

Committee: **Governance and Audit Committee**

Date of Meeting: **12th July, 2023**

Report Subject: **Annual Governance Statement 2021/22**

Portfolio Holder: **Steve Thomas – Leader / Cabinet Member Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources**

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

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present to the Governance and Audit Committee the final Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2021/22 (attached at Appendix A).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report provides the AGS for 2021/22, providing an assessment of the effectiveness of the Authority's governance arrangements.
- 2.2 Responsibility for reviewing the AGS has been delegated to the Governance and Audit Committee as 'those charged with Governance'.
- 2.3 The draft AGS was approved by the Governance and Audit Committee at its September 2022 meeting. Further to this the statement would usually be updated to reflect the current position and re-submitted to the committee along with the final Statement of Accounts.
- 2.4 However, due to the delay with the Statement of Accounts for 2021/22, the AGS for 2022/23 is now in production, and any updates to the previous document would replicate the information in the current one. The authors are not aware of any significant changes to the arrangements that should be brought to the attention of Committee and consequently it is not considered good use of resources to fully update the AGS for 2021/22.
- 2.5 The AGS for 2021/22 is attached as a final version with some narrative added to explain the position described above. The AGS for 2022/23 will come to the committee in due course and provide the most up to date position on the Governance framework.

Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Governance and Audit Committee consider the following options:

Option 1

The Committee approve and adopt the AGS for 2021/22 in its current state and receive the AGS for 2022/23 in due course.

Option 2

The Committee propose amendments / alterations to the AGS for 2021/22.

Option3

The Committee choose not to approve the AGS in its current format.

4. Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

- 4.1 Production of the AGS assists the Authority in achieving its Corporate Plan priority of being an ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and at the right place, by providing an assessment of the governance arrangements in place for Blaenau Gwent CBC.

- 4.2 Production of the AGS is a statutory requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations (Wales) 2014 to accompany the Statement of Accounts.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 *Impact on Budget*

There are no direct financial implications resulting from the production of the AGS.

5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

Options 1 and 2 are compliant with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (Wales) 2014, albeit the AGS does not give the most current position. As indicated in 2.4, authors are not aware of any significant changes to governance arrangements since the draft report and as a consequence the decision has been taken not to update fully on the grounds efficiency. Option 3 would result in non-compliance with these regulations.

5.3 *Legal*

There are no direct legal implications arising from the production of the AGS.

5.4 *Human Resources*

The production of the AGS involves the investment of Senior Management time from across the Authority. The commitment is met from existing resources.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

The production of the AGS is an element of the governance framework of the Authority.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The AGS sets out how the Council's governance framework has operated for the ultimate benefit of the citizens of Blaenau Gwent.

6.3 ***Involvement***

The AGS informs the reader of the Authority's consultation and engagement activities during 2021/22. Officers from all directorates have contributed to the production of the AGS and Members consider & confirm that the AGS reflects their understanding of the Council's position for the previous year.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term***

The statement provides a comparison of the governance activity for 2021/22 with the Code of Governance and identifies development activities for 2022/23 and future years

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The AGS outlines how the Authority's governance arrangements have operated in the context of risk management and internal control, identifying weaknesses and developments for the future.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The AGS acknowledges the Authority's collaborative working approach as part of the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board and other partners.

6.7 ***Integration***

Officers from all directorates have contributed to the production of the AGS and the document reflects a whole Authority perspective.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The production of the AGS has no direct impact on decarbonisation and reducing carbon emissions.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

Not applicable.

6.9b ***Equality Impact Assessment***

The production of the AGS has a neutral impact against people or groups from the nine protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The AGS provides the assessment of the Authority's governance framework against the Code of Governance.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- [Appendix A - Annual Governance Statement](#)
- [Code of Governance](#)