

OCTOBER 2025

Improvement Proposals in External Audit Reports

Key to the conclusions –

1. **On-going** - agreement or action plan in place in order to respond to the recommendations and work has commenced.
2. **Completed – continuous work**. Action plan to respond to the recommendations being realised but it can be argued that the work of achieving the recommendations will never end as it is continuous work.
3. **Completed - recommendations have been realised**.

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

1. **Gwynedd Council – Arrangements for responding to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021**

Local report for Gwynedd from Audit Wales published in November 2022

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

Improvement Proposals arising from the report that continue to require attention:

- i) Update on recruiting all the necessary lay members
- ii) Arrangements for the provision of training for Committee members
- iii) On a regional North Wales level, confirm the scrutiny arrangements, borrowing powers and the VAT status of the Corporate Joint Committee

Progress against improvement proposals:

1. Following a further recruitment campaign, all lay member seats on the Governance and Audit Committee are now filled.
2. Training areas have been identified at the workshop on 3 April 2024.
3. The scrutiny arrangements, borrowing powers and VAT status of the Joint Corporate Committee are all now in hand. The six Councils in north Wales have now approved the Joint Corporate Committee's scrutiny arrangements and arrangements are in place to establish the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

Conclusion

Completed – continuous work.

2. Setting of Well-being Objectives – Cyngor Gwynedd

Audit Wales

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

Recommendations arising from the report:

R1

Delivery of well-being objectives

The Council should ensure that budget-setting or producing of a medium-term financial plan are clearly aligned with the Council's new well-being objectives, so that there is clarity about how savings targets or known future financial uncertainty might affect the delivery of its current well-being objectives.

R2

Appropriate measures and monitoring arrangements

The Council should ensure that it develops appropriate outcome measures and provides effective monitoring, reporting and scrutiny of the progress being made on delivering its current well-being objectives.

R3

Improving well-being and having a broad impact

The Council should map how the Council's work could support partners' objectives, and vice versa when setting future well-being objectives so that it can identify opportunities to collaborate with others.

R4

Involvement and consultation

The Council should extend its stakeholder networks when setting future well-being objectives and seek to involve people who reflect the full diversity of the county.

The direction of the discussion on the recommendations

Recommendations received and plans put in place to respond. The organisational response form was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee at the meeting on 23rd May 2023.

Progress against the recommendations

R1

A Medium Term Financial Plan was approved by Cabinet at their meeting on 14 May 2024. A new Medium Term Plan for a period of 3 years commencing on 1 April 2026 was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 16 September 2025.

R2

Work to review the measures takes place on an ongoing basis while milestones and outputs have been identified for the priority projects in the Council Plan, and progress against them are reported to bi-monthly performance challenge and support meetings. Since June 2025 Cabinet Members' performance reports are submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committees. This will mean that day to day work performance scrutiny arrangements along with the progress of our priority projects are in place to monitor progress in achieving its current well-being objectives.

R3

Mapping challenges and threats is now a fixed item on the Public Services Board's work programme. Examples where this has led to the identification of opportunities to collaborate and act on that are areas of being more trauma-informed, attracting young people to jobs which require the ability to converse through the medium of Welsh, and acting on the Active Travel Charter by sharing resources and good practice.

R4

It has been found that it can be very difficult to increase representatives from different feature groups on the Equality Core Group, and although efforts continue to try to do this we are also investing time and resources to secure input by targeting specific feature groups when we carry out consultations.

As noted when last reported, the Council was involved in a National Resident Survey at the beginning of 2025 and received over 3,000 responses (which is much higher than the normal response to consultations). We intend to conduct similar surveys with residents in the future, either annually or every other year.

Conclusion

Completed – continuous work.

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

1. Time for Change - Poverty in Wales

National Report from the Auditor General for Wales November 2022

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

Improvement Proposals arising from the report requiring updates –

Recommendation 2

Strategies, targets and reports on local performance in order to address poverty and mitigate it

In Paragraphs 2.13 – 2.23 and Paragraphs 3.33 – 3.35 we highlight that councils and partners have prioritised work on poverty, but the mix of approaches and a complicated delivery landscape mean that ambitions, focus, actions and prioritisation vary widely. We highlight that evaluating activity and reporting performance are also variable with many gaps. We recommend that the councils use their 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. This should:

- include SMART local actions with a greater emphasis on prevention;
- include a detailed resourcing plan for the length of the strategy;
- be developed with involvement from other public sector partners, the third sector, and those with experience of poverty;
- include a robust set of consistent outcome indicators and measures to increase understanding of poverty locally; and
- be subject to annual public reporting to enable a whole system view of poverty locally to help improve delivery and support.

Recommendation 5

Map experiences to create inclusive services for people in poverty

In Paragraphs 3.2 – 3.6 we highlight that people in poverty are often in crisis, dealing with extremely personal and stressful issues, but they often find it difficult to access help from councils because of the way services are designed and delivered. We recommend that councils 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.

Progress against improvement proposals:

Recommendation 2

Gwynedd Council held workshops with the Bevan Institute for two tiers of staff across PSB organisations in 2024 – frontline staff and executive level staff. We will also be running a workshop at a strategic level for the CEOs of the public institutions that will use local data and case studies. We are now working together regionally and are likely to use the lessons learned from the sessions on poverty held for members of the Conwy and Denbighshire PSB.

Recommendation 5

A Inclusion and Tackling Poverty Co-ordinator has been appointed and a cross-departmental Supporting People Working Group has been established. The working group steers the Council's 'supporting people' work programme, including the tackling poverty agenda and improving access to advice and services. The implementation of the supporting people work programme is part of the Council's ongoing work which takes place across departments. The Council also funds and works closely with a network of partners who act as community hubs that help people access more easily support, activities and services in their community. The Help with the Cost of Living website provides information about the support available in one place. The Gafael Llaw project is currently being piloted with the Galw Gwynedd reference board going the extra mile to find out if there is further support that can be given to a small group of people who get in touch. Learning from this project will enable us to identify the level of demand for this service.

Conclusion

Completed – continuous work.

2. Urgent and Emergency Care: Flow out of Hospital – North Wales Region

A report by Audit Wales

[Link to the report](#)

Recommendations arising from the report:

There are 16 recommendations in the report – details can be found here: [Link to the report](#)

Progress against the recommendations

This is a regional report for North Wales, and a response has been prepared at a regional level to address its recommendations. This was discussed at the Governance and Audit Committee meeting on 10th October, 2024. It was agreed at that time that an update on the recommendations would be provided to the Committee in 12 months' time.

An update report on progress was submitted to the Regional Partnership Board in March, 2025 which noted the development of a new Hospital Discharge Policy. A further update will be provided to the Regional Partnership Board in the spring of 2026.

Conclusion

Completed – continuous work. This is led by the Regional Partnership Board, who will also monitor progress.

New reports since January 2025

Following the decision of this committee in January 2025, when an external report is published, an "institutional response" will come to this Committee, and then the relevant department will be given up to 12 months to carry out any necessary actions, before reporting back to this Committee that they have been carried out.

This will ensure that we respond promptly to external recommendations, and avoid a situation, as has been the case in the past, where constant updates on our response are provided to this Committee over many years.

In addition, an additional phase will be introduced where the Performance Challenge and Support process will check that departments are acting on what was outlined in the "institutional response" and ensure that any necessary actions are completed within the 12 months.

These are the reports that have been published since January 2025, along with the dates by which Departments are expected to report back to this committee:

Report title	Author	Institutional response to this committee	Department to report on completion by
Financial Sustainability Review – Cyngor Gwynedd	Audit Wales	16 January 2025	January 2026
Review of Domiciliary Care - Cyngor Gwynedd	Audit Wales	22 May, 2025	May, 2026
Improvement Check visit to Cyngor Gwynedd	Care Inspectorate Wales	22 May, 2025	May, 2026
Strategic Management of Balances and Reserves	Audit Wales	11 September, 2025	September, 2026