

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**CABINET EXECUTIVE
9 February 2021**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Rosemarie Harris
Leader of the Council

REPORT TITLE: Wales Audit Report – Transformation at Powys County Council

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

1.1 This report sets out to advise Cabinet that Audit Wales have found that, overall, the Council is well placed to deliver its transformation programme.

2. Background

2.1 During 2018-19, Audit Wales looked at Powys County Council's (the Council) transformation work: 'Vision 2025'. Their 2018-19 work on the Council's transformation concluded that: 'The Council is making transformation a higher priority, but it needs to better define and communicate its vision and programme for transformation and ensure that planned actions are of sufficient scale and pace.' Since 2018, the Council has further developed its transformation work to help drive change at pace.

2.2 The Audit work during 2019-20 included a follow-up audit where Audit Wales asked; is the Council well placed to deliver its transformation programme with sufficient pace? The full Audit Wales report is available at appendix one.

3 Advice

3.1 The 2019-20 audit considered:

- Has the Council identified what it is trying to achieve through its transformation programme?
- Has the Council put in place proper arrangements to deliver its transformation programme?
- Does the Council review if its transformation programme is delivering the intended benefits?

3.2 Audit Wales completed a health check as well as a number of interviews with Cabinet and Officers and found that, overall, the Council is well placed to deliver its transformation programme, however COVID-19 presents new challenges and risks to the programme.

3.3 This conclusion was reached because:

- The Council has comprehensive project plans and clearly identifies the aims of its transformation programme
- The Council has put in place arrangements to deliver its transformation programme, however some arrangements are stronger than others
- COVID-19 has had an impact on the pace of some transformation projects and this will be an ongoing risk for the delivery of the overall transformation programme.

3.4 The audit also identified 3 proposals for improvement;

- a) The Council should build on and develop its ongoing engagement with stakeholders. Key stakeholders include Powys residents, partners, schools, businesses, Council staff and County Councillors. This is to help ensure people are aware of developments within the transformation programme, particularly in light of challenges and changes coming from the pandemic.
- b) For the Council to aim to evaluate all projects and consider ways to demonstrate the impact the projects are having on local residents and communities in Powys. This includes for example; identify who has benefitted from the work; are projects having the impact that was planned; and/or is there data which helps to describe the impact of transformation work.
- c) The Council should build on any learning from the COVID-19 pandemic. This is to help ensure the Council takes stock of its transformation progress so far and incorporates learning into future delivery.

Action Plan in place to address the above proposals for improvement:

Area for Improvement:	Action to be taken:	By Whom:	When By:
a) Above	A comprehensive Comms & Engagement plan for the programme will be put in place to ensure there is robust ongoing engagement with stakeholders	Nicola Williams / John Evans	February 2021
b) Above	Data will be gathered, and analysis will be undertaken within the Business Analytics team to evaluate the impact of the projects are having on local residents and communities	Nicola Williams / Catherine James	June 2021
c) Above	Review the objectives in the CIP to ensure that they are realistic and relevant to reflect that learning has been taken from the pandemic and that we respond to the challenges and opportunities.	Nicola Williams / Rhian Jones	February 2021 and thereafter annually

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The Council has a £2m budget identified to support transformation projects across the Council. Services bid from this fund on an annual basis. Many other sources of funding are also supporting transformational activity through specific grant or service budgets.
- 4.2 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) comments will be reported at the meeting.

6. Comment from local member(s)

- 6.1 N/A

7. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment is not required as this paper is referring to an audit conducted by regulators and not a policy decision.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 It is recommended the Cabinet accept the findings of this report and agree to focus and commit the resources necessary to complete actions set out in section 3 of this report.

Contact Officer: Emma Palmer, Head of Transformation and Communications
Tel: 01597 826768
Email: emma.palmer@powys.gov.uk

Head of Service: Emma Palmer, Head of Transformation and Communications

Corporate Director/CEO: Dr Caroline Turner, Chief Executive Officer