

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 26th June 2024
Report Subject	Audit Wales - Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes
Report Author	Strategic Performance Advisor
Category	Advisory

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes audit was undertaken to help fulfil the Auditor General's duties under Section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) and Section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This was a national study and Audit Wales undertook this work at Flintshire County Council during July and September 2023 and final report was issued in December 2023.

The audit sought to:

- Gain assurance that the performance information the Council provides to senior officers and elected members enables them to understand the service user perspective and the outcome of its activities;
- Gain assurance that this information forms part of the Council's arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources and its application of the sustainable development principle; and
- Identify opportunities for the Council to strengthen its arrangements.

Three recommendations for improvement have arisen from this audit, with the Council providing a planned action in response to these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The Committee endorses the Council's planned action in response to the recommendations for improvement.
---	---

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE USE OF PERFORMANCE INFORMATION: SERVICE USER PERSPECTIVE AND OUTCOMES REPORT
1.01	<p>The scope of the audit focused on the performance information provided to senior officers and senior members (senior leaders) about service user perspective and outcomes, and how this information is used. Audit Wales did not undertake a full review of the Council's performance management arrangements or an in-depth review of the quality of the data that the Council collects. Neither did the review focus on engagement with service users on specific service changes or the development of policies and strategies.</p>
1.02	<p>The scope of the audit was to answer the question 'Does the Council's performance data enable senior leaders to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of its activities to effectively manage its performance?'</p> <p>This was done by exploring the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the performance information provided to senior leaders include appropriate information on the perspective of service users? • Does the performance information provided to senior leaders include appropriate information on the outcomes of the Council's activities? • Does the Council have robust arrangements to ensure that the data provided is accurate? • Does the Council use the information to help it achieve its outcomes? • Does the Council review the effectiveness of its arrangements?
1.03	<p>Audit Wales focused on the Council's key performance reporting mechanisms:</p> <p>The Council's Cabinet, Chief Officer Team and Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive six monthly performance reports that include details of service performance, progress towards wellbeing objectives and financial monitoring information. These forums also receive various annual performance reports. These include the Council's Annual Self-assessment, Annual Complaints report and the Director of Social Services' report.</p>
1.04	<p>Audit Wales found that limited performance information is provided to senior leaders to enable them to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of the Council's activities. This audit confirms what the Council are already aware of and these are highlighted within the Corporate Self-assessment findings (questions within Theme G – Customer and Community Engagement), and actions were already in development to address these findings.</p>
1.05	<p>The three recommendations for the Council following the audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation One: Information on the perspective of the service user The Council should strengthen the information it provides to its senior leaders to enable them to understand how well services and policies are meeting the needs of service users. • Recommendation Two: Outcomes information The Council should strengthen the information provided to senior leaders to help them

	<p>evaluate whether the Council is delivering its objectives and the intended outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation Three: Arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of data The Council needs to assure itself that it has robust arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of the data it provides to senior leaders relating to service user perspective and outcomes. <p>The Council's response and action plan to the Audit Wales report and the three recommendations is attached at Appendix C (Organisational Response Form). These actions were already under development in relation to the Corporate Self-Assessment findings (as mentioned above).</p> <p>Additionally, Flintshire County Council also asked Audit Wales if they could identify another Council to liaise with for best practice or provide examples of what this looked like. At the time of the audit this was not available, and Audit Wales are currently reaching out to National Audit Office in England for this information.</p>
--	---

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no specific resource implications to Recommendations One and Two, however, it has been identified that for Recommendation Three, arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of data beyond existing arrangements would require additional capacity and resources that the present financial environment would not allow.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>Audit Wales engaged with Cabinet Members, Senior Leaders and Officers as part of their audit.</p> <p>Governance and Audit Committee, Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet will receive this report.</p> <p>In response to the Recommendation One, a key focus will be to develop a Consultation and Engagement Strategy to strengthen how we consult and use this information.</p>

4.00	APPENDICES
4.01	<p>Appendix A: Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes (Welsh)</p> <p>Appendix B: Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes (English)</p> <p>Appendix C: Organisational Response Form</p>

5.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
5.01	A number of accessible background documents and information is available on Audit Wales' website .

6.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
6.01	Contact Officer: Emma Heath (Strategic Performance Advisor) Telephone: 01352 702 744 E-mail: emma.heath@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Audit Wales: Work to support the Auditor General as the public sector watchdog for Wales. They aim to ensure that the people of Wales know whether public money is being managed wisely and that public bodies in Wales understand how to improve outcomes.