

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 17TH APRIL, 2024

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: J. ABSALOM (CHAIR)

Councillors S. Behr (Vice-Chair)
K. Chaplin
W. Hodgins
C. Smith
J. Wilkins

M. Veale
C. Hucker

WITH: Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
Audit & Risk Manager
Professional Lead – Internal Audit
Service Manager – Accountancy
Senior Finance Business Partner
Data Protection & Governance Officer
Corporate Communications - Marketing & Customer
Access Manager

AND: **Audit Wales Representatives**
Mike Jones

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u>	

	<p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Councillor D. Bevan Chief Officer Resources Deborah Woods (Audit Wales)</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declarations of interest were reported:-</p> <p>Jo Absalom (Chair), Councillor Chris Smith and Councillor Jo Wilkins all declared an interest in the exempt report - Item No. 8 – Recruitment.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Governance & Audit Committee held on 21st February, 2024 were submitted.</p> <p>It was reported that Martin Veale, Lay Member, was not present for the duration of the meeting and requested not to be recorded in attendees present.</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 21st February, 2024 was submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>AUDIT PLAN OUTTURN 2023-24</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Audit & Risk Manager.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee noted the following:-</p>	

- the levels of audit coverage in each service area,
- the plan outturn for the financial year, and
- the performance of the Internal Audit Service for the financial year 2023/24.

No. 7

ANTI-FRAUD, ANTI-CORRUPTION & ANTI-BRIBERY POLICY

Consideration was given to report of the Audit & Risk Manager.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee endorsed Option 2; namely that the Policy be amended, in line with Member's comments and issues raised, prior to approval by Cabinet.

The Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships left the meeting at this juncture.

No. 8

RECRUITMENT

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 & 13, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to report of the Interim Chief Executive.

RESOLVED that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted; and the Governance and Audit Committee:-

3.1 Considered and noted the following:-

- The investigation report (Appendix B)
- CLT determinations (Appendix C)

3.2 The Action Plan (Appendix D) to address the weaknesses identified and strengthen recruitment policy and process be updated in line with Member's recommendations and future progress reports be received.

3.3 The Committee continued to gain assurance that improvements in processes were made, and compliance was monitored.	
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