

<b>ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Report to:</b>	Governance and Audit Committee
<b>Date:</b>	4 December 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	External Audit – Monitoring Report
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<b>Nature and Reason for Reporting:</b> The Governance and Audit Committee is receiving this report in line with its Terms of Reference –	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.4.8.11.3 The Committee will oversee external audit arrangements, comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and ensure it gives value for money. It will consider external audit reports <b>and will monitor their recommendations</b>; and</li> <li>• 3.4.8.13.1 The Committee will receive and consider reports from any other regulators or inspectors, which will be a useful source of assurance.</li> </ul> <p>The purpose of this report is to assure the Committee that the recommendations attached to the external audit reports have been given due consideration by the Council Services and that the relevant ones are being implemented in a meaningful way.</p>	

## Introduction

1. In order to demonstrate good governance, this report details the council's response to external audit reports and associated recommendations published by regulators.
2. Updates are provided against the work the council has undertaken since the last report that was presented to this committee in April 2024.
3. This report has been streamlined and redesigned to ensure that it is more concise and easier to navigate than the previous version.

## Recommendation

4. That the Governance and Audit Committee:
  - a. Considers the report and accepts the responses and updates as an accurate reflection of the Council's work against the related recommendations.



# External Audit – Monitoring Report

**Prepared by:** Transformation Service

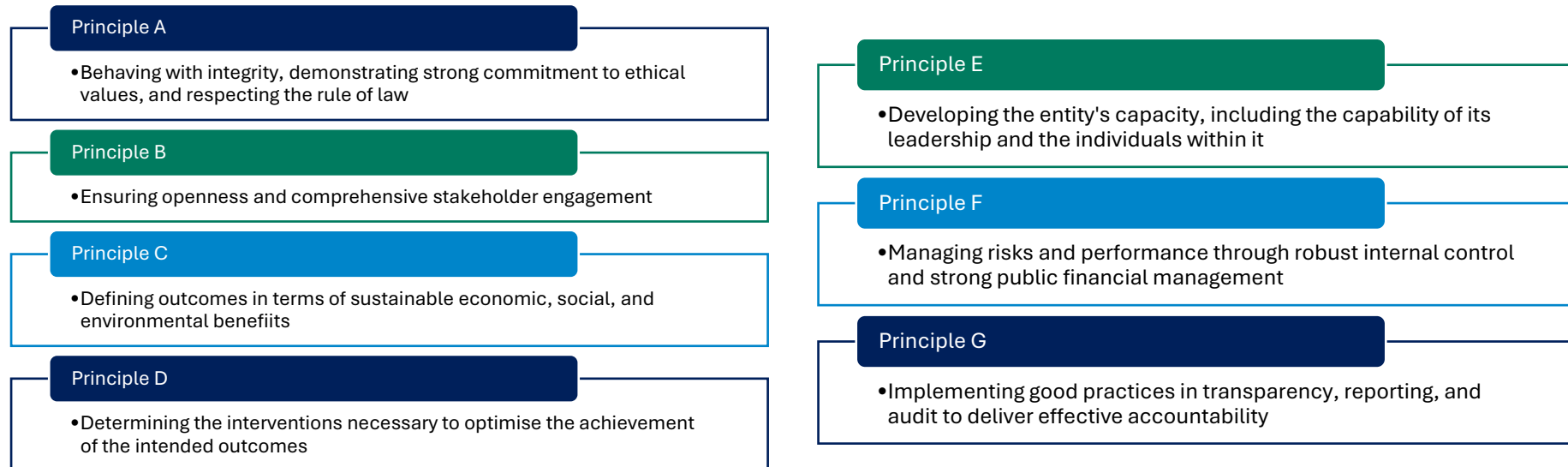
**Publication date:** November 2024

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn y Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh

# Introduction

This report outlines the council's progress in responding to recommendations from local and national regulatory reports over the past 24 months that are yet to be implemented. Monitoring and reporting on progress against these recommendations is a cornerstone of effective governance.

Our [Local Code of Governance 2023-2028](#) demonstrates how the Council follow the core (and supporting) principles contained within the Framework for Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (CIPFA / Solace, 2016). The established principles are:



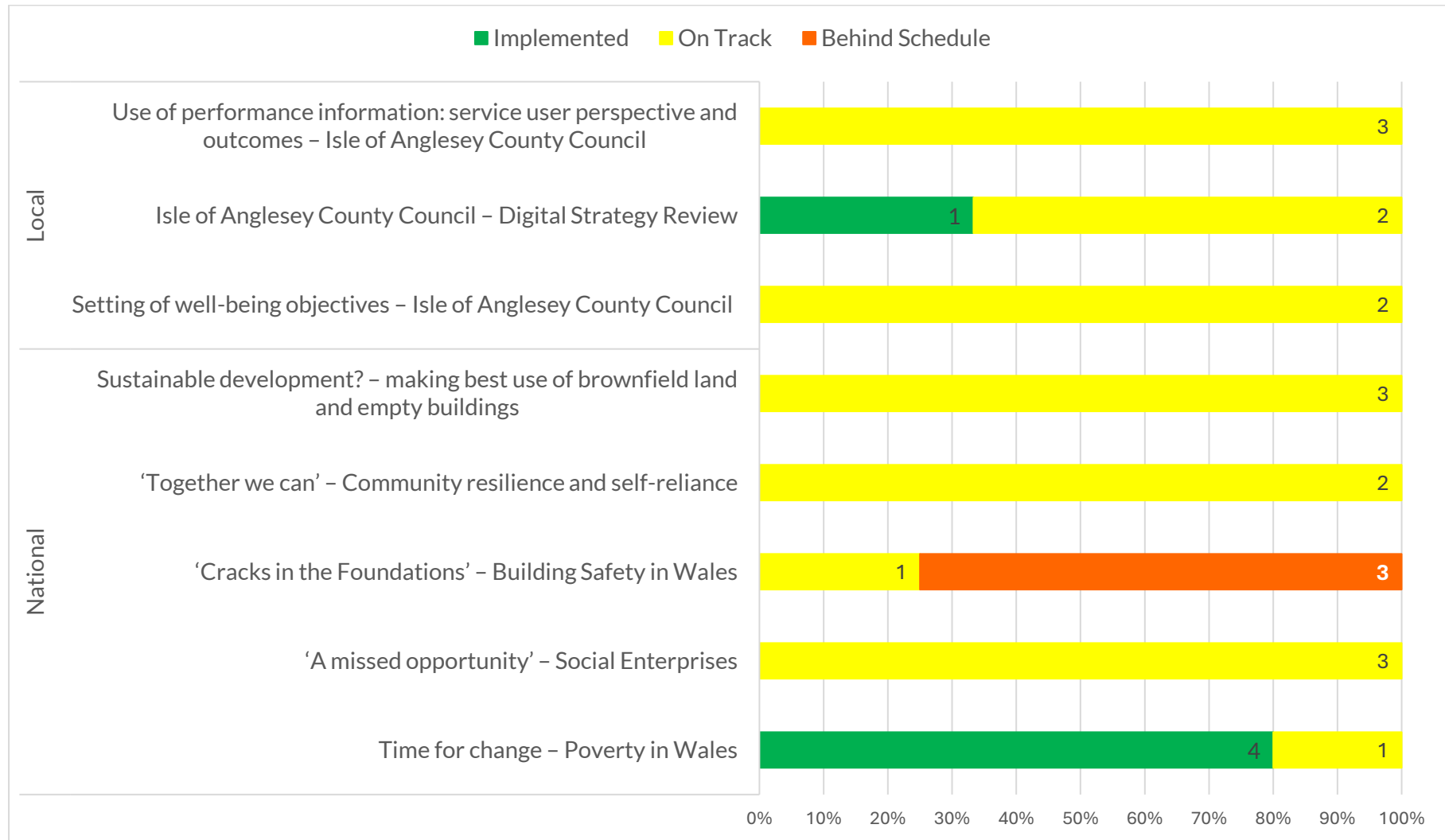
External audit and regulatory reports and how the council respond to the recommendations align closely with **Principle G** and **Principle F**.

These reports are critical tools for ensuring that the council operates transparently and is held accountable for its decisions, resource use, and service delivery. By evaluating the council's adherence to statutory obligations and identifying areas for improvement, they support evidence-based governance and enable the council to demonstrate its commitment to continuous improvement.

By actively reviewing and addressing the recommendations, the council demonstrates its commitment to delivering high-quality services and meeting its statutory obligations.

## Summary

As at the end of October 2024, the council have implemented 20% of the recommendations, 68% of responses are on track, and 12% are behind schedule. The chart below notes the local and national regulator report titles and the evaluation of the response to their recommendations.



The numbers in the bar chart identify how many recommendations there are that are relevant to Local Authorities from each regulatory report.

## Detailed Overview

### Time for change – Poverty in Wales - National

Recommendations	Update	RAYG
<p><b>R2</b> Use Wellbeing Plans to provide a comprehensive focus on tackling poverty to co-ordinate their efforts, meet local needs and support the revised national plan targets and actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council Plan objectives and wellbeing objectives have a focus on Poverty.</li> <li>• Tackling Poverty Strategic Plan has been approved by the Executive in March 2024.</li> <li>• Key priority areas in tackling poverty on the Island over the next five years are monitored monthly and reported to the Leadership team. In developing the Plan, the financial constraints on the Council have been considered with it being recognised that more has to be achieved with less</li> <li>• PowerBI Dashboard with Poverty linked indicators has been developed and is updated quarterly</li> </ul>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p><b>R3</b> Designate a cabinet member as the council’s poverty champion and designate a senior officer to lead and be accountable for the anti-poverty agenda.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council Leader is the Poverty designated Poverty champion from the Executive.</li> </ul>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p><b>R5</b> Improve their understanding of their residents’ ‘lived experience’ through meaningful involvement in decision-making using ‘experience mapping’ and/or ‘Poverty Truth Commissions’ to review and improve accessibility to and use of council services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This work is considered business as usual for the work that the council undertake with residents. All teams who work with residents are aware of how to access information and support on Poverty and the cost of living crisis.</li> <li>• We update our Council web page regularly with important cost of living information.</li> <li>• The Financial Inclusion Team is very good at promoting through the Tai Môn Facebook page and works together with local partners. They continue to send updates about the drop-in sessions. Posters are updated weekly on social media accounts.</li> <li>• Work closely with our partners, Citizens Advice, Medrwn Mon and Menter Mon to understand and gain better knowledge of what’s needed on the Island.</li> </ul>	<p>Implemented</p>

Recommendations	Update	RAYG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the recent Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) we have conducted numerous sessions within our community's island wide to raise awareness of the support available</li> </ul>	
<b>R6</b> Optimise their digital services by creating a single landing page on their website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webpage in place which is regularly monitored and updated including links to work undertaken by partners</li> </ul>	Implemented
<b>R7</b> We recommend that councils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish corporate data standards and coding that all services use for their core data;</li> <li>• undertake an audit to determine what data is held by services and identify any duplicated records and information requests;</li> <li>• create a central integrated customer account as a gateway to services;</li> <li>• undertake a data audit to provide refresher training to service managers to ensure they know when and what data they can and cannot share; and</li> <li>• review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council is working on a data maturity assessment and will develop an action plan to identify any weaknesses or opportunities to strengthen business processes</li> <li>• The council have a CRM in place which is being developed in line with the Data Strategy to improve customer focused processes. The CRM forms already available on the system use personal details, inputted by the resident and stored on the CRM, to fill out common aspects of application forms.</li> <li>• Data sharing protocols are in place and are updated when improvements are identified</li> </ul>	On Track

## 'A missed opportunity' – Social Enterprises - National

Recommendations	Update	RAYG
<p><b>R1</b> To get the best from their work with and funding of Social Enterprises, local authorities need to ensure they have the right arrangements and systems in place. We recommend that local authority officers use the checklist in Appendix 2 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-evaluate current Social Enterprise engagement, management, performance and practice;</li> <li>• identify opportunities to improve joint working; and</li> <li>• jointly draft and implement an action plan with timeframes and responsibilities clearly set out to address the gaps and weaknesses identified through the self-evaluation.</li> </ul>	<p>Social enterprises are of significant importance on Anglesey and are key partners in delivery across services. This is highlighted within the Council Plan 2023-2028 and collaboration is recognised as one of the Council's values.</p> <p>'Collaborate: We work as a team, with our communities and partners to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Anglesey.'</p> <p>Key partners include Medrwn Môn, Menter Môn, Môn Communities Forward and Ynys Môn Citizens Advice.</p> <p>Place Shaping continues to progress across the Island and 8 alliances are now in place.</p> <p>SPF grants continue to enhance and support social enterprise activity.</p> <p>The local authority has representation at the North Wales Social Enterprise Network which includes members from other North Wales Council's, Cwmpas, Menter Môn, Medrwn Môn. The network discuss any issues that social enterprises are facing including future funding requirements.</p> <p>The Council is preparing a new Procurement Strategic Plan which builds upon the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, the Procurement Act 2023, Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 and Health Service Procurement (Wales) Act 2024.</p>	<p>On Track</p>

Recommendations	Update	RAYG
<p><b>R2</b> To drive improvement we recommend that the local authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formally approve the completed Action Plan;</li> <li>regularly report, monitor and evaluate performance at relevant scrutiny committees; and</li> <li>revise actions and targets in light of the authority's evaluation and assessment of its performance.</li> </ul>	<p>The checklist has been completed in order to self- evaluate engagement, management, performance and practice and an action plan is being developed.</p> <p>The key partners noted above have all reported to the Council's Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.</p>	On Track
<p><b>R3</b> To ensure the local authority delivers its S.16 responsibilities to promote Social Enterprises we recommend that it reports on current activity and future priorities following the evaluation of its Action Plan including the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.</p>	<p>This will be considered as part of the development of an action plan.</p> <p>Current activity and future priorities will be reported on in the next Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.</p>	On Track



## 'Cracks in the Foundations' – Building Safety in Wales - National

Recommendations	Update	RAYG
<p><b>R5</b> Local authorities should develop local action plans that articulate a clear vision for building control to be able to plan effectively to implement the requirements of the Act. The Plans should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be based on an assessment of local risks and include mitigation actions;</li> <li>• set out how building control services will be resourced to deliver all their statutory responsibilities;</li> <li>• illustrate the key role of building control in ensuring safe buildings and be linked to well-being objectives and other corporate objectives; and</li> <li>• include outcome measures that are focused on all building control services, not just dangerous structures.</li> </ul>	<p>No progress has been possible to date, due to ongoing recruitment difficulties and an increased workload.</p> <p>Currently, it is difficult to recruit qualified staff to specialist planning positions and this is not unique to Anglesey.</p> <p>The Council have plans in place to respond to this challenge, including adapting job descriptions and being open to providing opportunities for staff to gain the necessary qualifications within their roles. Recruitment packs have also been designed which outline the benefits of working for the Service and Council.</p>	<p>Behind Schedule</p>
<p><b>R6</b> Local authorities should urgently review their financial management of building control and ensure they are fully complying with Regulations. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing a timetable of regular fee reviews to ensure charges reflect the cost of services and comply with the Regulations;</li> <li>• annually reporting and publishing financial performance in line with the Regulations;</li> <li>• ensuring relevant staff are provided with training to ensure they apply the Regulations and interpret financial reporting correctly; and</li> <li>• revise fees to ensure services are charged for in accordance with the Regulations.</li> </ul>	<p>Some initial exploratory meetings have been held with colleagues from Finance, but meaningful progress has not been possible due to ongoing recruitment difficulties and the increased workload identified above.</p>	<p>Behind Schedule</p>

Recommendations	Update	RAYG
<p><b>R7</b> Local authorities should work with partners to make better use of limited resources by exploring the potential for collaboration and regionalisation to strengthen resilience through a cost benefit analysis of partnering with neighbouring authorities, establishing joint ventures and/or adopting a regional model where beneficial.</p>	<p>Regional planning was discussed with other North Wales Local Authorities during June of this year to establish a Corporate Joint Committee for the North. However, no further communication has been received.</p>	<p>Behind Schedule</p>
<p><b>R8</b> Local authorities should review risk management processes to ensure that risks are systematically identified, recorded, assessed, mitigated and subject to regular evaluation and scrutiny.</p>	<p>The Service Risk Register is updated regularly and supports strategic decision making.</p>	<p>On Track</p>

## 'Together we can' – Community resilience and self-reliance - National

Recommendations	Update	RAYG
<p><b>R1</b> To strengthen community resilience and support people to be more self-reliant, local authorities need to ensure they have the right arrangements and systems in place. We recommend that local authorities use the evaluation tool in Appendix 2 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-evaluate current engagement, management, performance and practice;</li> <li>• identify where improvement is needed; and</li> <li>• draft and implement an action plan with timeframes and responsibilities clearly set out to address the gaps and weaknesses identified in completing the evaluation tool.</li> </ul>	<p>Place Shaping continues to progress across the Island with 8 community alliances now established across 11 of Anglesey's electoral wards.</p> <p>Community alliances are collaborative partnerships that bring together diverse voices, including residents, community groups, town and community councils, local businesses, and more. Working together, they develop creative, community-led solutions to address local priorities and respond to consultations from organisations like the Health Board, Ynys Môn County Council, and North Wales Police.</p> <p>A number of Shared Prosperity Fund grants are being delivered by the Council and partners to enhance and improve community resilience.</p>	On Track
<p><b>R2</b> To help local authorities address the gaps they identify following their self-evaluation, we recommend that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formally approve the completed Action Plan arising from the evaluation exercise;</li> <li>• regularly report, monitor and evaluate performance at relevant scrutiny committees; and</li> </ul> <p>revise actions and targets in light of the authority's evaluation and assessment of its performance</p>	<p>The checklist has been completed in order to self- evaluate engagement, management, performance and practice and consideration is being given to the development of an action plan.</p> <p>The key partners noted above have all reported to the Council's Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.</p>	On Track

## Sustainable development? – making best use of brownfield land and empty buildings - National

Recommendations	Update	RAYG
<p><b>R1</b> To enable stakeholders to assess potential sites councils should create a systematic process to find and publicise suitable sites for regeneration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• this should draw on data already held by councils, as well as external data sources to develop a composite and more complete picture of sites; and</li> <li>• where known, key barriers should be named to help efforts to overcome them</li> </ul>	<p>The Regulation and Economic Development Service has a programme in place to tackle Brownfield sites, where possible, in partnership with stakeholders and partners.</p>	<p>On Track</p>
<p><b>R2</b> To help ensure that regeneration activity and the shaping of the environment is informed by the needs of communities Councils should increase opportunities for community based involvement in regeneration, both in plan-making and actual development.</p>	<p>The Regulation and Economic Development Service always seek to engage with residents and communities to inform our regeneration activities. There is currently (November 2024) an Anglesey Town Centres Consultation to inform our Place Making Plans.</p>	<p>On Track</p>
<p><b>R3</b> To provide focus and impetus to developing brownfield sites Councils should review their current regeneration approaches and where appropriate set clearer, more ambitious regeneration policies and targets. Together these should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out the approach and expectations of the council;</li> <li>• set out how their approach will be resourced; and</li> <li>• set out how the approach aligns with national policy goals and regional planning priorities.</li> </ul>	<p>We believe, especially given the scale of our limited resources (people and funds), that our regeneration policies and targets are sufficiently ambitious. Whilst we will always strive to do more, we must also be realistic and pragmatic.</p>	<p>On Track</p>

## Digital Strategy Review - Local

Recommendations	Update	RAYG
<p><b>R1</b> Strengthening the evidence base To help ensure that its next digital strategy is well informed and that its resources are effectively targeted, in developing its strategy the Council should draw on evidence from a wide range of sources, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• involving stakeholders with an interest in the digital strategy as well as drawing on the views of stakeholders from existing sources;</li> <li>• the objectives and strategies of other public bodies, and identifying opportunities to collaborate;</li> <li>• further analysis of current and future trends (see our audit criteria for Q.1.1 and Q1.2 in Appendix 1 for some examples of what this might include)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Digital Strategy</u> is now in place. The Strategic Plan sets out how the council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the work of implementing the Council Plan so that we continue to improve and provide the best possible service</li> <li>• Provide a clear framework to progress digital priorities following external engagement and internal consultation</li> <li>• Recognise and support the implementation of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act</li> <li>• Support modern ways of working and operating and the Council's aspiration to be flexible when offering services to improve efficiency</li> </ul> <p>Follow the direction of the Digital Strategy for Wales – joint vision.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p><b>R2</b> Identifying resource implications To help ensure that its next digital strategy is deliverable, the Council should identify the short- and long- term resources implications of delivering it together with any intended efficiency savings.</p>	<p>Annual plan developed based on service requirements and available budget</p>	<p>On Track</p>
<p><b>R3</b> Arrangements for monitoring value for money To be able to monitor the value for money of its next digital strategy, the Council should strengthen its arrangements for monitoring both its progress and impact over the short, medium and longer term.</p>	<p>The digital strategy is monitored quarterly in the Transformation Programme Board (Modernising). The Board includes the Council Leader, Deputy Leader, Party Leaders, Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.</p> <p>An annual report on the progress will also be made available.</p>	<p>On Track</p>

## Use of performance information: service user perspective and outcomes - Local

Recommendations	Update	RAYG
<p><b>R1</b> The Council should strengthen the information it provides to its senior leaders to enable them to understand how well services and policies are meeting the needs of service users.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Corporate Scorecard in place for 24-25.</li> <li>• Resident Survey completed and will be analysed and reported to senior leadership and committees in Q4</li> <li>• PowerBI dashboards have been developed to monitor trends including a Population and Demographics Dashboard, Poverty Dashboard, Net Zero Dashboard and others in development</li> </ul>	<p>On Track</p>
<p><b>R2</b> The Council should strengthen the information provided to senior leaders to help them evaluate whether the Council is delivering its objectives and the intended outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior leaders are provided with updated information in respect to the completion of the Council Plan objectives and outcomes. Programme boards in place to facilitate discussions and improvements where needed.</li> <li>• PowerBI Dashboards in place</li> <li>• Resident Survey results will be analysed, and a response will be implemented</li> </ul>	<p>On Track</p>
<p><b>R3</b> The Council needs to assure itself that it has robust arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of the data it provides to senior leaders relating to service user perspective and outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The implementation of new PowerBI Dashboards and Scorecard has identified weaknesses with regards to the robustness and quality of some data sources. These have or are being improved.</li> <li>• User perspective is important and many customer surveys have been developed or are being developed to help strengthen our knowledge of user perspectives and outcomes</li> </ul>	<p>On Track</p>

## Setting of well-being objectives - Local

Recommendations	Update	RAYG
<p><b>R1</b> To deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle, the Council should ensure the future iterations of its Medium Term Financial Plan clearly show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the Council’s resources will be prioritised to deliver its well-being objectives; and</li> <li>• how current and future savings targets or known future financial risks might impact the delivery of its well-being objectives.</li> </ul>	<p><u>MTFP</u> for 25/26 was discussed by the Executive in September. It identified that an additional £0.5M is needed to complete the Council Plan’s Objectives.</p> <p>Work continues to identify future savings before setting the budget. Some of which will be consulted upon in the new year.</p>	<p>On Track</p>
<p><b>R2</b> The Council should give more detailed consideration to relevant future trends, needs, risks and opportunities in order to build on the progress it has made in applying the sustainable development principle when setting future well-being objectives.</p>	<p>PowerBI dashboards have been developed to monitor trends including a Population and Demographics Dashboard, Poverty Dashboard, Net Zero Dashboard and others in development.</p> <p>Risks are monitored on a quarterly basis whilst opportunities are explored when identified.</p>	<p>On Track</p>