

Isle of Anglesey County Council – Performance Work Programme Update for Audit Committee 26 May 2016

Local government studies – update

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. 2015-16 local government studies

Community safety

The national report is in the clearance stage with a planned publication date in July 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. Most work is complete:

- the report is at draft stage;
- there is also a summary comparing performance of all Welsh councils with counterparts in England and Scotland; and
- we are also attending the Society of Welsh Treasurers meeting in July 2016 to discuss the study findings with councils and Welsh Government.

Anglesey is not a fieldwork site.

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; and review decision-making processes to determine whether the principles of good governance in funding third sector services are being followed. The project should be finalised by the end of May 2016. Anglesey is not a fieldwork site.

2. 2016-17 local government studies

Consultation has closed and the following studies are included for 2016-17.

2016-17 study – improving well-being through housing adaptations

This study includes all local authorities and the major RSLs in Wales, and complements work undertaken by the Wales Audit Office health team on discharge planning. The study will review system issues such as timescales, application processes, accessibility of guidance and support, and eligibility criteria. It will focus on how adaptations are being used to prevent poor outcomes such as unnecessary spending, trips and falls, hospital admissions/delayed discharges and child poverty.

2016-17 study – strategic commissioning of learning disability services by local authorities

The study will assess how local authorities deliver strategic commissioning. The review will focus on learning disability schemes as a tracer in local authorities. Currently councils spend just under £334 million on learning disability services in Wales including commissioning.

2016-17 study – how local government manages demand for local government services

The study will focus on a specific tracer area of homelessness in local authorities using the recent prevention duties placed on local authorities to judge how demand for services is managed.

3. 2018-19 local government studies

Three surveys are being developed to gauge senior council officers' views on recent changes to guidance and legislation in advance of our 2018-19 programme of work. The surveys will gather local authorities' views and will cover:

- Implementing the Social Services and Well-being Act
- Tackling domestic violence
- Are planning services delivering value for money

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).

Governance review

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

Annual improvement report

Annual summary and assessment by the Auditor General and other regulators. The draft annual improvement report has been issued to the Council for comment.

5. Follow-up on national recommendations

The Wales Audit Office is following up on recommendations made in national studies reports published during 2014-15 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 2016-17, and give a national picture of the implementation of Wales Audit Office recommendations. A summary will be included in the Council's annual improvement report for 2016.

6. Improvement audit assessment work for 2016-17

This part of the briefing provides an update on progress on delivering the audit and assessment work at Anglesey during 2016-17 (some studies will also include other North Wales and Welsh councils).

Improvement plan audit

Audit of discharge of duty to publish an improvement plan. Timing – six weeks after the plan is published.

Annual performance report audit

Audit of discharge of duty to publish an assessment of performance. Timing – due in November 2016.

Annual improvement letter

Annual summary and assessment by the Auditor General and other regulators. Timing – by March 2017.

Local performance work

To be agreed in consultation with the Council. Timing – May 2016 to March 2017.

Thematic reviews

In the light of the reform programme set out in the draft Local Government (Wales) Bill, the proposed repeal of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009; and the new duty on councils to adopt the sustainable development principle from April 2016, the Auditor General recently reviewed how the local performance audit work is delivered at councils. This has resulted in minimising work that focuses on the process of improvement planning in favour of work that focuses on councils' capacity and capability to effect change whilst maintaining good governance. Three thematic reviews are agreed.

Financial resilience review

Councils are continuing to deal with austerity and an uncertain future. This review will seek to provide assurance that arrangements are focused on maintaining resilience over the medium to long term. Timing – June to December 2016.

Governance review

With the introduction of CIPFA's revised framework for **Delivering good governance in local government**, and the requirement for councils to adopt the sustainable development principle from April 2016, this review will provide councils with a baseline from which to plan improvements to governance. Timing – September to December 2016, reporting January 2017.

Transformational review

This baseline review will examine how councils are approaching 'transformational change'; in particular, how key corporate enabler functions work in an integrated way to support change programmes. Timing – December 2016 to February 2017, reporting March 2017.

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 and 2016-17 period.

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
Early intervention and public behaviour change	Report	Spring/Summer 2017	Fieldwork	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.
WG interventions in local government	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	Scoping	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.