

Meeting of:	GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	17 JULY 2025
Report Title:	REGULATORY TRACKER
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER - LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	ALEX RAWLIN POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The regulatory tracker forms part of the Council's Performance Management Framework.
Executive Summary:	<p>The regulatory tracker has been updated to the end of quarter 4 of 2024-25. This report provides an update on recommendations awarded “red” status only. As at the end of quarter 4: –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 audits/inspections with 89 regulator recommendations are on the tracker • There is one “red” recommendation on the tracker

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Governance and Audit Committee with an update on any recommendations on the Regulatory Tracker that have been judged to have “red” status at quarter 4 (Q4) of 2024-25.

2. Background

- 2.1 A report to the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) on 10 November 2022 proposed that a ‘regulatory tracker’ be created to monitor progress against recommendations from all inspections/audits completed by key regulators of local government services, including Audit Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), and Estyn. An updated ‘regulatory tracker’ is considered at GAC twice yearly.
- 2.2 A report to the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) on 24 April 2025 provided an update on the regulatory tracker up to the end of quarter 3 of 2024-25, and addressed issues raised by the Committee: to ensure the tracker is regularly reviewed and updated by Corporate Management Board,

the need to keep the revision of target dates for recommendations to a minimum, and to strengthen the process for referrals to the Scrutiny Committees.

- 2.3 The Committee discussed a number of issues including the following:
- That it would be helpful to have any revised target dates for actions recorded in a separate column to the original agreed date.
 - Whether a live document could be created to track progress on a more regular basis.
 - Commentary could be improved to provide greater clarity on why a recommendation has been given amber or red status.
 - Further discussion outside the meeting was required to consider and agree what is required to provide a rationale for a referral from the Governance and Audit Committee to Scrutiny, ideally involving consideration of value for money and quality of service delivery.
- 2.4 The Committee considered the updated process for Corporate Management Board consideration of the regulatory tracker, agreed to change regulatory tracker updates at GAC to April and October each year (and those with a red designation reported to meetings in between), and considered the scrutiny arrangements. In addition, GAC proposed that where two consecutive reds for any action are reported to the Committee, then the appropriate Cabinet Member and Director will be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to explore the reasons for the delay.
- 2.5 The performance judgements for recommendations on the tracker are awarded by applying the following key as prescribed within the Performance Management Framework, which provides clear definitions for the Blue, Red, Amber, Yellow, Green (BRAYG) statuses.

Status	What does this Status mean?
	Commitments, projects or regulatory improvements
COMPLETE (BLUE)	Project is completed
EXCELLENT (GREEN)	As planned - within timescales, on budget, achieving outcomes
GOOD (YELLOW)	Minor issues. One of the following applies – deadlines show slippage, project is going over budget or risk score increases
ADEQUATE (AMBER)	Issues – More than one of the following applies - deadlines show slippage, project is going over budget or risk score increases
UNSATISFACTORY (RED)	Significant issues – deadlines breached, project over budget, risk score up to critical or worse

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Suggested changes/improvements to the tracker have been considered and where appropriate will be incorporated in the next full analysis of the tracker due to be presented to GAC in October 2025.
- 3.2 Updates for the tracker for Q4 were collected as part of the Q4/year-end corporate performance data collection process. A full report on performance against the corporate plan and the updated regulatory tracker was presented to Cabinet and Corporate Management Board (CCMB) on 24 June 2025 and is due to be presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) on 24 July 2025.
- 3.3 The Q4 tracker content is summarised below with breakdown of BRAYG judgements. There are currently 89 regulator recommendations for the Council included on the full tracker report from 15 Audits/Inspections.

Audit/Inspection	Recommendations					
	Total	Blue	Green	Yellow	Amber	Red
Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection of Sunny Bank (February 2025)	1				1	
CIW Inspection Report on Ty Ynysawdre (Residential) (January 2025)	1			1		
Audit Wales, Setting of Well-being Objectives	3	1	2			
Audit Wales, Review of Decision-Making Arrangements	5	5				
CIW Inspection of Golygfa'r Dolydd (September 2024)	5		4		1	
Audit Wales (AW), Financial Sustainability Review	2	2				
CIW Inspection of Harwood (June 2024)	2		2			
Audit Wales, Digital Strategy Review	3	1	2			
CIW Inspection Report on Foster Wales Bridgend	20	17	1	2		
AW, Use of Service User Perspective and Outcomes	3	2			1	
CIW Improvement Check Visit to Children's Social Care Services	10	7		2	1	
AW, Springing Forward, Strategic Workforce Management	3	2		1		
Transformational Leadership Programme Board, Baseline Governance Review Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board	7	3	1	1	2	
CIW Performance Evaluation Inspection of Children's Services	21	19	1			1
AW, Review of Arrangements to Become a 'Digital Council'	3	2			1	
Total	89	61	13	7	7	1

- 3.4 This identifies one red recommendation. Details of this recommendation and current progress update provided by the service area are as follows:

Name of Audit / regulator	CIW, Performance Evaluation Inspection of Children's Services (May 2022)
Recommendation / proposal for improvement	PR3 - Placement sufficiency and support
Responsible Officer	HoS/GM Placements and Provider Services
Initial Delivery Date	March 2023
Action Update Q4 2024-25	<p>A Business Justification Case has been developed and approved by the relevant boards in respect of increasing capacity of provision of homes for children.</p> <p>A property has been identified for a multi-occupancy residential service and offer accepted. Search underway for the second home.</p> <p>We have continued to work closely with Foster Wales on recruiting and retaining foster carers. Our recruitment officer has supported national campaigns and led local activities such as information sessions and drop-ins. A new foster carer handbook and welcome pack for newly approved carers are nearly ready and awaiting final sign-off.</p> <p>We also held our latest Information and Communication Event (ICE), which was well attended and generated valuable ideas and feedback from carers and staff.</p> <p>A new front door process is now in place to strengthen the applicant journey—from the first enquiry right through to panel. This includes clearer communication with applicants, mid-point meetings to check progress and provide support, and a stronger quality assurance process of independent social worker assessments.</p> <p>We have also worked with regional groups to help shape national resources, including a Children's Guide that we will be adapting for our local area.</p>
Current Delivery Date	March 2030

- 3.5 The service has provided the following additional information to clarify the reason for the red judgement:

Children's placement sufficiency remains a significant risk to the local authority. The legislation to remove profit from children's social care is now on the statute books in Wales and Bridgend as all local authorities are managing a period of significant transition. There are insufficient numbers of in house foster carers to meet needs, a small number of children who are accommodated in settings operating without Care Inspectorate Wales registration and at the end of quarter 4 no certainty about the future of grant funding from Welsh Government. The Council has developed a comprehensive placement commissioning strategy which sets out the actions needed to meet the statutory timescales to remove profit from children's social care in Bridgend which includes development of additional in-house residential capacity and enhanced support for Bridgend foster carers. There

remains uncertainty regarding the future intentions of for-profit providers which is leading to increased cost and challenges in placement availability in the short term.

- 3.6 The progress of this recommendation has been scrutinised on a number of occasions since the regulator report was issued. Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SOSC 2) received the Commissioning Strategy on 19 Feb 2024, as well as the Children and Family Services Placement Commissioning Strategy 2025-2030 on 13 March 2025 as a pre-decision item, and made recommendations for consideration prior to the report being presented to Cabinet in September 2025. The Scrutiny Committee consistently raise the subject of sufficiency of placements when considering any Safeguarding item as well as on receipt of the Director of Social Services' Annual Report which is next due for consideration by the Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (formerly SOSC 2) on 11 September 2025.
- 3.7 SOSC 2 also received the Authority's 3 Year Sustainability Plan in Children's Services in July 2023, the focus of which was the safe reduction and usage of agency staff and growing our own social workforce and the Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing and Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing have continued to provide regular updates on the progress of the Plan during most subsequent meetings of the Committee.
- 3.8 In addition, sufficiency of foster carers was discussed at the most recent meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 June 2025 during scrutiny of the Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25 report, in which it was reported that Council have approved a budget pressure of £3.250 million for 2025-26 to mitigate the ongoing pressures of Care Experienced Children and insufficient numbers of foster carers.
- 3.9 Placement sufficiency is a consistent priority for Scrutiny and is considered quarterly in Budget and Performance Monitoring reports and any other Social Services related reports.
- 4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty / Welsh Language)**
 - 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 This report forms part of the measurement of progress against the following corporate well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that form part of the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-28:-

- A prosperous place with thriving communities
- Creating modern, seamless public services
- Enabling people to meet their potential
- Supporting our most vulnerable

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no specific implications of this report on climate change.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no specific implications of this report on safeguarding or corporate parenting.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications associated with these arrangements.

9. Recommendation

9.1 The Governance and Audit Committee is recommended to consider the red recommendation and current position at Q4.

Background documents

None