

[Audit Wales – Annual Audit Summary 2020](#)

Local and National Reports – Recommendations/Proposals for Improvement

Compliance	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee <u>26 April 2021</u>	As at November 2021
Audit of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's 2019-20 Accounts	The Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Council's financial statements on 26 <u>November 2020</u>	Noted - No further action.
Annual Improvement Plan Audit of 2020/21 Plans contained in the Council's annual Corporate Performance Report 2020/21	The Auditor General certified that the Council has met its legal duties for improvement planning and reporting, and believes that it is likely to meet the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 during 2020-21 in <u>January 2021</u>	Noted – No further action.

Other Regulators	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
Care Inspectorate Wales Local Authority Performance Review April 2019 – March 2020 - Annual Letter <u>published August 2020</u>		Supplemented by Care Inspectorate Wales Assurance Check 2021 presented <u>to Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee</u> both in July 2021.
Estyn “In January 2021, Estyn wrote to the Council's Chief Executive outlining the outcome of their review of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's work in supporting their learning communities in schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) during the period from March to October 2020. Also relevant is Estyn's National report, ' <u>Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19</u> ' Update report from June to November 2020, published in January 2021”.	The findings from the Estyn report will form part of the ongoing Self Evaluation and the recommendations have been used to inform the 2021-22 Delivery Plan for the service.	An update on the progress of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's response to the recommendations within the overarching Thematic report published by Estyn was provided to the <u>Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 13th October 2021.</u> The recommendations relating to addressing the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable pupils and on physical and mental health of all pupils, are long term in nature and continue to be addressed through ongoing Service Self Evaluation and Delivery Planning.

Local Reports

Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 examination

An examination the extent to which the Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle in the delivery of the priority investments for leisure facilities to increase participation in exercise and contribute to residents' health and well-being

Published: March 2020

Proposals for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<p>There are clear examples of how the Council is applying the sustainable development principle to its investment in leisure facilities, but there are opportunities to develop longer term planning and involve people in shaping future leisure provision. Report is here.</p>	<p>The examination findings will be used to continue to ensure that the Council and its services are acting in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act including the Sustainable Development principles when developing and implementing its Service Delivery and Priority Plans and also plans for key projects. This includes the Council's new Leisure Strategy 2021- 2026 which is currently being developed.</p>	<p>The requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act have been strengthened within the Performance Planning processes for 2022/23 and have been described in the Council's annual Corporate Performance Report approved by Council on 20 October 2021. The Council's arrangements will be developed as part of its continuous drive for improvement.</p> <p>Work on the new Leisure Strategy referenced in April 2020, has been delayed to allow focus on front line priorities. The new strategy for 2022-27 is currently being developed. Pre scrutiny and engagement/involvement with residents and key partners to help shape future provision will start in early 2022.</p>

Financial Sustainability Assessment

The project sought to assess the sustainability of councils' short to medium-term financial position. This included a focus on the financial strategy of each council as well as reviewing financial 'indicators' of each council's financial position in relation to Performance against budget; Delivery of savings plans; Use of reserves; Council tax and Borrowing

Published: 27 March 2020

<p>The Council is well placed to manage its financial sustainability over the short and medium term. Report is here</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Noted - No further action.</p> <p>For information, the Audit Wales 'Rhondda Cynon Taf Financial Sustainability Assessment 2020/21' Report for Rhondda Cynon Taf was presented by Audit Wales to the 9th November 2021 Governance and Audit Committee. An update on the specific progress of the 2 proposals for improvement will be included in the next update to the Governance and Audit Committee.</p>
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National Report Recommendations

[The National Fraud Initiative in Wales 2018-20](#) This national report contained four recommendations for public bodies.

Published: 12 October 2020

Recommendations	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
All participants in the NFI exercise should ensure that they maximise the benefits of their participation. They should consider whether it is possible to work more efficiently on the NFI matches by reviewing the guidance section within the NFI secure web application.	Agreed The guidance is always followed and is helpful in prioritising the match outcomes.	As reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 26 April 2021.
Where local auditors have identified specific areas where improvements could be made, the public bodies should act on these as soon as possible.	Agreed Any significant aspect of improving the internal control environment is prioritised and audit recommendations are also followed up. Audit Committee also receives regular updates in respect of the service progress in implementing Internal Audit recommendations. This includes the number of recommendations implemented, for those yet implemented a revised implementation date.	As reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 26 April 2021.
Audit committees, or equivalent, and officers leading the NFI should review the NFI self-appraisal checklist. This will ensure they are fully informed of their organisation's planning and progress in the 2020-22 NFI exercise	Agreed The checklist has been reviewed by the Council's Fraud Service. NFI updates are provided to Audit Committee at relevant intervals. The next update of the 2020/22 NFI exercise is scheduled to be provided to Audit Committee in the first half of 2021/22.	The completed self-appraisal checklist was incorporated within the Anti-Fraud Annual Report 2020/21 which was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 12th July 2021.
All participants should be aware of emerging fraud risks e.g. due to COVID-19 and take appropriate preventative and detective action.	Agreed The Council is signed up with the relevant fraud sharing bodies and has received and shared Covid and other related threats. These threats have been reviewed and disseminated to relevant Services and residents, to provide necessary mitigation.	As reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 26 April 2021.

Recommendations	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
	<p>At the outset of Covid, consideration was given to the potential for fraud to emerge as a result of Covid support measures e.g. Business Support Grants, Free School Meal payments etc.</p> <p>Audit Committee is updated on Corporate Fraud at regular intervals throughout the year, which includes any Covid related matters.</p>	

Local Government Studies

The 'Front Door' to Adult Social Care : This national report contained two main recommendations. These recommendations contained actions for Local Authorities and the Welsh Government.

Published: September 2019

Recommendations for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<p><u>Improving access to the front door</u></p> <p>R1 - Part 1 of the report sets out how authorities promote access to the 'front door' and provide information, advice and assistance to help people to improve their wellbeing and prevent their needs from deteriorating. To improve awareness of the front door we recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review their current approaches, consider their audience, and ensure that good-quality information is made available in a timely manner to avoid needs deteriorating and people presenting for assistance in 'crisis'; - work in partnership with public and third-sector partners to help ensure people accessing via partner referrals, or other avenues, are given the best information to help them; - ensure that advocacy services are commissioned and proactively offered to those who need them at first point of contact; and - to take local ownership and lead on the co-ordination and editing of local information published on Dewis Cymru locally. - • The Welsh Government: 	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>RCT continuously reviews its Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) service to improve access to the 'front door'. This includes what we offer, what, when and how best to communicate information so that people get the help they need to prevent their needs getting worse leading to a request for assistance in 'crisis'. Advice and Assistance is offered following assessment by the Single Point of Access (SPA) service. SPA is able to directly commission services from a range of preventative services available, this includes Advocacy services.</p> <p>Advocacy services are commissioned from a variety of sources including third sector. The offer of this service is repeated to ensure that those people in need of longer term care who have not previously needed advocacy can be identified and supported. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) recognised the work we have undertaken to improve our provision of advocacy services for older people in their Annual Letter published in August 2020.</p> <p>The Council is the lead for Dewis Cymru across the County Borough. To date, RCT has 617 resources registered on the Dewis website, a combination of both local authority and 3rd sector organisations.</p>	<p>As reported to the Governance and Audit Committee 26th April 2021, noting the specific updates set out below.</p> <p>The Council is the lead for Dewis Cymru across the County Borough. To date, RCT has 422 resources registered on the Dewis</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve carers' awareness and understanding of their rights to be assessed for their own care and support needs, aimed at generating demand for local authorities' preventative services; and - undertake a full evaluation of the role of Dewis Cymru in the wider implementation of the Act and use the data gained to build on its potential as a national information sharing portal. 	<p>Information on the resources that are available is required to be updated every 6 months to ensure information is up to date. Independent organisations update their own pages as designed by Dewis, but oversight is maintained with the Council.</p> <p>We agree with the recommendations for Welsh Government and welcome a national information sharing portal across a single online platform for all partners.</p>	<p>website, a combination of both local authority and 3rd sector organisations.</p> <p>The national information sharing portal Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS) is operational across RCT Adult Services.</p>
<p><u>Investing in prevention and understanding impact</u></p> <p>R2 - Part 2 of the report highlights weaknesses in authorities' assurance of the availability and quality of third-sector, preventative, community based services that they signpost people to. We recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - map the availability of preventative services in their area to better understand current levels of provision and identify gaps and duplication; - involve third-sector partners in co-producing preventative solutions to meet people's needs and ensure people have equitable access to these services; - work with third-sector partners to tailor and commission new services where gaps are identified; and - work with partners to improve data to evaluate the impact of preventative services on individuals and the population more generally. • Welsh Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve the cost evaluation in relation to the impact of the Act in a national context, and support local authorities to ensure that the 	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The Council regularly maps the availability of preventative services across the RCT area to better understand current levels of provision and to identify gaps and duplication. This information is accessible via Dewis.</p> <p>Interlink also maintains a database of local services across the County Borough and ensures connections between Social Care and Community Services.</p> <p>Interlink and third sector services are represented on various regional forums such as Regional Partnership Board and Transformational Leadership Board where new developments and funding of services to meet identified needs are discussed and agreed. This provides the forum for third sector representation to influence decision making across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.</p> <p>Over the last year organisations and volunteers have worked together to support those most in need in their communities during the pandemic which has been described in a Cabinet report in May 2020 on the Council's response to the pandemic. This</p>	<p>Interlink and third sector services continue to be represented on various regional forums such as Regional Partnership Board and Transformational Leadership Board where new developments and funding of services to meet identified needs are discussed and agreed. This provides the forum for third sector representation to influence decision making across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.</p> <p>As we progress into winter, along with its partners we continue to deliver preventative, hospital avoidance services and explore options around the development of a new offer for integrated health and social care community model. We will update our winter planning report in December 2021 (For reference last year's report: 8th December 2020 Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee - Adult Services: Covid-19 - Response and Winter Planning)</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<p>desired impact of prevention on overall social-care expenditure becomes a demonstratable reality.</p>	<p>experience has strengthened joint working and has demonstrated that it is possible to identify vulnerable residents, refer them for support and provide ongoing input including befriending, preventing loneliness and isolation, that is available within the communities through voluntary sector and community groups. We will build on these positive experiences as a platform for sharing new service developments, highlighting pressure points and areas for further development, as we emerge from the pandemic.</p> <p>We agree with the recommendation for Welsh Government.</p>	<p>The current Integrated Care Fund (ICF) investment programme will end the 31st March 2022. As noted within Chief Social Care Officer for Wales letter received 17th August, Ministers have approved a new five-year revenue investment fund to build on the work and learning of the Integrated Care Fund and Transformation Fund to date. The new fund will run from April 2022 to March 2027 and will further focus integrated delivery of health and social care services across Wales.</p> <p>RCTCBC have been working with Regional Partners to review existing ICF and Transformations programme and prepare for the new fund. Guidance has yet to be issued on the new programme; however place-based support incorporating third sector brokerage, effectively linking the third sector with existing Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) provision, social prescribing and discharge pathways is a future aspiration.</p> <p>As part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Region we are required to produce a Population Assessment by 1st April 2022. Working with the Regional Unit, RCTCBC have been supporting the development providing needs assessment data to inform future planning. Engagement with citizens and wider organisations is a key focus and working with the RPB Engagement Officer to undertake meaningful engagement</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
		<p>activities with people from each priority group, and then reflect these insights in our Population and Wellbeing Needs Assessment. As part of this work an engagement toolkit for use across the region has been developed.</p> <p>By June 2022 there is a further requirement to develop a Market Stability report that will build on the population assessment and support the development of a new Area Plan by April 2023.</p>

Review of Public Services Boards: This national report contained recommendations for Public Services Boards, Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association

Published: 7 October 2019

Recommendations for Improvement	Cwm Taf PSB comment for information as reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<p>R1 - In Part 1 of the report we set out that understanding the impact of choices and decisions requires public bodies to fully involve citizens and stakeholders and undertake comprehensive Impact Assessments. However, we found that current practice is insufficient to provide assurance that the needs of people with protected characteristics are fully considered when reviewing choices and the voice of citizens is not sufficiently influencing decisions.</p> <p>We recommend that PSBs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct formal assessments to identify the potential impact on people with protected characteristics and the Welsh language and review agreed actions to ensure any adverse impacts are addressed; • improve transparency and accountability by making PSB meetings, agendas, papers and minutes accessible and available to the public; • strengthen involvement by working to the guidance in the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales; and • feed back the outcome of involvement activity identifying where changes are made as a result of the input of citizens and stakeholders. 	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The Audit Report was considered by the Cwm Taf Public Services Board at its meeting on 22 October 2019 and concluded that the PSB could do more to focus on ‘wicked’ issues and strengthen involvement with residents and communities.</p> <p>The recommendations will be addressed in more depth within the Well-being and Population Assessments.</p>	<p>Work on the Well-Being and Population Assessments is now in progress with a strong emphasis on involvement. This work is being carried out with Co -Production Network for Wales after Cwm Taf and Bridgend PSBs were secured their support for a five-year programme.</p> <p>An ‘Involvement’ sub-group has been set up to contribute and deliver the Assessments and conversations are underway about the role and purpose of the group.</p>
<p>R2 - In Part 2 of the report we review arrangements for PSB scrutiny and conclude that</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed a forward work plan at its meeting in</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	Cwm Taf PSB comment for information as reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<p>there are shortcomings and weaknesses in current performance and practice. To improve scrutiny, we recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PSBs and public bodies use the findings of the Auditor General for Wales' Discussion Paper: Six themes to help make scrutiny 'Fit for the Future' to review their current performance and identify where they need to strengthen oversight arrangements and activity; and - PSBs ensure scrutiny committees have adequate engagement with a wider range of relevant stakeholders who can help hold PSBs to account. 	<p>The Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee has taken steps to strengthen scrutiny arrangements and to bring scrutiny closer to communities and have held meetings in Hwb Glynrhedynog (Ferndale) and Calon Las (Gurnos)</p> <p>However, there is more that can be done including refreshing the Scrutiny Work Programme to support the closure of the current Well-being Plan and the development of the new Well-being Assessment and Plan.</p>	<p>September 2021. The plan has a focus on reviewing progress of the PSB's Well-being Plan 2018-2023 as well as the work underway for the next iteration of the Well-being Assessment.</p> <p>The Chair of Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) is an RCT Councillor and is part of the Community Assessment Action Group overseeing the work for the Population Needs and Well-being Assessments.</p> <p>On 5 November members of JOSC also undertook training on the Well-being of Future Generations Act, Public Services Boards and their role.</p>
<p>R3 - In Part 3 of the report we summarise the difficulty of developing, implementing and resourcing PSBs and the challenges of managing multiple partnerships that can often have overlap and duplication.</p> <p>To help build capacity, consistency and resourcing of activity we recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSBs take the opportunity to discharge other plan and strategy obligations through the Local Well-being Plan; • the Welsh Government enables PSBs to develop flexible models of working including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - merging, reducing and integrating their work with other forums such as Regional Partnership Boards; and - giving PSBs flexibility to receive, manage and spend grant monies subject to PSBs ensuring they have adequate safeguards and appropriate systems in place for management of funding; effective budget 	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The PSB is keen to pursue opportunities to reduce overlap and duplication within the current legislative constraints. There is developing and strengthening integration between the Cwm Taf and Bridgend Public Services Boards and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board which will enable resources to be maximised as far as possible.</p> <p>A joint Well-being Assessment produced for Cwm Taf and Bridgend is being developed to support the CTM footprint, which will lead to a single Well-being Plan for CTM. This work will be produced alongside the separate statutory requirement for a Population Assessment so that overlaps and duplication are minimised.</p>	<p>Work ongoing and in line with the position reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 26th April 2021.</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	Cwm Taf PSB comment for information as reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
and grant programme controls; and public reporting, scrutiny and oversight systems to manage expenditure.	The PSB would welcome increased funding flexibilities from Welsh Government with appropriate local oversight, controls and scrutiny.	
<p>R4 - To help build capacity, consistency and resourcing of activity we recommend that the Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association in their review of strategic partnerships take account of, and explore, the findings of this review.</p>	<p>Agreed The Review of Strategic Partnerships prepared jointly with Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association and Welsh NHS Confederation was shared at a meeting of the Public Services Board in July 2020 (Item 5 Governance item)</p>	<p>The October 2021 meeting of the Cwm Taf PSB considered the roles of the Area Planning Board, Community Safety Partnership and Safeguarding Board in reviewing structures and preparing for the creation of one regional Public Services Board. Representatives from these Boards were in attendance to give their views on how they could work with a regional PSB.</p>

[Progress in implementing the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act:](#) This national report contained recommendations for Local Authorities, other public bodies and partners.

Published: 21 November 2019

Recommendations for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<p>R1 - Part 1 of the report highlights that despite public bodies having an increasing understanding of, and demand for, VAWDASV services, significant gaps remain and engagement with survivors and victims in reviewing and developing services is inconsistent. To address this, we recommend that needs assessment and mapping of service provision by public bodies are revisited and involvement widened and enhanced to include all relevant stakeholders to build a more accurate picture of current service provision and identify gaps.</p>	<p>A response to this report was prepared for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Crime & Disorder Committee at its meeting scheduled for 16 March 2020.</p> <p>As a result of the actions taken to respond to the pandemic, the committee meeting did not take place as scheduled.</p> <p>During the pandemic, all the Council's VAWDASV support services continued and adjusted to operate remotely as a result of the Covid restrictions in place. We deployed regular social media campaigns to highlight the issues of domestic abuse and how to report. Numbers of referrals remained constant</p>	<p>All the Council's VAWDASV support services operated remotely throughout the pandemic with most services open and providing face to face support. Numbers of referrals remained constant throughout and are currently at the same level as pre-Covid.</p> <p>Service mapping is undertaken by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Advisor.</p> <p>The Audit Wales Report is scheduled to be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Crime & Disorder Committee on 1st December 2021 as part of a report on Keeping women and girls safe in RCT.</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
	<p>throughout and are currently at the same level as pre-Covid.</p> <p>The Audit Wales Report is now scheduled to be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Crime & Disorder Committee in Autumn 2021. The Council's response will be revised to reflect the work completed since March 2020 and the lessons learned from responding to the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>The recommendations arising from the Audit Wales report are already reflected in the priorities identified in the local Cwm Taf Morgannwg Implementation Plan 20/21 which is set out in the Cwm Taf VAWDASV Strategy Report 2019-20.</p>	
<p>R2 - Part 1 of the report describes how victims and survivors of VAWDASV often find it difficult to navigate a fragmented system of service delivery. To support victims and survivors to access and use services we recommend that public bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce comprehensive and relevant information in a variety of media on the full range of services available to protect and support victims and survivors; and • create a joint pathway to access services and support for both victims and professionals and advertise access arrangements widely 	<p>Agreed</p> <p>It is worth noting that the Audit Report highlights examples of good practice which includes development of the Council's Resilient Families Programme, which has drawn together a range of work streams to provide a single pathway for early intervention service for families.</p>	<p>The Council, in partnership with Women's Aid RCT has reviewed current service provision to consider "a one front door approach" to domestic abuse services in RCT. This work is well underway and a report will be presented to the Service Director Public Health, Protection and Community Services and Group Director of Community Services in December 2021 for their approval to consult with staff in early 2022 in respect of the proposed new working arrangements.</p>
<p>R3 - Part 2 of the report notes that whilst it is important that organisations comply with relevant data protection legislation, they also need to share data with partners to better meet the needs of victims and survivors. We recommend that authorities:</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>There are clear examples set out in the Cwm Taf Annual Report of how staff from all agencies are involved in meeting the needs of survivors of VAWDASV. The findings set out in the Audit Wales Report will be considered as part of our continual review of processes to strengthen our support to clients.</p>	<p>The National Training Framework is a key action within the Cwm Taf VAWDASV Strategy Report 2019/20.</p> <p>An RCT senior leads workshop received refresher training on the 6th October 2021.</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure staff who are likely to come into contact with victims and survivors have appropriate VAWDASV training; • provide refresher training to service managers to ensure they know when and what data they can and cannot share; and • review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities. 		
<p>R4 - Part 2 of the report highlights that while some good progress has been made with regional working, there are not always appropriate levers in place to support service transformation in line with VAWDASV legislation. To ensure the benefits of regionalisation are realised, we recommend that delivery agencies (local authorities, health bodies, the police, fire and rescue authorities and the third sector) review their approach to regional working to better integrate services and maximise the positive impact they can make on victims and survivors.</p>	<p>Agreed VAWDASV is a complex agenda and this is recognised in the report above. The report also sets out the Council's commitment to developing a new regional service model in the medium term and statement of intent.</p>	<p>This is an ongoing process with partners with many of the actions to take forward this agenda highlighted in the Cwm Taf VAWDASV Action Plan.</p> <p>Recent developments for taking forward regional working include exploring opportunities for piloting a Domestic Violence Perpetrator Project (DVPP) in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.</p> <p>A Regional task and finish group has been set to explore the development of a housing pathway for perpetrators of domestic abuse.</p>
<p>R5 - Part 3 of the report highlights that the complex and short-term funding mechanisms, lack of data and insufficient consultation with stakeholders, are not supporting sustainable commissioning of VAWDASV services. To address this, we recommend that local authorities review their commissioning arrangements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remove duplication and overlap between different approaches within the authority and with partners; • rationalise administration arrangements to improve efficiency and value for money; 	<p>Agreed This will be part of the considerations for the new regional service model which will be developed in the medium term.</p>	<p>It is recognised the current funding arrangements for the VAWDASV are not in line with other grant funding streams i.e. Housing Support Grant and Children and Communities Grant and welcome the Welsh Government review of this funding stream.</p> <p>On 4th October 2001 we were awarded 'Safer Streets' funding of £475K to provide interventions to take a holistic approach to address the issues of Violence against Women and Girls in the targeted areas, and more broadly across the local authority, bringing about a wider effect over time to reduce Violence against Women and Girls.</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • streamline and standardise commissioning arrangements to reduce the burden of administration on all parties; and • set appropriate performance measures, targets and benchmarks to judge the impact and outcome of commissioned services. 		<p>Additional funding opportunities and partnership working with the Police Crime Commissioners office and Health has provided two additional Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) posts to work with young people and patients in a hospital setting who have been affected by domestic abuse.</p>

Rough Sleeping in Wales – Everyone’s Problem; No One’s Responsibility - This national report contained two recommendations with actions for Local Authorities, public bodies and partners

Published: 23 July 2020

Recommendations for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<p><u>Intelligent use of data</u> R1 - Public bodies and third sector partners should ensure they use data to plan the right future services, and to put in place effective data sharing protocols to ensure they respond effectively and safely to people sleeping rough. We recommend that councils and their partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invest in data analytical skills to better understand the current situation and predict future demand to prevent future homelessness; • review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities effectively; and • introduce a single data capture and risk assessment process for to help support safe decisions making in dealing with people sleeping rough 	<p>Agreed The Council has put in place a Performance and Support Officer, which has significantly improved data capture and recording. This enables the production of weekly reports in respect of homeless people, rough sleepers and temporary accommodation placements. The data has improved our understanding of service demand and pressures.</p> <p>Through the use of ‘Abritas’ the Case Management system for Homelessness and ‘Homefinder’ we are able to better plan the right services for the future.</p> <p>Information in respect of the number of clients supported and the accommodation units available, among other things, is included in the RCT Housing Support Grant annual update which sets out the support provided to prevent people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation.</p>	<p>The Performance and Support Officer role is critical in the development and monitoring of the data for the Homelessness and Housing Advice Service and the ‘Homefinder’ Team. Weekly management reports confirm overall operational data particularly for our temporary accommodation placements and homelessness presentations. This helps understand current demand and service pressures particularly in respect of the number of available daily temporary accommodation placements. As a result of this intelligence, we increased the number of B+B establishments to ensure sufficient bedspaces to cover the winter period.</p> <p>Regular analysis of this data also helps us understand our client profile and the services we need to put in place to offer support. For example, our Prison Leaver homelessness population have been identified as one the main client groups for making multiple homelessness applications in a 12- month period. This led to a recently commissioned short- term Offender project in partnership with South Wales Police and Her Majesty’s Prison Service.</p> <p>Our Outreach service has been reviewed to offer a multi-agency response with Probation, Dyfodwl and South Wales for individuals found sleeping rough or begging in our town centres.</p> <p>We are working with ‘Crisis’, a national homelessness organisation to understand why 25% of our homeless applicants drop out of the system having made a homelessness application. Following a Discovery Phase which involved a file audit, an action plan has been developed with 8 quick wins identified for service improvement, which include improved process for data logging.</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
		<p>Quarterly reporting is undertaken from reports made available through our 'Abritas' IT system. This data is regularly shared with our seven registered social landlords 'Homefinder' partners to understand data relating to applicants and lettings. A review of the RCT Allocation Scheme 2017 is planned for 2022 which will include Rapid Rehousing arrangements to address the needs of our most complex and challenging individuals.</p> <p>Cwm Taf Healthy Partnership Wales is a more recent innovative partnership between RCTCBC and Public Health Wales and will explore how Housing and health are intimately intertwined and work towards improved housing/health partnership arrangements. This will aim to improve outcomes for residents/clients/patients through development of a mechanism to share, interpret and use data for action across partners in relation to housing and Health.</p>
<p><u>Integrated services to tackle complex needs</u> R2 - Because public bodies are responding to people in crisis, they often deal with acute issues in isolation and rarely address the fundamental cause of the crisis. To do this requires public bodies to design and create service delivery models that are responsive. We recommend that public bodies use our complex needs self-reflection tool to improve how they can jointly address complex needs in the future</p>	<p>The Council has a strong track record of working with partners to support people in crisis.</p> <p>Our case management system, Abritas, and other referral pathways help us identify service users who present with complex needs.</p> <p>The identification of these needs led to the Council applying for Welsh Government Trail blazer funding to pilot a Housing First project for offenders and an outreach project for those individuals deemed to have complex needs in partnership with Pobl and our Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners who provide the support and accommodation.</p> <p>The outcomes from both these projects have been over and above what we expected. Some of our most complex and high-risk clients many of whom</p>	<p>Additional Housing Support Grant Funding in 2021/22 has provided additional staffing resources for our RCT Housing First project, enabling the team to increase the number of vulnerable individuals it supports, including developing a pilot project to support Registered Social Landlords (RSL) tenants at risk of losing their tenancy, who have complex and challenging needs.</p> <p>The development of our Regional specialist Mental Health and Substance Misuse Outreach Health Team in partnership with Health, the Area Planning Board and Bridgend and Merthyr County Borough Councils work closely with our homeless and Housing First cohort to offer health related interventions. Information provided from this service is helping us better understand the health needs of our homeless individuals which has prompted joint working with Health and the Area Planning Board.</p> <p>Both Project Officers funded through Housing Support Grant have been recruited and are in post. A draft referral for</p>

Recommendations for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
	<p>have previously led extremely chaotic lives, have maintained their tenancies.</p> <p>Following the outcomes from the pilot projects. Housing First has been mainstreamed and these services can be commissioned to assist our clients who present with multiple support needs. These include chronic substance misuse, mental health needs, domestic abuse and offending backgrounds.</p> <p>Additional staffing resources have been secured through Housing Support Grant in 2021/22 to expand the Housing First project in RCT and to increase the number of service users who can be supported on the project.</p>	<p>accessing housing related support services and our Housing First Project has been developed and is out for consultation with partners.</p> <p>In recognition of the increasing complexity of clients a review of our adult hostel is currently being undertaken with the aim of developing a purpose-built assessment centre. This will help us carry out more in depth needs assessments for single homeless people with the aim of providing the right services and support based on the outcome of clients assessed housing and support needs.</p> <p>Commissioning arrangements for Women's Aid Rhondda Cynon Taf (WARCT) and housing related support provision have been reviewed with service provision covering male and female service provision including early intervention and prevention projects, floating support, and refuge provision with 4 additional bedspaces commissioned in 2020/21.</p> <p>Regional Commissioning with Merthyr CBC and Care and Repair provides target hardening arrangements for male and female individuals who are at risk or have experienced domestic abuse. Performance measures have been set and are monitored through joint contract monitoring arrangements.</p>

[Better law making: the implementation challenge](#) – This national report sets out key findings and the four key questions that the Welsh Government and the Senedd should routinely address.

Published: 24 September 2020

Key Findings and Questions	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<p>Audit Wales considered some of the challenges faced by local authorities and other public bodies when trying to implement legislation on the ground.</p> <p>Key findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory Impact Assessments underestimate the costs associated with implementing legislation • Local authorities struggle with capacity and find it difficult to implement new legislation • Implementation of legislation often requires the Welsh Government to support local authorities and publish timely guidance, but this is not always provided nor is it sufficiently clear and aligned • Different pieces of legislation and guidance are not sufficiently integrated to ensure public bodies are able to deliver their new responsibilities effectively and efficiently 	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Councils have over many years drawn the attention of Welsh Government to the local impact and implications of proposed changes to legislation, the changing partnership landscape and the potential resourcing requirements of the bodies/partnerships required to implement new laws.</p> <p>Whilst the Council has a positive track record of allocating resources to meet and support new initiatives and laws, the key findings identified by the Auditor General reflect this Council's experience on the ground.</p>	<p>As reported to Governance and Audit Committee on 26 April 2021</p>

Commercialisation in Local Government

Published: 06 October 2020

Recommendation for Improvement	As reported to Governance and Audit Committee 26 April 2021	As at November 2021
<p>R1 - Undertaking commercialisation requires councils to have enough capacity, the right skills and robust but agile systems to be in place.</p> <p>We recommend that councils use our self-evaluation tools to develop a strategy for the extent to which they want to pursue commercialisation.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The Council has a good track record of using commercialisation as a tool to meet its business needs. This is explicate in our Corporate Priorities and our approach to delivering them as set out in our Corporate Plan 2020-24 – Making A Difference</p> <p>The Council’s approach to Commercialisation was set out the Capital Strategy Report (sections 9.9-9.11), considered by Council at its meeting on 10 March 2021.</p>	<p>As indicated in April 2021, the Council’s approach to Commercialisation was set out the Capital Strategy Report (sections 9.9-9.11), considered by Council at its meeting on 10 March 2021 and an update was provided as part of the Council’s annual Corporate Performance Report 2021/22, approved by Council in October 2021.</p>