

Committee: **Governance and Audit Committee**
 Date of meeting: **12th July 2023**
 Report Subject: **Audit Wales: Review of the Planning Service – Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**
 Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Steve Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member Corporate Overview and Performance**
 Report Submitted by: **Steve Smith, Service Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance and Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
		04.07.23	12.07.23					Planning Committee 7.9.23

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Governance and Audit Committee with the Audit Wales Report, '*Review of Planning Service*' (Appendix 1).
 - 1.2 The Council has responded to the review and its Management Response is attached at Appendix 2.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 Audit Wales published their report, '*Review of the Planning Service*' in May 2023 and covers the audit year 2022/23.
 - 2.2 The review was undertaken to provide assurance and insight as to whether the Council's planning service is effectively and sustainably meeting its objectives and contributing towards the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities. The work included a review of the performance of the planning service.
 - 2.3 The Audit Wales report identified the following recommendations:

R1 – Include performance measures in the Development and Estates business plan to demonstrate the service's performance ambitions and to enable effective monitoring of the service.

R2 – Include in the Development and Estates business plan the service's contribution towards delivery the Council's corporate objectives to demonstrate its important enabling role.

R3 – The Council needs to assure itself that the planning service has robust data quality arrangements to ensure that it reports accurate performance data so that staff, members, Welsh Government and the

public can place reliance on its integrity to make accurate and informed decisions.

R4 – Full Council to consider the outcome of the scheme of delegation and planning protocol review by September 2023 and decide on future planning governance arrangements.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 This report will also be presented to the Planning Committee during September 2023.

3.2 Option 1

The Governance and Audit Committee consider the content of the Audit Wales review and findings on the Review of Planning Service and to be assured that the Management Response responds to the identified recommendations within the report.

Option 2

The Governance and Audit Committee consider the content of the Audit Wales review and findings on the Review of Planning Service and to provide any specific comments in relation to the Management Response.

4. Monitoring Arrangements

4.1 The recommendations from Audit Wales will be included within the business plan and updated on a quarterly basis.

The information will be reported within the Joint Finance and Performance Report to Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

Regular meetings are held with Audit Wales to assess progress of reports.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Audit Wales Report '*Review of Planning Service*'

Appendix 2 – Management Response '*Review of Planning Service*'