

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

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

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE
21ST JUNE, 2023**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC OFFICER

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. BEHR (VICE-CHAIR IN THE CHAIR
Item Nos 1 – 4 only)**

Councillors D. Bevan
K. Chaplin
W. Hodgins
C. Smith
J. Wilkins

Joanne Absalom
Martin Veale

**WITH: Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
Professional Lead – Internal Audit
Solicitor**

**AND: Alice King, Audit Wales
Deborah Woods, Audit Wales**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from the Audit and Risk Manager and the Data Protection & Governance Officer.</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interests or dispensations reported.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR 2023/2024</u></p> <p>Nominations were sought for the appointment of Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee for 2023/2024.</p> <p>A Member proposed that Ms Joanne Absalom be appointed to the role, and this proposal was seconded.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Ms Joanne Absalom be appointed Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee for 2023/2024.</p> <p>Ms. Absalom took the Chair at this juncture.</p> <p>It was agreed that Item No. 11 – Civic Centre Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) would be considered at this juncture.</p>	
<p>No.11</p>	<p><u>CIVIC CENTRE INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>Following a discussion, the following actions were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The final costs associated with the demolition of the Civic Centre be provided. ➤ Updated footfall figures relating to visits to all the community hubs be provided for February – June 2023 including the nature of usage and how residents were interacting through these channels. ➤ The report relating to the new Council Operating Model which was agreed at Council on 25th March, 2021 be circulated. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Further information be provided in relation to parking/access issues, specifically disabled access at community hubs. ➤ Visitor footfall in Ebbw Vale Town Centre to be provided. <p>It was, thereupon, unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and it was confirmed that the Committee was assured that an Integrated Impact Assessment had been completed in line with legislation to be formally agreed at Council.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Governance & Audit Committee held on 26th April, 2023 were submitted.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 26TH APRIL, 2023</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 26th April, 2023 was submitted.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the proposed Forward Work Programme 2023/2024.</p> <p>Following a discussion, it was agreed that the following items be included within the Forward Work Programme 2023/2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd – to provide detail around the finalisation of the in-house transfer. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Annual Report of the Governance & Audit Committee. ➤ Review how Committee can be assured of progress against External and Internal Audit recommendations. ➤ A discussion to take place with appropriate officers regarding the provision of a report relating to Artificial Intelligence. <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 2 be endorsed, namely that the Forward Work Programme be approved, subject to the above amendments.</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/2022</u></p> <p>At this juncture, Deborah Woods the new Audit Lead for Blaenau Gwent was introduced to the Committee.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources gave a verbal update relating to the 2021/2022 Statement of Accounts and advised the Committee that subject to Audit Wales competing their audit including the ISA 260 and audit opinion, the 2021/2022 Statement of Accounts would be considered at the Committee meeting on 12th July, 2023.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p>	
No. 9	<p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND RISK MANAGER 2022/2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Audit and Risk Manager.</p> <p>Following a discussion, it was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The wording of the Welsh translation advert relating to the lay member vacancy be revised, if required. ➤ An update be provided on the three large investigations that had commenced during the year, at the appropriate juncture. 	

	<p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the Annual Audit Opinion of the Audit and Risk Manager be noted, namely that based on the findings of the audit work undertaken during 2022/23, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's system of internal control during the financial year 2022/23 operated to a level which gave Reasonable Assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's framework of governance, risk management and control.</p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023-2028</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the basis for audit selection / prioritisation as described in section 2 of the report be noted, and the audit plan be approved, deeming it to provide sufficient coverage upon which the Audit and Risk Manager could provide an annual audit opinion, enabling the Governance & Audit Committee to fulfil its assurance role.</p>	
<p>No. 12</p>	<p><u>TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u></p> <p>Members considered the time of future Governance & Audit Committee meetings.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that all future Governance & Audit Committees commence at 9.30 a.m.</p>	