

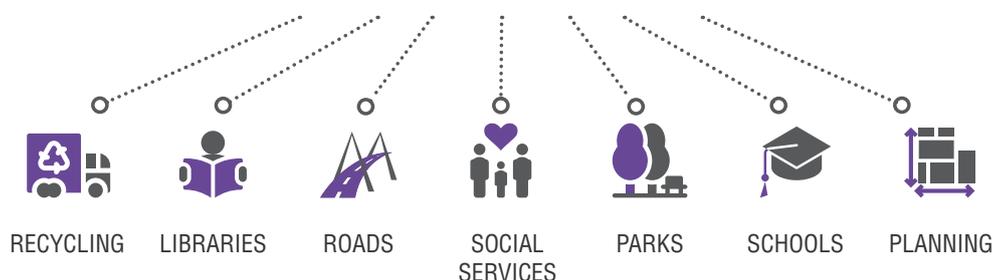


This is our audit summary for Powys County Council. It shows the work completed since the last Annual Improvement Report, which was issued in October 2018. Our audit summary forms part of the Auditor General for Wales' duties.



[More information about these duties](#) can be found on our [website](#).

Some of the Services the Council provides:



About the Council



We complete work each year to meet the following duties:

Our duties

- **Audit of Accounts**

Each year we audit the Council's financial statements to make sure that public money is being properly accounted for.

- **Value for money**

The Council has to put in place arrangements to get value for money for the resources it uses, and we have to be satisfied that it has done this.

- **Continuous improvement**

The Council also has to put in place arrangements to make continuous improvements and we also check if it has done this.

- **Sustainable development principle**

Public bodies need to make sure that when making decisions they consider the impact they could have on people living in Wales now and in the future. We have to assess the extent to which they are doing this.



To meet our duties we complete specific projects, but we also rely on other audit work, and the work of other regulators such as Care Inspectorate Wales and Estyn (the education inspectorate). The findings from our audit work are summarised below.



Audit of Powys County Council's 2018-19 Accounts

Each year we audit the Council's financial statements.

For 2018-19:

- ✓ We gave an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements on 10 September 2019, five days ahead of the statutory deadline;
- ✓ The Council's Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report were prepared in line with the [CIPFA Code and relevant guidance](#). They were also consistent with the financial statements prepared by the Council and with our knowledge of the Council;
- ✓ The quality of the draft statements presented for audit on 3 June 2019 was generally good;
- ✓ A number of changes were made to the Council's financial statements arising from our audit work, which were reported to the Audit Committee in our Audit of Financial Statements Report in September 2019; and
- ✓ In addition to our responsibilities for auditing the Council's financial statements, we also have responsibility for the certification of a number of grant claims and returns. Our work to date has not identified any significant issues.

Value for Money

We are satisfied that the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money from the resources it uses. Significant challenges remain particularly in terms of delivering timely transformation against the backdrop of a challenging financial position.

The recent senior management restructure is beginning to provide a more focused strategic input to support the transformation agenda. In addition, the better than anticipated Welsh Government funding settlement will to some extent ease, but not address the financial pressure facing the Council in the 2020-21 financial year. The Council recognises the extent of the continuing financial challenge and the transformation required to its service delivery over the immediate and longer term. We will include further commentary in our work on the Council's financial sustainability in our report which is due to be published in February 2020.

Continuous Improvement

We are satisfied the Council has met its legal duties for improvement planning and reporting, and is likely to meet the requirements of the Local Government Measure (2009) during 2019-20.

Well-being of Future Generations Examinations

The examination that we undertook in 2018-19 considered the extent to which the Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when taking steps to improve its school infrastructure. We concluded that the Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle in setting the 'step' (Improve our Schools Infrastructure) and is taking account of the five ways of working in the actions it is taking to deliver it.

Our examination in 2019-20 considered the design of the North Powys Well-being Programme and considered the steps taken by both Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board. Our report concluded that the Council and the Health Board have applied the sustainable development principle and its associated five ways of working in designing the step. However, there are opportunities to further embed the five ways of working into the next phases of the North Powys Wellbeing Programme.

Transformation

Our audit work in 2018-19 also looked at the Council's transformation programme. Our audit concluded that the Council is making transformation a higher priority, but it needed to better define and communicate its vision and programme for transformation to ensure that planned actions are of sufficient scale and pace. Since our last report, the Council refreshed the Vision 2025 strategy including updating its approach and adding other projects for transformation. We will be further reviewing these new transformation arrangements during Spring 2020.

Other Inspectorates

We also took into account the reports of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn as well as any subsequent actions taken by the Council in response. An Improvement and Assurance Board for Social Care was established in March 2018 to provide challenge and support following CIW's reports relating to Children's services in [October 2017](#) and [January 2019](#) as well as a report relating to Adult services in [May 2018](#). CIW also issued a [Local Authority Performance Review](#). A further Improvement and Assurance Board for Education was formed in October 2019 in response to the [Inspection of Local Government Education Services at Powys County Council, which took place in July 2019](#).

Planned work for 2019-20

We also looked at the key challenges and opportunities facing the council. These risks could have an effect on its ability to meet its legal obligations in relation to the sustainable development principle, the use of its resources and continuous improvement.

Taking our current and previous work into consideration and after reviewing the challenges and opportunities the Council faces, we decided that our work for 2019-20 would include:

- **Growing Mid Wales;**
- **Delivering Vision 2025;**
- **Assurance and risk assessment; and**
- **A review of the Council's financial sustainability.**

The Auditor General is independent of government, and is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office Board, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General. The Wales Audit Office is held to account by the National Assembly.

The Auditor General audits local government bodies in Wales, including unitary authorities, police, probation, fire and rescue authorities, national parks and community councils. He also conducts local government value for money studies and assesses compliance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Beyond local government, the Auditor General is the external auditor of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, the Assembly Commission and National Health Service bodies in Wales.

The Auditor General and staff of the Wales Audit Office aim to provide public-focused and proportionate reporting on the stewardship of public resources and in the process provide insight and promote improvement.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

This document is also available in Welsh.