

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 25th JANUARY, 2022

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: Mr. Terry Edwards (Chair)

Councillors S. Healy
P. Baldwin
D. Davies
D. Hancock
J. Hill
J. Holt
W. Hodgins
M. Moore
J. Millard
J.C. Morgan
K. Rowson
B. Summers
S. Thomas
H. Trollope
L. Winnett
Mr. Martin Veale

WITH: Chief Officer Resources
Head of Governance & Partnerships
Professional Lead Internal Audit
Data Protection & Governance Officer

AND: **Audit Wales**
Charlotte Owen
Alice Rushby

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>No apologies for absence were reported.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillor B. Summers declared an interest in the following:</p> <p>Item No. 7 Audit Wales – Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Annual Audit Summary 2021 (<i>Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd.</i>)</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Audit Committee held on 7th December, 2022 were submitted, whereupon:</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET</u></p> <p>There were no actions arising from the meeting of the Governance & Audit Committee held on 7th December, 2021.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Professional Lead</p>	

	<p>Internal Audit.</p> <p>The Professional Lead Internal Audit presented the report which updated the Committee on progress against the Internal Audit Plan for the period 1st October, 2021 to 31st December, 2021</p> <p>Activities for the period were set out in Appendix A and provided a summary of findings from audit reports produced in the period, including a formal audit opinion where appropriate. Performance data for the Section was presented at Appendix B; and the grading's issued during the period and percentage coverage for each Department was shown at Appendix C and D.</p> <p>In response to questions raised regarding sickness absence the Officer confirmed that the data related to the Internal Audit Section only. She said the Team had been fortunate with very little Covid related sickness during the period, and the Team had worked exceptionally well throughout the pandemic.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee note the findings within the attached Appendices, and progress on activities for the period 1st October 2021 to 31st December 2021.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>AUDIT WALES – BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL AUDIT SUMMARY 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>The newly appointed Head of Governance & Partnerships was introduced to the Committee. She had commenced the post at the beginning of January, which included the role of Head of Democratic Services, and she looked forward to working with the Committee in the coming years.</p> <p>The Officer presented the Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary for Blaenau Gwent 2021 (attached at Appendix 1) which provided a summary of work undertaken since the last Annual Audit Summary in April 2021. There were no</p>	

substantial issues raised by Audit Wales, and the report highlighted some strengths in the way the Council had utilised data to inform its response to the Covid pandemic and support the recovery plan process. The report also mentioned the improved financial planning within the Council.

The report also provided information on local and national studies undertaken by Audit Wales in the last year; and also highlighted some of Audit Wales' planned work. The Officer pointed out that a follow-up audit of Corporate Safeguarding would be undertaken in the Spring and the Terms of Reference for that audit was expected to be received in February.

A Member referred to the key facts on page 28 of the report and requested further details on the six areas of deprivation. The Officer undertook to provide this information to all Members.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee note the content of the report and receive future reports from the Wales Audit Office.