

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

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| REPORT TO: | Governance and Audit Committee |
| DATE: | 27 September 2022 |
| LOCATION: | Remotely by Video Conference |
| TITLE: | Ceredigion County Council Responses to Regulator & Inspectorate Reports |
| PURPOSE OF REPORT: | To provide the Governance and Audit Committee with the Council's responses to Regulator and Inspectorate Reports |
| For: | Decision |

Introduction

This Report sets out the Council's responses regarding Regulator and Inspectorate Reports and progress made regarding proposals and recommendations.

This Report has 2 parts:

- a) Council tracker of Regulator/Inspectorate proposals for improvement and recommendations; and*
- b) Other Council related matters.*

Current Position

a) Council tracker of Regulator/Inspectorate proposals for improvement and recommendations

- Council Management Response Forms 2020-2021 & 2021-2022 Update:
 - MRF - 'Raising our Game' Tackling Fraud in Wales Update (**Appendix 1**)
 - Progress Note – MRF - Welsh Community Care Information System (**Appendix 2**)
 - See progress note highlighted in yellow
 - MRF – Review of Planning Service (**Appendix 3**)
 - As previously reported 17 January 2022. See Action Plan at **Appendix 4** for update
 - Planning Task and Finish Group Action Plan Update 24.08.2022 (**Appendix 4**)
- Council Management Response Forms 2022-23:
 - MRF - Springing Forward – Review of Strategic Asset Management (**Appendix 5**)
 - MRF – Springing Forward – Review of Strategic Workforce Management (**Appendix 6**)

b) Other Council related matters

RECOMMENDATIONS: To consider the Council's responses to Regulator and Inspectorate Reports

Reasons for Recommendation To keep the Governance and Audit Committee informed of reports, proposals and work being undertaken

Appendices:

- Appendix 1** - MRF - 'Raising our Game' Tackling Fraud Update
- Appendix 2** - Progress Note – MRF - Welsh Community Care Information System
- Appendix 3** - MRF Review of Planning Service
- Appendix 4** - Planning Task and Finish Group Action Plan Update 24.08.2022
- Appendix 5** - MRF - Springing Forward – Review of Strategic Asset Management
- Appendix 6** - MRF – Springing Forward – Review of Strategic Workforce Management

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Designation: Corporate Lead Officer: Legal & Governance & Monitoring Officer

Date of Report: 31/08/2022

AW National Report Summary and Proposals for Improvement

Regulatory Authority: Audit Wales

Report title: 'Raising our Game' Tackling Fraud in Wales

Issue date: 30 July 2020

Audit Committee:

Document reference: https://www.audit.wales/sites/default/files/2020-11/raising_our_game_tackling_fraud_in_wales_english.pdf

Report Summary

This report examines seven 'key themes' that all public bodies need to focus on in raising their game to tackle fraud more effectively:

- leadership and culture;
- risk management and control frameworks;
- policies and training;
- capacity and expertise;
- tools and data;
- collaboration; and
- reporting and scrutiny.

Recommendations

| Ref | Proposal for Improvement / Recommendation | Council Response |
|-----|---|---|
| R1 | The Welsh Government should enhance its strategic leadership of counter-fraud across the public service in Wales, playing a coordinating role where it can, while recognising that individual bodies remain responsible for their own counter-fraud activities. | The Council would welcome a co-ordinating role by Welsh Government in this area, which would assist and support collaboration and consistency in working practices within Local Government. |
| R2 | All public bodies should champion the importance of a good anti-fraud culture and actively promote its importance to give confidence to staff and members of the public that fraud is not tolerated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council has a comprehensive 'Strategy on Countering Fraud, Corruption and Bribery (to include Anti-Money Laundering)' which is due for its 3-yearly review in April 2021. Update presented to & endorsed by Governance & Audit Committee 3/6/21; final approval by Council 17/6/21. Updated copy on Council website.• The public are able to report any suspected incidents of Council Tax Reduction Scheme fraud and/or |

| Ref | Proposal for Improvement / Recommendation | Council Response |
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| | | <p>Housing Benefit / DWP benefit fraud on-line by following the instructions on the Council's website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the Council's safeguarding arrangements, the website also has a page detailing how suspected financial abuse (which includes fraud/theft) against a vulnerable adult should be reported. • The Council undertakes the National Fraud Initiative exercise regularly in order to prevent and detect fraud via data matching. Notifications publicising this exercise to staff and the public are placed on the Council website and on Ceri. • Internal Audit use 'Activedata' software to undertake data analytic techniques within systems where appropriate eg during the processing of covid grants. • Zurich, the Council's insurer, provided a training module on Ethics & Fraud to the Council's Corporate Workshop on 28 May 2021. Following this presentation, the slides were used as a basis for an e-learning module for all staff. IA provided content & module created by Learning & Development. The launch of the module is currently awaiting the update of the Code of Conduct which is awaiting approval by the TU's. |
| R3 | All public bodies should undertake comprehensive fraud risk assessments, using appropriately skilled staff and considering national intelligence as well as organisation-specific intelligence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Managers produce business plans which include their business risks – fraud can be input as a risk if deemed appropriate, with mitigating actions noted. • Fraud appears as a priority heading in the Internal Audit annual audit plan of work. This is supported by notifications from external bodies such as NAFN and CIPFA, as well as other Local Authorities via the Welsh |

| Ref | Proposal for Improvement / Recommendation | Council Response |
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| | | Chief Auditor Groups and by undertaking internal risk assessments. |
| R4 | Fraud risk assessments should be used as a live resource and integrated within the general risk management framework to ensure that these risks are appropriately managed and escalated as necessary. | All risks within business / service plans are assessed for impact & likelihood in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Framework. Any risks with a resultant score falling in the high or critical risk categories are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register which is monitored by Leadership Group and reported to Governance & Audit Committee. |
| R5 | All public bodies need to have a comprehensive and up-to-date set of policies and procedures which together represent a cohesive strategy for identifying, managing and responding to fraud risks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Strategy on Countering Fraud, Corruption and Bribery (to include Anti-Money Laundering)' covers the prevention, detection and investigation of fraud. • The Risk Management Framework provides a comprehensive process for identifying and mitigating all risks. • The 'Policy and Guidelines for Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk' contains a referral process with supporting forms, if financial abuse is suspected. • The Council has a Whistleblowing Policy if staff wish to report a concern, which can be made anonymously. • All the above policies & procedures are supported by various training packages for staff. |
| R6 | Staff working across the Welsh public sector should receive fraud awareness training as appropriate to their role in order to increase organisational effectiveness in preventing, detecting and responding to fraud. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement Officers such as Trading Standards staff are qualified to conduct PACE interviews. • The Council's HR service arranges in-house training for staff who are designated 'investigating officers' for disciplinary matters. |

| Ref | Proposal for Improvement / Recommendation | Council Response |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each service has a trained designated safeguarding officer to which allegations of abuse against vulnerable persons are reported. • The Audit Manager holds a CIPFA Certificate in Investigative Practices (CCIP) & the Corporate Manager – Internal Audit is an Accredited Counter Fraud Technician (ACFTech). • Zurich, the Council’s insurer, provided a training module on Ethics & Fraud to the Council’s Corporate Workshop on 28 May 2021. Following this presentation, the slides were used as a basis for an e-learning module for all staff. IA provided content & module created by Learning & Development. The launch of the module is currently awaiting the update of the Code of Conduct which is awaiting approval by the TU’s. |
| R7 | Cases where fraud is identified and successfully addressed should be publicised to re-enforce a robust message from the top that fraud will not be tolerated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any enforcement work resulting in successful court cases are covered by the local press. • Internal audit counter-fraud work undertaken is reported to Governance & Audit Committee annually. • Any member of staff responsible for a risk on the corporate risk register, or an action in an audit report can be called to the Governance & Audit Committee to provide assurances that appropriate systems / actions are in place. |
| R8 | All public bodies need to build sufficient capacity to ensure that counter-fraud work is resourced effectively, so that investigations are undertaken professionally and in a manner that results in successful sanctions against the perpetrators and the recovery of losses. | The Council does not have a dedicated fraud team, but investigations are undertaken by officers who are deemed appropriate to each case, as per their experience / qualifications (see point R6 above). |
| R9 | All public bodies should have access to trained counter-fraud staff that meet recognised professional standards. | As per point R8 above. |

| Ref | Proposal for Improvement / Recommendation | Council Response |
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| R10 | All public bodies should consider models adopted elsewhere in the UK relating to the pooling /sharing of resources in order to maximise the availability of appropriately skilled staff. | The North & Mid Wales Chief Auditor Group is currently in the process of resurrecting the Specialist Fraud Working Group, which will assist with support and consistency in internal audit fraud practices throughout member authorities. |
| R11 | All public bodies need to develop and maintain dynamic and agile counter-fraud responses which maximise the likelihood of a successful enforcement action and re-enforces the tone from the top that the organisation does not tolerate fraud. | As per point R8 above. |
| R12 | All public bodies should explore and embrace opportunities to innovate with data analytics in order to strengthen both the prevention and detection of fraud. | Internal Audit use 'Activedata' software to undertake data analytic techniques within systems where appropriate eg during the processing of covid grants. |
| R13 | Public bodies should work together, under the Digital Economy Act and using developments in data analytics, to share data and information to help find and fight fraud. | The Council undertakes the National Fraud Initiative exercise regularly in order to prevent and detect fraud via data matching between own services and with other national public sector bodies. |
| R14 | Public bodies need to collate information about losses and recoveries and share fraud intelligence with each other to establish a more accurate national picture, strengthen controls, and enhance monitoring and support targeted action. | The Council perceives this as a task appropriate to WG if it accepts the coordinating role of strategic leadership of counter-fraud across the public services in Wales (see point R1 above). |
| R15 | Governance & Audit Committees must become fully engaged with counter-fraud, providing support and direction, monitoring and holding officials to account. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal audit counter-fraud work undertaken is reported to Governance & Audit Committee annually in the Internal Audit Counter Fraud Report. • Any member of staff responsible for a risk on the corporate risk register, or an action in an audit report can be called to the Governance & Audit Committee to provide assurances that appropriate systems / actions are in place. |

WAO National Report Summary and Proposals for Improvement

Regulatory Authority: Wales Audit Office

Report title: Welsh Community Care Information System

Issue date: 14th October 2020

Audit Committee: 12th November 2020

Document reference: https://audit.wales/sites/default/files/WCCIS-Eng_10.pdf

Report Summary

The Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) is intended to enable health and social care staff to deliver more efficient and effective services using a single system and a shared electronic record. The arrangements for reporting the benefits from WCCIS roll-out have been the subject of discussion and review from the outset. Work is still ongoing to develop a suitable reporting framework.

Recommendations

| Ref | Proposal for Improvement / Recommendation | Council Response |
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| R1 | <p>We recommend that, before committing any further central funding, the Welsh Government works with the WCCIS National Programme Team, health boards, local authorities and the supplier to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce an updated business case that takes account of local, regional and national costs and sets out expectations for further roll-out of the system, its use over the remainder of the contract term, the development of national data standards and planning for any successor arrangements; • ensure the organisations involved have the necessary capacity to support implementation and are giving enough priority to the programme against a clearly agreed plan; and • pull together a clear national picture on feedback from front-line users about the performance and general functionality of the system. | <p>Clear development plan between the Local Authority and Health on future development of the system. Regionally we are sharing data with our Health Board through the system and have worked in partnership to develop the system. Other Local Authority's in the region have yet to sign the deployment order, therefore we currently have had limited engagement.</p> <p>Regionally we are developing local plans on the development of national data standards and interoperability of all the systems within the region</p> |
| R2 | <p>We recommend that the Welsh Government works with the National Programme Team to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the WCCIS contract might have been strengthened to support and incentivise delivery and manage risk; and | <p>Central resource of business design and development – plan once for all users, common data sets, common workflows</p> |

| Ref | Proposal for Improvement / Recommendation | Council Response |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how relevant lessons can be applied to any successor contracting arrangements and wider public procurement. | <p>All stakeholders must be committed to the product and give a clear timeline of implementation. This can only be achieved if all are part of the specification and procurement process</p> |

Note: There is no further update to provide at this stage as recommendations are for Welsh Government to implement and the Council is awaiting their plan. The Council are still working together with Hywel Dda Health Board where possible.

Council Response Form

Council action planned in response to the recommendations issued by Audit Wales

Council: Ceredigion County Council

Report title: Review of Planning Services

Issue date: 16th November 2021

Document reference: 2602A2021-22

| Ref | Recommendation | Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales | Target date for completion of actions | Responsible officer |
|-----------|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| | Governance | | | |
| R1 | <p>The Council should review its constitution to strengthen the governance of its development control arrangements. The review should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn from the development control governance arrangements of other Local Planning Authorities (LPAs); develop an agreed Terms of Reference for the Council's Development Control Committee, to clearly state its purpose, role and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has established a Task and Finish Group (T&F group) to develop actions that will improve the Planning Service including decision making. The T&F Group agreed an Action Plan on the 6th July that included a range of tasks. The Action Plan is regularly updated and was revised on the 10th November to include the Audit Wales Planning Report recommendations. A review of the Constitution and current practice, taking into account | March 2022 | Russell Hughes-Pickering (RHP), Task and Finish Group (T&F Group). Support from Development Management (DM), Planning Policy (PP), Legal & Governance Services (L&G) and Democratic Services (DS). |

| Ref | Recommendation | Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales | Target date for completion of actions | Responsible officer |
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| | <p>responsibilities, and how it links to Corporate Priorities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define what it deems as strategically important and ‘major’ planning applications; • strengthen the Development Control Committee’s scheme of delegation by considering raising the threshold for planning applications called into Committee to allow it to better focus on more strategically important and major applications; • ensure planning applications submitted by or on behalf of the Council’s officers and members are considered by the Development Control Committee and not under officer delegated powers to safeguard against any perceived conflicts of interest and to promote independence and transparency; • review the balance of time local ward members have to speak on planning applications at committee meetings as compared to applicants and objectors; and • review and include the Council’s Planning Code of Practice in the constitution and ensure members understand and act in accordance with it. | <p>arrangements in other authorities, is currently progressing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised Terms of Reference has been drafted. This will be considered by the T&F Group on the 10th December and reported with other proposed changes to the Governance and Audit Committee in January. • Revisions to the Constitution have been drafted that propose amendments to the section on delegations. Draft proposals include automatically reporting: strategic and major applications; council own applications; Member and certain staff applications to Committee. These will initially be discussed by the T&F Group on the 10th December. • A paper has been drafted on the role and time allowed for local Ward Members to speak at Committee. This is to be considered by the T&F Group on the 10th December. • A revised Code of Practice and accompanying Operational Procedures has been drafted. This was initially considered by the T&F Group on the 30th November. Further revisions maybe necessary as other responses are agreed. | | |

| Ref | Recommendation | Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales | Target date for completion of actions | Responsible officer |
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| R2 | The Council should ensure that its Development Control Committee and committee support arrangements comply with data protection principles and the processing of personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members will receive training on their obligations under the GDPR as part of the new member training and a section on said legislation is now included in the draft protocol for members in planning. | May / June 2022 | RHP, T&F Group, DM, PP, L&G, DS and Customer Contact (CC) |
| R3 | The Council's Development Control Committee members need to ensure that any planning decisions are based on sound material planning considerations, and not applicants' personal circumstances. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The T&F Group agreed a 'cooling off' deferral process in July 2021. This was shared and agreed by the Development Control Committee on the 14th July 2021. The process was first applied to cases considered at the Development Control Committee on the 28th July 2021. Several cases have been considered and reported back since. This process will be reviewed after six months so that more permanent arrangements can be put in place. In addition to the cooling off deferral process The T&F Group agreed, on 26th October 2021, to resume a training programme for Members from January 2022. It will initially focus on PPW and Future Wales; the Well Being and FG Act & Socio Economic Duty; Phosphates; and Case Law | In place | RHP, T&F Group, DM, PP, L&G and DS. |
| R4 | The Council needs to ensure that recordings of its 'in public' Development Control Committee meetings are made publicly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with the requirements of the LGEW Act 2021, arrangements are being made to enable hybrid meetings | May 2022 | DS, CC. |

| Ref | Recommendation | Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales | Target date for completion of actions | Responsible officer |
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| | available after committee meetings to adhere to the future requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 | to be held from May 2022. New equipment is currently being installed in the Chamber December 2021/January 2022. The system will allow meetings to be recorded and made available online. | | |
| R5 | The Council should ensure that Development Control Committee decisions relating to 'affordable' homes in the open countryside are made and reported accurately in accordance with the Council's Affordable Housing supplementary guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information in relation to compliance with the Affordable Homes SPG has been added to a number of internal council monitoring systems and DC committee reports for AH properties will explicitly state whether the proposal is in-line with the AH SPG. • A review of all current and past AH approvals for AH will be undertaken and their status in accordance with compliance will be updated on the council's systems. • This will be reported to the T&F Group in January 2022. | March 2022 | RHP, T&F Group, DM, PP and DS. |
| R6 | The Council and Development Control Committee should assess the cumulative implications and long-term infrastructure impact of approving single affordable dwellings and TAN 6 planning applications in the open countryside to ensure they contribute sustainably and cohesively to the Council's wider corporate priorities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A response to this recommendation will look at affordable housing and TAN6 dwellings separately. TAN6 applications by their very definition will need to be located functionally close to the agricultural holding or dwelling. Policies also allow for affordable housing where they are in or adjacent to settlements. • Officer are developing a sustainability checklist for use by members at the Development Control Committee to assess the individual and cumulative impacts of decision making – this is | March 2022 | RHP, T&F Group, DM, PP and DS. |

| Ref | Recommendation | Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales | Target date for completion of actions | Responsible officer |
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| | | <p>being informed by PPW11, Dev Plans Man 3 and the WBFG Act and the corporate priorities of the council. The checklist will be pre-completed for members by planning officers and will form part of the agenda pack at DCC for decision making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will be reported to the T&F Group in January 2022. | | |
| | <u>Service Planning</u> | | | |
| R7 | The Council's Planning Service should: More clearly present its performance information and targets in its business plans. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business and Service Plans will be reviewed. A Tender Brief has been drafted for appointing consultants to help clear planning application and enforcement backlogs. This will help inform revised performances targets and measures. | March 2022 | RHP, T&F Group, DM and PP. |
| R8 | Review the effectiveness and efficiency of combining the Development Management Officer and Enforcement roles including the impact on performance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is to be reviewed when caseloads have been reduced. | October 2022 | RHP, T&F Group and DM. |
| | <u>Monitoring</u> | | | |
| R9 | The Council should establish a framework to assure itself that the Development Control Committee contributes cohesively and sustainably to achieving the Council's corporate priorities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions made contrary to officer advice and that do not fulfil the criteria of the checklist being developed under R6 will be annually reviewed as part of the AMR process and reported to the internal audit procedures. | March 2022 | RHP, T&F Group, DM, PP, L&G and DS |

| Ref | Recommendation | Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales | Target date for completion of actions | Responsible officer |
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| | <u>Well-being of Future Generations</u> | | | |
| R10 | In making any changes to the planning service, the Council should take the opportunity to consider how it might act more closely in accordance with the sustainable development principle in contributing to the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives when making planning decisions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review PPW and other monitoring frameworks to identify ways to capture contributions to the delivery of well-being objectives. To review how this can be made clearer in Committee reports. Currently reviewing other authority reports. Briefings / training on the wellbeing and FG Act and sustainability. | March 2022 | RHP, T&F Group, DM, PP, L&G and DS |

Planning Task & Finish Group Action Plan

| Ref | Action | Time-scale | Status / Comments | Who | Key Documents |
|---|---|----------------------------|--|---|--|
| Task 1: Set up Task & Finish Group and appoint Chair | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Agree Membership of a Task & Finish Group | 28 th June 2021 | Completed | | |
| 1.2 | Appoint Chair | 28 th June 2021 | Completed | | |
| 1.3 | Set up meetings | 29 th June 2021 | Completed | | |
| 1.4 | Agree Action Plan | 6 th July 2021 | Completed Action Plan is a 'live' document. Reviewed at each meeting | T&F Group, RHP | Action Plan (Document TF1) agreed and reviewed |
| Task 2: Agree arrangements for considering high risk 'red' decisions | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Consider the introduction a 28 day 'cooling off' period | Mid July 2021 | Completed Cooling Off process introduced in July 2021 taking into account Para 9.6.17 – Development Management Manual (Document TF2) Document TF10 – Cooling Off discussed at T&F on 20 th July | T&F, RHP Legal and Governance team (L&G) | Revised wording presented as TF10. |
| 2.2 | Agree definition of high risk 'red' cases | Mid July 2021 | Completed Draft definitions (Document TF4) considered by T&F group on 20 th July. | T&F, RHP | Draft definitions (Document TF4) |
| 2.3 | Seek agreement for new arrangements and timescale for their introduction with other Members | End July 2021 | Completed Action Plan shared with Committee and other Members pre DCC meeting on 14 th July. | T&F | Action Plan (Document TF1) |

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| 2.4 | To agree wording for Constitution and/or Planning Member and Officer Code of Conduct | July / August 2021 – March 2022 | <p>Completed Examples shared at T&F Group on 27th July. Changes to Constitution agreed in March 2022. Included – Operational Procedures, Code of Practice, Revised Delegated Powers</p> | T&F, L&G, RHP | Constitution March 2022 |
| 2.5 | Implement for trial period | July 2021 | <p>Completed Applied at DCC on 28th July. Applications have since been referred to the T&F group.</p> | T&F, Cttee | |
| 2.5 | The Council's Development Control Committee members need to ensure that any planning decisions are based on sound material planning considerations, and not applicants' personal circumstances. AW Recommendations R3. | November 2021- March 2022 | <p>On-going Link to Action 3.10 below. Model reasons where decisions being made contrary to policy. Also to Task 9 Training for Members.</p> <p>The T&F Group agreed a 'cooling off' deferral process in July 2021.</p> <p>The T&F Group agreed, on 26th October 2021, to resume a training programme for Members from January 2022. Should focus on PPW and Future Wales; the Well Being and FG Act & Socio Economic</p> | T&F, Cttee, RHP | |

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| | | May 2022 | Duty; Phosphates; and Case Law Covered in Members training post elections | | |
| 2.6 | Delegating authority to the Cabinet Member and CLO Economy and Regeneration | March 2022 | Completed Considered as part of changes to delegated powers in Constitution | T&F, L&G, RHP | Constitution March 2022 |
| Task 3: Review Delegation and Committee Processes - The Council should review its constitution to strengthen the governance of its development control arrangements (AW Recommendation R1) | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Learn from the development control governance arrangements of other Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) AW Recommendation R1a. | Dec 2021 | Completed Changes arising from the Action Plan have taken into account practice in other authorities. | T&F, Cttee, L&G, DM, Policy, RHP | |
| 3.2 | Amend Delegated Powers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Red' cases • Applications lacking information • Phosphates • Where Members declare an interest | Sept – March 2022 | Completed Changes to Constitution agreed in March 2022. Included – Operational Procedures, Code of Practice, Revised Delegated Powers | T&F, L&G, RHP | Constitution March 2022 |
| 3.3 | Review cases to be presented to Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Applications • Council Own Development Define what it deems as strategically important and 'major' planning applications. AW Recommendation R1c Strengthen the Development Control Committee's scheme of delegation by considering raising the threshold for planning | Sept – March 2022 | Completed Changes to Constitution agreed in March 2022. Included – Operational Procedures, Code of Practice, Revised Delegated Powers Revisions to delegated powers differentiates between strategic / major | T&F, L&G, RHP, Development Management (DM) team | Constitution March 2022 |

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| | applications called into Committee to allow it to better focus on more strategically important and major applications. AW Recommendations R1d | | applications and more minor applications. | | |
| 3.4 | Ensure planning applications submitted by or on behalf of the Council's officers and members are considered by the Development Control Committee and not under officer delegated powers to safeguard against any perceived conflicts of interest and to promote independence and transparency. AW Recommendation R1e | Nov 2021 – March 2022 | Completed Revisions to the Constitution include automatically reporting: strategic and major applications; council own applications; Member and certain staff applications to Committee. | T&F, L&G, DM | Constitution March 2022 |
| 3.5 | Review the balance of time local ward members have to speak on planning applications at committee meetings as compared to applicants and objectors. AW Recommendation R1f | Nov 2021 – March 2022 | Completed A paper has been considered on the role and time allowed for local Ward Members to speak at Committee. Changes are included in Constitution. | T&F, L&G, Democratic Services, DM, RHP | Constitution March 2022 |
| 3.6 | Agree Terms of Reference Develop an agreed Terms of Reference for the Council's Development Control Committee, to clearly state its purpose, role and responsibilities, and how it links to Corporate Priorities. AW Recommendation R1b | Nov 2021-March 2022 | Completed The Terms of Reference has been revised in the Constitution. | T&F, L&G, Democratic Services (DS) | Constitution March 2022 |
| 3.7 | Review size of Committee | Oct 2021 – March 2022 | Completed Discussed at the T&F Group meeting on 30 th November. Agreed to reduce to 15 at Council on 27 th January 2022. | T&F, L&G, DS, DM | Constitution March 2022 |

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| 3.8 | <p>Introduce new Planning Members and Officer Code of Conduct & Protocol for considering applications</p> <p>Review and include the Council's Planning Code of Practice in the constitution and ensure members understand and act in accordance with it. AW Recommendation R1g</p> | Oct – March 2022 | <p>Completed</p> <p>A Code of Practice and accompanying Operational Procedures has been included in the Constiution.</p> | T&F, L&G, DS, RHP, DM | Constitution March 2022 |
| 3.9 | <p>Provide model reasons for referring a case to Committee.</p> | March 2022 | <p>Completed</p> <p>Included in Code of Practice</p> | T&F, RHP, DM | Constitution March 2022 |
| 3.10 | <p>Provide advice on providing reasons for cases contrary to policy.</p> <p>The Council's Development Control Committee members need to ensure that any planning decisions are based on sound material planning considerations, and not applicants' personal circumstances. AW Recommendations R3.</p> | March 2022 | <p>Completed</p> <p>Advice contained in Code of Practice. Further advice to be given in training and briefing sessions for Members</p> | T&F, RHP, DM | Constitution March 2022 |
| 3.11 | <p>Review SIP Process and Protocols</p> | March 2022 | <p>Completed</p> <p>Included as part of changes to Constitution and Protocol</p> | T&F, L&G, DS, RHP, DM | Constitution March 2022 |
| 3.12 | <p>The Council should ensure that it's Development Control Committee and committee support arrangements comply with data protection principles and the processing of personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation. AW Recommendation 2.</p> | May / June 2022 | <p>Completed</p> <p>Members received training on their obligations under the GDPR as part of the new member training and a section on said legislation has been included in the Code of Practice</p> | T&F, DS, L&G, Data Protection, DM, RHP | Constitution March 2022 |
| 3.13 | <p>The Council needs to ensure that recordings of its 'in public' Development Control Committee meetings are made publicly available after committee meetings to adhere to the future</p> | May / June 2022 | <p>On-going</p> <p>In accordance with the requirements of the LGEW Act 2021, arrangements</p> | T&F, DS, RHP | |

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| | requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. AW Recommendation R4. | | have been put in place so that hybrid meetings can be held from May 2022. The system will allow meetings to be recorded and made available online. A decision is yet to be made on making the recordings available. | | |
| 3.14 | Review Constitution | March 2022 | Completed | T&F, L&G, DS, RHP, DM, Planning Policy (PP) | Constitution March 2022 |
| Task 4: Review Impact of Decision Making on delivery of Sustainable Development and Well Being and Future Generations Objectives | | | | | |
| 4.1 | The Council should establish a framework to assure itself that the Development Control Committee contributes cohesively and sustainably to achieving the Council's corporate priorities. AW Recommendation R9 | Jan – Dec 2022 | On-going A framework is being developed. Information can be reviewed annually as part of the AMR process. | T&F, Policy and Performance, DM, Planning Policy, RHP | |
| 4.2 | In making any changes to the planning service, the Council should take the opportunity to consider how it might act more closely in accordance with the sustainable development principle in contributing to the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives when making planning decisions. AW Recommendation R10. | Jan – Dec 2022 | On-going To review PPW and other monitoring frameworks to identify ways to capture contributions to the delivery of well-being objectives and links to the Corporate Strategy. The Corporate Strategy for 2022-2027 sets out how sustainable development principles inform objectives and actions in the plan. | T&F, Policy and Performance, DM, Planning Policy, RHP | |

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| | | | Briefings / training on the wellbeing and FG Act and sustainability. | | |
| 4.3 | The Council and Development Control Committee should assess the cumulative implications and long-term infrastructure impact of approving single affordable dwellings and TAN 6 planning applications in the open countryside to ensure they contribute sustainably and cohesively to the Council's wider corporate priorities. AW Recommendation R6. | Jan – Dec 2022 | <p>On-going</p> <p>The T&F group will look at affordable housing and TAN6 dwellings separately. TAN6 applications by their very definition will need to be located functionally close to the agricultural holding or dwelling. Policies also allow for affordable housing where they are in or adjacent to settlements.</p> <p>Officers are developing checklists for use when considering individual and cumulative impacts of decision making – this is being informed by PPW11, Dev Plans Man 3 and the WCFG Act and the corporate priorities of the council.</p> <p>This working is still progressing.</p> | T&F, Policy and Performance, DM, Planning Policy, RHP | |
| 4.4 | The Council should ensure that Development Control Committee decisions relating to 'affordable' homes in the open countryside are made and reported accurately in accordance with the Council's Affordable Housing | Jan - Dec 2022 | <p>On-going</p> <p>Additional information is being included in committee reports for AH properties that explicitly state whether</p> | T&F, DM, Planning Policy, RHP | |

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| | supplementary guidance. AW Recommendation R5. | | the proposal is in-line with the AH SPG. A review of all current and past AH approvals for AH is currently being undertaken to assess compliance with policies and SPG. | | |
| Task 5: Review Role of Local Member | | | | | |
| 5.1 | Agree advice and protocol for local Member | March 2022 | Completed Includes in revisions to Constitution – operational procedures and Code of Practice | T&F, L&G, DS, RHP, DM | Constitution March 2022 |
| 5.2 | Review protocol for contact by officers during application stage and prior to Committee | March 2022 | Completed Includes in revisions to Constitution – operational procedures and Code of Practice | T&F, RHP, DM | Constitution March 2022 |
| 5.3 | Consider whether the local Member should be able to vote if Member of the Committee | March 2022 | Completed Includes in revisions to Constitution – operational procedures and Code of Practice | T&F, L&G | Constitution March 2022 |
| 5.4 | Agree process for delegated powers where the local Member has declared an interest | March 2022 | Completed Includes in revisions to Constitution – operational procedures and Code of Practice | T&F, L&G, DS, RHP, DM | Constitution March 2022 |
| Task 6: Protocol for Officer Advice at Committee | | | | | |
| 6.1 | Review current arrangements | Sept 2021 | Completed Discussed current arrangements at T&F on | T&F, L&G, DS, RHP, DM | |

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| | | | 20 th July. Current approach not proposed to change. | | |
| 6.2 | Agree protocol for considering applications at Committee | Dec 2021 | Completed Current approach not proposed to change. | T&F, L&G, DS, RHP, DM | |
| Task 7: Improve Service Planning | | | | | |
| 7.1 | More clearly present its performance information and targets in its business plans. AW Recommendation R7 | March 2022 and October 2022 | On-going A commitment to developing performance data has been included in business and service plans for 202/23. A target being given for performance and service standards to be developed and agreed by October 2022. The timeframe reflects time to progress other elements of the Action Plan, staffing issues, the need to put arrangements in place to engage consultants and deal with complaints. The Council has now appointed consultants to help clear planning application and enforcement backlogs. This will help inform revised performances targets and measures. | T&F, DM | |

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| 7.2 | Review the effectiveness and efficiency of combining the Development Management Officer and Enforcement roles including the impact on performance. AW Recommendation R8. | Dec 2022 | On-going This is to be reviewed when caseloads have been reduced. | T&F, DM, RHP | |
| 7.3 | Review resources, consider actions to clear backlogs and add resilience to the team | March 2022 | On-going The Council has appointed consultants to help clear planning application and enforcement backlogs. The Council has also appointed Cadnant, who specialise on historic and listed buildings, to assist with the Y Hen Coleg proposals. The Council is also seeking help with ecology demands arising from phosphate issues. The Council is also seeking to recruit staff for its policy and DM teams | T&F, DM, RHP | |
| Task 8: Improve quality of information submitted to the LPA | | | | | |
| 8.1 | Re-instate regular agent forum meetings | October 2021 | On-going T&F considered on 20 th July. Agent meeting held on 22nd October. | T&F, DM | |
| 8.2 | Review guidance for applicants and agents - to promote importance of pre-application advice | Dec 2022 | On-going Work has been delayed due to other pressures. | T&F, DM | |

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| | | | Reviews will be considered this Autumn. | | |
| 8.3 | Review guidance for applicants and agents –to emphasise importance of quality submission – adherence to policy, appropriate scale, location and supporting information. | Dec 2022 | On-going Work has been delayed due to other pressures. Reviews will be considered this Autumn. | T&F, DM | |
| 8.4 | Review guidance for applicants and agents – lobbying Members and submission of information prior to Committee | Dec 2022 | On-going Changes have been made in the Code of Practice. Further guidance to be provided to agents, | T&F, DM | |
| Task 9: Provision of Training and Briefings for Members | | | | | |
| 9.1 | Set up programme for training and regularly briefings, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPW and Future Wales • Well Being and FG Act & Socio Economic Duty • Phosphates • Case Law | July 2022 | On-going Training was provided to all Members following the elections. Further training will be provided through regular briefing, the first provided in July | T&F, L&G, DS, RHP, DM, PP | |
| 9.2 | Agree training for Councillors post Election | May / June 2022 | Completed Training was provided in May 2022 | T&F, DS | |
| Task 10: To review the funding of resources to provide greater enforcement of unauthorised developments | | | | | |
| 10.1 | Review the effectiveness and efficiency of combining the Development Management Officer and Enforcement roles including the impact on performance. AW Recommendation R8. | June / Sept / Dec 2022 | On-going Consider alongside 7.3 above. This is to be reviewed when caseloads have been reduced. | T&F, DM, RHP | |

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| 10.2 | Prepare a report to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff resources • Number of cases • Breakdown by type • Income | Sept 2021 | <p>Completed Update presented to T&F Group on 7th September and 25th January 2022.</p> <p>Support to be provided through appointment of consultants. Tender to be published by 11th Feb 2022.</p> | RHP, DM | |
| 10.3 | Consider necessity to report to relevant Scrutiny Committee | Dec 2022 | <p>On-going Further information to be provided to T&F group</p> | T&F | |
| 10.4 | Consider budget provision and agree new resources if considered necessary | March 2022 | <p>Completed Discussed at T&F Group on 26th October. Budgets subsequently agreed to appoint consultants and to enhance team with additional full time permanent post.</p> | T&F | |
| 10.5 | Review Enforcement Charter – characterisation of cases and timescales for dealing with enforcement complaints | Dec 2022 | <p>On-going To be reviewed subject to the above</p> | T&F, RHP, DM | |
| 10.6 | Consider other powers – Proceeds of Crime | Dec 2022 | <p>Not Started Internal position made to concentrate on arrangements to clear backlog and improve performance before tackling new approaches</p> | T&F, L&G, RHP, DM | |
| 10.7 | Introduce regular monitoring and reporting of enforcement performance data | March 2022 | <p>On-going Included as part of Business and Service Plan for 2022/2023.</p> | T&F, RHP, DM | |

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| | | | Performance and service standards to be considered in autumn 2022. | | |
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Council Response Form

Council action planned in response to the recommendations issued by Audit Wales

Council: Ceredigion County Council

Report title: Springing Forward – Review of Strategic Asset Management

Issue date: June 2022

Document reference: 2970A2022

| Ref | Recommendation | Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales | Target date for completion of actions | Responsible officer |
|-----|--|---|--|--|
| R1 | <p>Early engagement on key changes to asset use.</p> <p>The Council should ensure that it undertakes early engagement with Council Members, the wider Leadership Group, citizens and other stakeholders on the impact that key changes within its Hybrid Working Strategy will have on some of the Council's key assets, such as the offices at Penmorfa and the future</p> | <p>The Hybrid Strategy and Interim Hybrid Working Policy have been developed through significant engagement of the workforce. This has informed the New Ways of Working Group on current and expected patterns of working as well as the level and type of desk space required. As a result, Pilot Hybrid</p> | <p>March 2023 – for developing options around future use of assets</p> | <p>RHP / New Ways of Working Group</p> |

| Ref | Recommendation | Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales | Target date for completion of actions | Responsible officer |
|-----|---|---|---|---------------------|
| | plans for how citizens will access services. | <p>Spaces have been set up to help monitor new approaches in practice.</p> <p>This will help gauge the level of space and opportunities for using space and delivering services differently. The next phase will involve engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including external partners and citizens to consider options and optimise use of the Council's assets.</p> | | |
| R2 | <p>Workforce vision and planning</p> <p>The Council's processes around its asset planning, monitoring and governance could be strengthened by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refreshing its 2018 Service and Corporate Asset Management Plans, • ensuring that these reflect the current strategic long-term vision for assets and that they are integrated into business planning; | <p>It is recognised that improvements can be made to have a more strategic long-term vision and plan for its assets. It will do this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A refresh of the Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan. • A review of its asset management and asset development arrangements so that they are more strategic and streamlined. | <p>September / October 2022 – to review existing arrangements for asset management and development.</p> <p>March 2023 – for preparing a new draft Corporate Asset Management Plan, including a 10 year plan for</p> | RHP |

| Ref | Recommendation | Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales | Target date for completion of actions | Responsible officer |
|-----|---|--|---|---------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing robust plans to manage the risks identified by the 2019 condition survey; and • clearly articulating how it is using the Sustainable Development principle to shape future asset-focused strategies and plans. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a 10 year capital programme for maintaining, improving and where appropriate disposing of Council assets. | maintaining assets. | |
| R3 | <p>Benchmarking</p> <p>The Council should develop and use further benchmarking data to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more routinely support the development of its Corporate and Service Asset Management plan; and • strengthen its business planning and self-assessment arrangements. | The Council will review its use of data to inform the preparation of plans and provide a framework for improving arrangements in the future. | March 2023 – to develop benchmarking data as plans are drafted. | RHP |

Council Response Form

Council action planned in response to the recommendations issued by Audit Wales

Council: Ceredigion County Council

Report title: Springing Forward – Review of Strategic Workforce Management

Issue date: June 2022

Document reference: 2971A2022

| Ref | Recommendation | Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales | Target date for completion of actions | Responsible officer |
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| R1 | <p>Workforce vision and planning</p> <p>The Council's workforce vision, planning and monitoring could be strengthened by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> refreshing its corporate workforce vision; having a clearer integration with its tier one annual Business Planning process; an annual review of its strategic workforce plans; | <p>Development of five-year Strategic Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027 in progress coinciding with new administration and Corporate Strategy.</p> <p>The process will also include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of annual reporting mechanism of strategic workforce plans and integration with business planning process Review of Hybrid Working Strategy including the introduction of targets and timescales | <p>September/October 2022 - Services to complete Strategic Workforce Planning Toolkit</p> <p>December 2022 – Implement Hybrid Working Strategy targets and timescales</p> <p>March 2023 – drafting and approval of Strategic</p> | Geraint Edwards |

| Ref | Recommendation | Council action planned in response to recommendation issued by Audit Wales | Target date for completion of actions | Responsible officer |
|-----------|---|---|--|---------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a more comprehensive picture of workforce skills and competencies; • more clearly demonstrating how it consistently uses the sustainable development principle to support the delivery of its workforce planning; and • developing specific targets and timescales for its Hybrid Working Strategy success measures. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research skills competency framework and development workforce assessment process | <p>Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027</p> <p>March 2023 – Skills competency framework development and assessment</p> | |
| R2 | <p>Benchmarking</p> <p>The Council should undertake more routine workforce benchmarking to strengthen its business planning and self-assessment arrangements</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will review its current benchmarking measures and use of data to inform the preparation of plans and provide a framework for improving future self-assessment arrangements. | March 2023 | Geraint Edwards |

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Governance and Audit Committee

DATE: 27th of September 2022

LOCATION: Hybrid

TITLE: Estyn Inspections, Summer term 2022

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT: For information

REASON THE COMMITTEE HAS REQUESTED THE INFORMATION: For information

Estyn has resumed its inspections of schools with pilot visits having taken place in the Spring term 2022 and the inspection regime continuing in its usual way from the Summer term 2022. The Inspection Framework has been revised and now gradings such as Unsatisfactory, Adequate, Good and Excellent are no longer given for various elements of the Framework. Rather, the appraisal narrative notes a school's strengths and areas for improvement for specific aspects of their work. Estyn's recommendations continue and Estyn will come to an opinion if the school requires significant improvements and requires a second visit from Estyn within a certain period.

The following schools were inspected recently:

- Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6674044>
- Ysgol Llangwryfon
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6672310>
- Ysgol Penglais
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6674047>

None of the three schools require a second visit and the recommendations raised by Estyn are included in the School Development Plans of these schools.

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why

Summary:

Long term:

Collaboration:

Involvement:

Prevention:
Integration:

RECOMMENDATION: This item is for information.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: This item is for information.

Contact Name: Mary Davies
Designation: Corporate Manager - School Improvement
Date of Report: 8:09:22
Acronyms: