

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 26 th September 2024
Report Subject	Setting of Well-being Objectives
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Assurance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Auditor General has a duty to examine the extent to which the public bodies covered by the Act have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives and taking steps to meet them. The Auditor General must undertake an examination in each body at least once over each five-year reporting period, the current reporting period is May 2020 to May 2025.

The Setting of Well-being Objectives was a local study and Audit Wales undertook this work at Flintshire County Council during December 2023 - February 2024 and report was issued in June 2024.

The audit sought to answer the overall question;

‘To what extent has Flintshire acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting its new well-being objectives?’

No formal recommendations were identified, however, four recommendations for improvement have arisen from this audit, with the Council providing an action plan in response to the recommendations for improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The Committee to be assured of the recommendations for improvement.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE SETTING OF WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES REPORT
1.01	<p>The aim of the audit was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain how the Council applied the sustainable development principle throughout the process of setting its well-being objectives;• Provide assurance on the extent that the Council applied the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives; and• Identify opportunities for Flintshire to further embed the sustainable development principle when setting well-being objectives in future.
1.02	<p>The key question Audit Wales sought to answer was:-</p> <p><i>‘To what extent has Flintshire acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting its new well-being objectives?’.</i></p> <p>In acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle, this mean the Council must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>The Council need to ensure that when making decisions they consider the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future.</p> <p>There are five things that Council needs to think about to show that they have applied the sustainable development principle. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration• Integration• Involvement• Long-term• Prevention <p>Audit Wales reviewed this by exploring the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was the process Flintshire put in place to set its well-being objectives underpinned by the sustainable development principle?• Has Flintshire considered how it will make sure it can deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle?• Has Flintshire put in place arrangements to monitor progress and improve how it applies the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives?
1.03	<p>Audit Wales gathered their evidence in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewing key documents; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying out interviews with council officers and members
1.04	Audit Wales found the Council has applied the sustainable development principle in part to the setting of its current well-being objectives, but it did not directly involve its residents in the process and has not identified the resources required to deliver its objectives.
1.05	<p>The four recommendations flowing from the Audit Wales review are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R1: When it next develops its well-being objectives, the Council should ensure they are informed by the views of the diversity of its population to ensure the plan is informed by the full views of the local community. • R2: Outcomes information, when developing future well-being statements, the Council should set out how it proposes to ensure resources are allocated annually for the purposes of taking steps to meet its objectives to ensure these are achievable. • R3: The Council should ensure that in future budget setting processes or when refreshing its medium-term financial plan there is clear alignment with the Council well-being objectives, and that there is clarity about how savings targets or known future financial uncertainty might affect the delivery of its well-being objectives. • R4: To ensure that the Council can evaluate processes and identify lessons for learning, it should consider its arrangements for document retention and management covering how it gathers and stores information relating to the setting of well-being objectives and lessons learned. <p>The Council's response and action plan to the Audit Wales report and the four recommendations is attached at Appendix C (Management Response Form).</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no specific resource implications in relation to the four recommendations, however, as noted above consideration of the well-being objectives needs to be considered as part of the budget setting process and development of the MTFS.

3.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	Findings from the Audit have been risk managed and considered when providing a response to the three recommendations and will be monitored ongoing.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Audit Wales engaged with Cabinet Members, Senior Leaders and Officers as part of their audit.

	<p>Governance and Audit Committee, Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet will receive this report.</p> <p>In response to the recommendations, a key focus during the mid-plan review of the Council Plan (2023-28) will be to undertake a public consultation, workshops with the Chief Officer Team, Portfolios and Members.</p>
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5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix A: Setting of Well-being Objectives (Welsh)</p> <p>Appendix B: Setting of Well-being Objectives (English)</p> <p>Appendix C: Management Response Form</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>A number of accessible background documents and information is available on Audit Wales' website.</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Emma Heath (Strategic Performance Advisor)</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 702 744</p> <p>E-mail: emma.heath@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
	<p>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.</p>