

Isle of Anglesey County Council – Performance work programme update for Audit Committee 15th March 2016

Local Government Studies – Update August 2015

This part of the briefing provides an update on progress on delivering the all Wales Local Government studies programme and other centrally managed projects. Each study relates to local government only unless the commentary below specifically references work on National Parks and/or Fire and Rescue Authorities.

1. 2014-15 Local Government Studies

Independence of older people

The report was published on 15 October 2015. [The report is available on our website.](#)

Delivering with Less – Leisure

Published on 3 December 2015. [The report is available on our website.](#)

2. 2015-16 Local Government Studies

Community Safety

The national report is in the drafting stage with a planned publication date after the pre-election purdah ends on 6 May 2016.

The strategic approach of councils to income generation and charging

This study is being delivered under our annual “delivering with less” programme and the study will involve an audit of councils’ strategic approach to charging; the approval process for setting and reviewing charging within a council; the impact of charging on services and service users; and the legislative basis for charging.

The study is progressing:

- i. Fieldwork sites complete at Monmouthshire, Gwynedd, Merthyr, Powys and Caerphilly and Newport.
- ii. All surveys will be complete by February 2016.
- iii. Income profiles for all Welsh councils are being finalised, drawing information from published data and work to compare performance of councils in Scotland and England is phased for the next stage of this project.
- iv. A summary note on the legal basis for charging is being produced and is currently at its second iteration.

The study is due for completion by early April when report drafting will commence.

Anglesey is not a fieldwork site but has contributed with data along with all councils.

Council funding of third-sector services

Again, under the theme of delivering with less, this study will look at the level of investment in voluntary sector services to benchmark findings against an LGDU reviews conducted on behalf of the WCVA dating from 2001-02. The review will include the measures used to judge the effectiveness of funding in a tracer area, which will be agreed with the WCVA; review decision making processes to determine whether the principles of good governance in funding third sector services are being followed. The project is underway with fieldwork at selected councils and a survey. Anglesey is not a fieldwork site.

3. 2016-17 Local Government Studies

Consultation on the list of potential study topics for the next three years has closed and a report is being drafted on the future programme..

4. Improvement audit assessment work for 2015-16

This part of the briefing provides an update on progress on delivering the audit and assessment work at Anglesey (some studies will also include other North Wales and Welsh councils).

Assessment of performance audit

The certificate was issued in November and the Council's Performance Report complies with Welsh Government guidance and the LG Measure.

Financial resilience review

The review is complete and the local report was issued to the Council in January 2016. A national summary will be produced in Spring 2016.

Governance review

This work will focus on a review of sickness absence management. Timing – March 2016.

Performance management review

A study across all six North Wales councils on benchmarking social services costs against performance. The study includes CSSIW involvement and discussions with council staff. Timing – September to December 2015. A meeting between WAO, Council lead officers and CSSIW was held on 21 December 2015 to discuss potential outcomes from an analysis of the indicators. A summary of the analysis was produced and sent to all councils involved, and as agreed, will be used for Council information only.

Annual Improvement Report

Annual summary and assessment by the Auditor General and other regulators. Timing – Produced by the end of March 2016.

5. Improvement audit assessment work for 2014-15

Corporate Assessment

The final report was published on 2 December and will be presented to the Council on 9 December 2015.

6. Follow up on national recommendations

The Wales Audit Office is following up on recommendations made in national studies reports published during 2014-2015 by way of a survey to all councils in the autumn of 2015. This will enable the evaluation of progress on recommendations at each council, inform local planning for 2016-2017, and give a national picture of the implementation of WAO recommendations. A summary will be included in the Council's Annual Improvement Report for 2016.

7. National Value-for Money studies

A separate table has been produced which identifies the national studies the Wales Audit Office has produced or is planning through the 2015-16 period.

The following table provides an update on other LG related studies.

LG study	Output	Completion	Status	Comments
Welfare Reform	Inquiry	Jul-15	Published	Report published 8.1.15. PAC Inquiry completed and report published.
Safeguarding	Report	Jul-15	Published	Report published 21.7.15
Independence of older people	Report	Sep-15	Published	Report published 15.10.15
Delivering with less: Leisure	Report	Aug-15	Published	Report published 3.12.15
Community Safety	Report	Jun-16	Drawing Conclusions	Drafting stage and publication due post purdah.
Strategic approach to income generation and charging	Report	Jul-16	Fieldwork	Drawing conclusions
Council funding of third sector services	Report	Aug-16	Project set up	Fieldwork

WAO Regulatory Work Activity - VFM Studies update

Study	Output	Completion	Status	Comments/relevance to LG
WG investment in next generation broadband infrastructure	Report	May 2015	Published	Views invited from Councils and half responded. Third party clearance is including extracts relating to some named councils.
Governance in NHS Wales	Memorandum for PAC	May 2015	Published	
GP prescribing	Memorandum for PAC	May 2015	Published	
Regional Education Consortia	Report	June 2015	Published	Fieldwork included interviews with consortia officers and leaders and representatives of other councils including Chief Execs, Members, Audit Chairs and monitoring officers. The report contained recommendations for the Welsh Government and the individual regional consortia. Evidence collected in the course of the study will also be made available to inform annual improvement reports in local government.
Orthopaedic services	Report	June 2015	Published	

Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales	Report	July 2015	Published	Reactive investigation in response to concerns raised with the AGW. PAC inquiry on-going.
---	--------	-----------	-----------	---

Study	Output	Completion	Status	Comments/relevance to LG
Financial Management and Governance in Community and Town Councils 2013-14	Report	September 2015	Published 16 Sept 2015	This report considers the progress made by local councils to address these weaknesses and highlights areas the Auditor General will focus on for the audit of the 2015-16 accounts
Picture of Public Services	Report	December 2015	Published 17 December 2015	Public Service Leaders Survey: Summary Report published 28 Jan 2016.
WG acquisition and ownership of Cardiff Airport	Report	Jan 2016	Published 27 Jan 2016	Views invited from Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan and WLGA as part of the fieldwork.
Development of Natural Resources Wales	Report		Published 4 Feb 2016	The study team will draw on stakeholder views expressed as part of a recent consultation by the National Assembly's Environment and Sustainability Committee.
Operating theatres	Report	Feb 2016	Clearance	
NHS waiting lists and private practice	Report		Published 11 Feb 2016	
Wales Life Sciences Investment Fund	Report	March 2016	Clearance	Reactive examination in response to concerns raised with the AGW.
Welsh Government responses to audit recommendations	Memorandum for PAC	Spring 2016	Drafting	The output from this work is now likely to take the form of a memorandum for PAC to support PAC's own legacy reporting in March 2016.

Study	Output	Completion	Status	Comments/relevance to LG
Rail services	Report	Spring 2016	Drafting	
Coastal flood and erosion risk management	Report	Spring 2016	Drafting	Has included some evidence gathering across LG, including a survey of coastal authorities and some follow up enquiries with a selection of councils. (Pembrokeshire; Monmouthshire; Swansea; Gwynedd; Ceredigion; Newport).
Governance of the National Library of Wales	Report	Spring 2016	Fieldwork	Reactive examination in response to concerns raised with the AGW.
Welsh Government oversight of further education institutions' finances and delivery	Report	Autumn 2016	Fieldwork	New value for money study.
Public procurement (including development of the National Procurement Service)	Report	Winter 2016	Scoping stage	Likely to include some evidence gathering across LG. Details are to be confirmed.

Study	Output	Completion	Status	Comments/relevance to LG
<p>Early intervention and public behaviour change</p>	<p>Report</p>	<p>Spring/Summer 2017</p>	<p>Fieldwork</p>	<p>Our programme of good practice work includes a project that will aim to explore the range of behaviour change work across Welsh public services and opportunities to improve practice, deliver better outcomes for citizens, and achieve better value for money. The project will include a range of engagement events and the development of a community of practice to share learning and experience. We anticipate that the information and evidence gathered through this work will support the production of a report on this topic, although this is unlikely to be a traditional audit report and it would not be prepared until the first half of 2017. This work will invite input and participation from across Welsh public services.</p>
<p>WG interventions in local government</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p>	<p>Scoping</p>	<p>Plans for this work are being revisited in light of the Welsh Government commissioned review of the Anglesey intervention by the Public Policy Institute for Wales, and also to consider the implications for the work of plans for local government reform.</p>