

SUBJECT: Wales Audit Office Study

MEETING: Strong Communities Select Committee

DATE: 7th November 2019

DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide the committee with a report recently completed by the Wales Audit Office which examined the extent to which the authority is reducing child poverty and social isolation and improving economic inclusion. This is a clear step outlined in the council's well-being plan and is in line with the sustainable development principle.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is the legislation which defines the process of how public bodies can improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, by taking action in accordance with the sustainable development principle.
- 2.2 The authority is required to publish the steps that it will take to meet its objectives and these are contained with the Corporate Plan which is approved annually by Council.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The committee is invited to scrutinise the WAO report and, in line with its key findings, make recommendations to inform the future delivery of work delivered by the council and its partners to reduce child poverty and social isolation and improve economic inclusion.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Monmouthshire's Corporate Plan sets out the council's ambition to build sustainable and resilient communities through five well-being objectives which are underpinned by 79 actions or 'steps'. As well as providing clarity on the things we will focus on, the Corporate Plan is one of the ways in which the organisation discharges its responsibilities under part of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.
- 4.2 The Auditor General for Wales is statutorily required to examine public bodies to assess the extent to which they have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting wellbeing objectives and taking steps to meet them. The Wales Audit Office have worked with the council to identify one of the steps from the plan which it has used as a lens to examine the extent to which the authority is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle. This is the second evaluation by WAO, the first one having focused on rural transport.
- 4.3 The action that has been identified for the second study is 'reducing child poverty and social isolation and improve economic inclusion' which is aligned to the

objective of lifelong well-being and the ambition set within the Social Justice Plan. The WAO study presents an opportunity to reflect on some of the activity undertaken to date and assess whether any changes are required to the way in which this work is delivered.

- 4.4 Members are reminded that the authority's Corporate Plan and Social Justice Plan run until 2022. The WAO report refers to a long-term vision which in the context of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 equates to 25 years.
- 4.4 The work was undertaken as part of a workshop approach and has culminated in the production of a report which Wales Audit Office will attend the meeting to discuss. Members may wish to make use of the [Future Generations Framework for Scrutiny](#) which suggests questions to ask and the answers that scrutineers may expect to hear if the Act has been properly considered.

5. REASONS:

- 5.1 To ensure that actions are in place that will help build a sustainable and resilient Monmouthshire and make progress towards the objectives published in the Well-being Plan.
- 5.2 To improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of our county and work towards the aspirations outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no resource implications attached to this report.

7. EQUALITY, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Wales Audit Office report does not make any changes to policy and so no no evaluation has been necessary. Both the Corporate Plan and Social Justice Strategy have been evaluated when approved by decision-makers.

8. AUTHOR:

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