and failure.
4. We recommend that local authorities do more to involve people with learning disabilities and their carers in care planning and agreeing pathways to further independence by:
- consistently including people with learning disabilities and their carers in the writing, monitoring and development of care plans;
 - systematically involving carers and advocacy groups in evaluating the quality of services;
 - include people with learning disabilities in procurement processes; and
 - ensuring communications are written in accessible and appropriate language to improve the understanding and impact of guidance and information.
5. We recommend that local authorities collaborate with providers, the third sector and suppliers in understanding challenges, sharing data, and pooling expertise by:
- improving the quality range, and accessibility of tendering information; and
 - working with providers to shape local markets by coming to a common understanding of the opportunities, risks, and future priorities in providing learning disabilities services.
6. We recommend that local authorities develop a more appropriate set of performance indicators and measures of success that make it easier to monitor and demonstrate the impact of service activity by:
- co-designing measures, service and contract performance indicators with service providers, people with learning disabilities and their carers;
 - ensure commissioners have sufficient cost and qualitative information on the full range of placement and care options available;
 - equipping commissioners with data to demonstrate the long term financial benefits of commissioning choices, this includes having the right systems and technology;
 - integrating the outcomes and learning from reviews of care plans into performance measures;
 - evaluating and then learning from different types of interventions and placements; and

- including learning disability services in local authority scrutiny reviews to challenge performance and identify improvements.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

This matter was being addressed before this national work was commissioned. This field has been discussed in internal meeting for years and specific work has been done to establish a clear picture of accommodation needs in the learning disability field. The focus of these discussions has been on finding and programming local interventions to respond to the demand rather than on strategic matters. The general recommendations of this report have been part of the context of these internal discussions.

A report on the latest situation was submitted to the Care Scrutiny Committee in July 2021.

Progress against improvement proposals

The Department has looked at the local information and data which provides an accurate picture to try to anticipate the real demand for accommodation for individuals with learning disabilities in Gwynedd. This has included an analysis of the needs of individuals who receive service and young people in transition age. The Department has also continued to review out of county cases with the long-term objective of seeking to provide them support close to home where practicably possible.

The Department's work programme includes looking at housing provision in the community and a provision of more specialist placements to meet more severe needs. With these two elements the Department is working closely with our partners who include housing associations, care services providers and of course individuals and their families. The Learning Disabilities Transformation Group which includes providers and carer representatives has also contributed.

There are discussions in the pipeline to improve accommodation and care provision at Y Frondeg, Caernarfon with the intention also of expanding the provision on a new model basis and create opportunities to facilitate individuals to receive care nearer to home.

There has been significant investment in Tan y Marian, Pwllheli to offer respite care accommodation provision to support carers and their families and there is further investment to upgrade the home itself.

There are discussions in the pipeline with the housing associations, the Housing and Property Department and care providers to upgrade existing accommodation on offering a new purpose-built provision for individuals who are already being supported and others who could benefit from care in the community.

The need for suitable accommodation provision for individuals with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities is a core consideration in shaping plans for social housing and for health and care placements. This includes potential developments of the Dyffryn Nantlle Health and Care Hub and redeveloping the Penrhos site near Pwllheli.

Outcome

Completed.

5. Local Government Services to Rural Communities - National Report by Audit Wales published in December 2018

[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. The role of Public Service Boards is evolving but there are opportunities to articulate a clearer and more ambitious shared vision for rural Wales (see paragraphs 2.2 to 2.9 and 2.28 to 2.31). We recommend that PSB public services partners respond more effectively to the challenges faced by rural communities by:
 - assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their different rural communities using the Welsh Governments Rural Proofing Tool and identify and agree the local and strategic actions needed to support community sustainability; and
 - ensuring the Local Well-Being Plan sets out a more optimistic and ambitious vision for 'place' with joint priorities co-produced by partners and with citizens to address agreed challenge
2. To help sustain rural communities, public services need to think differently in the future (see paragraphs 3.1 to 3.12). We recommend councils provide a more effective response to the challenges faced by rural communities by:
 - ensuring service commissioners have cost data and qualitative information on the full range of service options available; and
 - using citizens' views on the availability, affordability, accessibility, adequacy and acceptability of council services to shape the delivery and integration of services.
3. To help sustain rural communities, public services need to think differently in the future (see paragraphs 3.1 to 3.12). We recommend councils do more to develop community resilience and self-help by:
 - working with relevant bodies such as the Wales Co-operative Centre to support social enterprise and more collaborative business models;

- providing tailored community outreach for those who face multiple barriers to accessing public services and work;
- enhancing and recognising the role of town and community councils by capitalising on their local knowledge and supporting them to do more;
- encouraging a more integrated approach to service delivery in rural areas by establishing pan-public service community hubs, networks of expertise, and clusters of advice and prevention services
- enabling local action by supporting community asset transfer identifying which assets are suitable to transfer, and having the right systems in place to make things happen; and
- improving community-based leadership by developing networks of interest, training and coaching, and encouraging volunteering.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

The report has not been discussed at Public Services Board meetings.

Progress against improvement proposals

Response to Improvement Proposal 1 - The Public Service Board (PSB) will assess the state of our communities as part of the Well-being Assessments 2021/22. This will be an opportunity for all PSB partners to develop an understanding of the well-being matters that affect our communities. The PSB will give consideration to cooperative steps to respond to them in our Well-being plan that will be published in 2023.

The PSB has considered the questions of the Welsh Government's Rural Proofing tool and should the PSB introduce a change in policy they would be able to make use of the tool.

Improvement proposals 2 & 3 – the Economy and Community Department has worked closely with Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig to establish community hubs. At the moment 'makerspaces', 'repair cafes' and hot-desking facilities are being created in 8 communities across the county. These resources support and enhance activities and resources already in place.

Historically, some of the council's assets have been transferred to communities of community groups – eg. Rhyd Ddu Outdoor Centre transferred to Antur Nantlle to be run as a bunk house; the library in Deiniolen was transferred to Menter Fachwen.

Specific workshops have been held under the guidance of Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig and the LEADER programme for communities which have identified certain challenges – eg. how to preserve the Welsh language in the Nefyn area; workshops dealing with the problem of litter in Dyffryn Nantlle. A programme is being developed to deliver information/training to communities on how to recognise a challenge and how to respond, by looking at the principles of being innovative.

At the moment the council is working on establishing Regeneration Projects for the county. Gwynedd has been split into 13 areas and a project will be developed for each one. We are currently at the first stage of consulting with active community groups and community and town councils in order to discover their views on what is important to them and how to build a model of co-working which will deliver on those priorities.

In general, the council considers the needs of rural communities when planning all our work, but Ffordd Gwynedd and the requirements of the Socio-economic Duty means that we will record how those needs are met. Work is underway to update the equality impact assessment form for this purpose.

Outcome

Completed.

6. Provision of Local Government Service to Rural Communities: Community Asset Transfer - National Report by Audit Wales published in December 2018
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Local authorities need to do more to make CATs simpler and more appealing, help build the capacity of community and town councils, give them more guidance in raising finance, and look to support other community development models such as social enterprises that support social value and citizen involvement. In addition, we recommend that local authorities monitor and publish CAT numbers and measure the social impact of CATs.
2. Local authorities have significant scope to provide better and more visible help and support before, during, and after the community asset transfer process. We conclude that there is considerable scope to improve the business planning, preparation, and after-care for community asset transfer. We recommend that local authorities:
 - identify community assets transfer's role in establishing community hubs, networks of expertise and clusters of advice and prevention services;
 - work with town and community councils to develop their ability to take on more CATs;

- identify which assets are suitable to transfer, and clarify what the authority needs to do to enable their transfer;
- ensure their CAT policy adequately covers after-care, long term support, post transfer support, signposting access to finance, and sharing the learning about what works well; and
- support community-based leadership by developing networks of interest, training and coaching, and encouraging volunteering.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

Please refer to comments regarding report number 5 above.

Progress against improvement proposals

Please refer to comments regarding report number 5 above. There are several active programmes to support rural communities, and some of these involve providing resources or assets which are fit for purpose. This does not always involve the transfer of Council assets, but these needs will become more apparent as the work on the regeneration projects proceeds.

Outcome

On-going.

7. **The maturity of local government in use of data** - National Report by Audit Wales published in December 2018
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. We recommend that local authorities:
 - have a clear vision that treats data as a key resource;
 - establish corporate data standards and coding that all services use for their core data;
 - undertake an audit to determine what data is held by services and identify any duplicated records and information requests; and
 - create a central integrated customer account as a gateway to services.
2. Part 2 of the report notes that whilst it is important that authorities comply with relevant data protection legislation, they also need to share data with partners to ensure citizens receive efficient and effective services. Whilst these two things are not mutually exclusive,

uncertainty on data protection responsibilities is resulting in some officers not sharing data, even where there is agreement to provide partners with information. We recommend that local authorities:

- provide refresher training to service managers to ensure they know when and what data they can and cannot share; and
- review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities.

3. In Part 3 of our report, we conclude that adequate resources and sufficient capacity are ongoing challenges. However, without upskilling staff to make better use of data, authorities are missing opportunities to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

We recommend that local authorities:

- identify staff who have a role in analysing and managing data to remove duplication and free up resources to build and develop capacity in data usage; and
- invest and support the development of staff data analytical, mining and segmentation skills.

4. Part 4 of our report highlights that authorities have more to do to create a data-driven decision-making culture and to unlock the potential of the data they hold. We recommend that local authorities:

- set data reporting standards to ensure minimum data standards underpin decision making; and
- make more open data available.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

The report and improvement recommendations were discussed at the Information Governance Operational Panel, and the matter is included in the Council's Risk Register (Governance level): "Fails to maximise the potential of information when supporting the business of the Council and fails to meet statutory standards".

Progress against improvement proposals

The Council's Information Plan 2021-26 was adopted by the Cabinet in January 2021. Along with the associated action plan, this sets out the Council's direction in the field of information over the coming years and includes the matters noted in the report.

Outcome

Completed.

- 8. The Effectiveness of Local Planning Authorities in Wales** - National Report by Audit Wales published in June 2019
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. That Local Planning Authorities:
 - (i) test current engagement and involvement practices and consider the full range of other options available to ensure involvement activities are fit for purpose;
 - (ii) use 'Place Plans' as a vehicle to engage and involve communities and citizens in planning choices and decision making; and
2. Improve capacity by working regionally to:
 - (i) develop joint supplementary planning guidance; and
3. We recommend that local planning authorities improve the effectiveness of planning committees by:
 - (i) reviewing their scheme of delegation to ensure planning committees are focussed on the most important strategic issues relevant to their authority;

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

The recommendations have been discussed as part of the work of maintaining the Joint Planning Policy Service and reviewing the delegation plan. See the details in the 'progress' description below.

Progress against improvement proposals

1. We are already holding the Planning Committee, Joint Planning Policy Committee, training sessions and awareness raising, offering advice / discussions with developers on a virtual platform.
We will consider opportunities to contribute towards Place Plans if they arise, but no opportunities / proposals have arisen so far. It is noted that there is no statutory requirement to prepare Place Plans.
2. We have established the Joint Planning Policy Service with Isle of Anglesey County Council since 2011, and have adopted the Joint Local Development Plan in 2017. Since then, 9 Joint Supplementary Planning Guidance have been adopted.
3. The planning delegation scheme was reviewed following a Scrutiny Investigation in 2017 with the new plan being reported to the Communities

Scrutiny Committee before being ratified by the Council in May 2018. A further report had been submitted to the Communities Scrutiny Committee in 2020 to provide an update on the implementation of the Delegation Scheme and to explain the arrangements for consulting on applications and the recommendations and associated work arrangements were supported.

Outcome

Completed.

9. **The 'Front Door' to adult social care** - National Report by Audit Wales published in September 2019
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. To improve awareness of the front door we recommend that - local authorities
 - 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';
 - 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;
 - ensure that advocacy services are commissioned and proactively offered to those who need them at first point of contact; and
 - to take local ownership and lead on the co-ordination and editing of local information published on Dewis Cymru locally.

2. To improve awareness of the front door we recommend that - local authorities
 - map the availability of preventative services in their area to better understand current levels of provision and identify gaps and duplication;
 - involve third-sector partners in co-producing preventative solutions to meet people's needs and ensure people have equitable access to these services;
 - work with third-sector partners to tailor and commission new services where gaps are identified; and
 - work with partners to improve data to evaluate the impact of preventative services on individuals and the population more generally.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

The matters raised in this report have fed into discussions on development plans and the broader transformation of the Department and this has and is being addressed through work programmes and other reports. Some of them have also been part of reports that have been submitted to the Care Scrutiny Committee. For example, it should be noted there is a need to strengthen and improve the front door to care services and the development of preventative services has received considerable attention through the Supporting People Board.

Progress against improvement proposals

The matters have been, and are being addressed as part of the Department's broader work and in fact through corporate efforts based on the priorities of the Supporting People Board. The departmental work includes the joint work with the Health Board to establish and develop the Community Resources Teams and the significant transformation work that is in the pipeline. It also intertwines with the Home Care Project. It is considered that the work to improve the front door and develop preventative services are central to these elements.

Outcome

Completed.

10. Review of Public Services Board - National Report by Audit Wales published in October 2019

[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

We recommend that PSBs:

- 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;
- improve transparency and accountability by making PSB meetings, agendas, papers and minutes accessible and available to the public;
- strengthen involvement by working to the guidance in the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales; and
- feed back the outcome of involvement activity identifying where changes are made as a result of the input of citizens and stakeholders.

To improve scrutiny arrangements, we recommend:

- that PSBs and public bodies use the findings of the Discussion Paper: Six themes to help make scrutiny 'Fit for the Future' by the Auditor General for

Wales to review their current performance and identify where they need to strengthen oversight arrangements and activity; and

- that PSBs ensure scrutiny committees have adequate engagement with a wider range of relevant stakeholders who can help hold PSBs to account

To help build capacity, consistency and resourcing of activity, we recommend that:

- PSBs take the opportunity to discharge other plan and strategy obligations through the Local Well-being Plan;
- the Welsh Government enables PSBs to develop flexible models of working including:
 - merging, reducing and integrating their work with other forums such as Regional Partnership Boards; and
 - 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.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

The recommendations were discussed during a meeting of the Public Services Board on 11 December 2019 and the outcome is described in the 'progress' below. The following scrutiny committees were notified that the PSB was discussing the recommendations:

- Gwynedd Council Communities Scrutiny Committee: 5 December 2019
- Isle of Anglesey County Council's Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee: 12 November 2019.

Progress against improvement proposals

The PSB's response keeping to the order of the bullet points as above:

- The PSB support team has already considered and acknowledged the need for Language and Equality Impact Assessments. The impact assessments will be developed if projects are submitted to the attention of the PSB that will recommend changing policy or service, and that in order to measure and understand the impact of the decisions that will be made by the PSB.
- The Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board has a website that operates under the name: <https://www.llesiantgwyneddaron.org> . Details and minutes of Board meetings are included on the website.
- Work on the PSB's Well-being Assessments is being planned in accordance with the National Principles for engaging with the public.

- The PSB support team has identified an opportunity here to make more use of their communication channels to inform our citizens of work done by the PSB and the progress it makes. This will involve experimenting along the lines of 'You said... - We did...' to show how the things that our citizens have told us have contributed to our decisions.
- (2 scrutiny bullet points) - The PSB works with Gwynedd and Anglesey Scrutiny Committees on scrutiny timetables (to align with PSB meetings) and the matters to be scrutinised.
- (capacity) - The PSB has very much taken the lead in relation to the action in question. The West Wales Health and Care Sub-group, which reports to the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board, has been working with the Regional Partnership Board to ensure that services being planned for older people are suitable for local needs.
- The 'A Healthier Wales' document steers the governance arrangements and plans of the Integrated Health and Social Care Sub-group for Gwynedd and Anglesey.

Outcome

Completed.

- 11. Progress in relation to implementing the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act** - National Report by Audit Wales published in November 2019
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. 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.
2. 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:

- 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
- create a joint pathway to access services and support for both victims and professionals and advertise access arrangements widely.

3. 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:
 - ensure staff who are likely to come into contact with victims and survivors have appropriate VAWDASV training;
 - provide refresher training to service managers to ensure they know when and what data they can and cannot share; and
 - review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities.
4. 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 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.
5. 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:
 - remove duplication and overlap between different approaches within the authority and with partners;
 - rationalise administration arrangements to improve efficiency and value for money;
 - streamline and standardise commissioning arrangements to reduce the burden of administration on all parties; and
 - set appropriate performance measures, targets and benchmarks to judge the impact and outcome of commissioned services.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

The report and recommendations have been discussed at the Safeguarding Operational Group and the Safeguarding Strategic Panel leading to the action/progress steps described below.

Progress against improvement proposals

The following have been numbered to correspond to the above-mentioned improvement proposals:

1. Efforts to map the whole provision regionally are currently taking place, we expect to receive an update at a steering group meeting soon.
2. Information about the support and services available has been regularly shared on the Council's social media. Also, there is comprehensive information on local support services on the 'Community Safety' page on the Council's website.
3. Data protection training has been arranged for every member of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department staff. The issue of when it is right to breach confidentiality for safeguarding reasons is an important part of this training.

A Domestic Violence e-learning package is available to staff. In 2019, all Gwynedd Council staff members were asked to complete the e-module. Progress to implement the national training framework - Ask and Act. By now, 4 trainers have received training during the period 2018-2020 (Adults, Education and Corporate Support fields). In addition, a new Ask and Act virtual training programme was developed, and we had to await approval from Welsh Government.

4. The relevant authorities have reviewed their method of working regionally, and by now MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) meetings are held weekly in addition to monthly meetings, and the Council is also part of local and regional steering groups. Regionally, the Vulnerability and Exploitation Board is leading on domestic violence and safeguarding, and the work is now in the mainstream.
5. Recommendation 5 comes under the Regional Commissioning Board. There was no budget to commission services internally. The Senior Community Safety Officer is a member of this board in terms of influencing spending.

Outcome

Completed.

12. Rough Sleeping in Wales - Everyone's Problem; No One's Responsibility

- National Report by Audit Wales published in July 2020

[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

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:

- invest in data analytical skills to better understand the current situation and predict future demand to prevent future homelessness;
- review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities; and
- introduce a single data capture and risk assessment process for to help support safe decisions making in dealing with people sleeping rough.

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 (the tool is set out at Appendix 2).

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

Homelessness and rough sleeping are discussed at a number of meetings including our Emergency Planning Action Panel and other internal and cross-departmental meetings by collaborating to ensure that no one sleeps rough in Gwynedd.

The recommendations of the report have underpinned the restructuring within our Homelessness units, which are currently being implemented following the Cabinet's approval in April, and were discussed in detail by the Cabinet at its meeting on 20 April 2021, and by the Scrutiny Committee in March 2021.

Progress against improvement proposals

We collaborate with a number of third sector agencies to provide support to individuals. We analyse data to identify trends and we will build on this work after appointing a new data officer to support the department, and the post is currently being advertised.

The recommendations have been relevant to restructuring our homelessness units and we are working closely with the health board including joint-employing a specialist staff member to provide mental health support to individuals.

Outcome

On-going.

13. Commercialisation in Local Government - National Report by Audit Wales published October 2020
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. Undertaking commercialisation requires councils to have enough capacity, the right skills and robust but agile systems to be in place. We recommend that councils use our self-evaluation tools to develop a strategy for the extent to which they want to pursue commercialisation.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

Discussions regarding commercialisation are held when a relevant case arises – please see below. These discussions are held between senior officers, the Cabinet, scrutiny committees and the Audit and Governance Committee.

Progress against improvement proposals

Gwynedd Council has undertaken commercialisation in fields such as Gwynedd Consultancy and Byw'n Iach etc. but has not ventured to borrow to invest in other projects such as local retail premises.

Outcome

Completed.

14. The National Fraud Initiative in Wales - National Report by Wales Audit published October 2020
[Link to the report on Audit Wales website](#)

Improvement Proposals arising from the report –

1. 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.
2. Where local auditors have identified specific areas where improvements could be made, the public bodies should act on these as soon as possible.
3. All participants should be aware of emerging fraud risks e.g. due to COVID-19, and take appropriate preventative and detective action.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

We report as needed to the Audit and Governance Committee on specific fraud risks. Where local auditors have identified specific areas where improvements could be made, the Audit and Governance Committee received specific reports on these.

Progress against improvement proposals

Recently, the outcomes of the National Fraud Initiative have not highlighted fraud of any significance in any field.

Outcome

Completed.