

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE
20TH SEPTEMBER, 2023**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC OFFICER

PRESENT: JOANNE ABSALOM (CHAIR)

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

Martin Veale

WITH: Interim Corporate Director of Social Services
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
Head of Community Services
Audit & Risk Manager
Professional Lead – Internal Audit
Team Manager - Housing Solutions and Compliance
Service Manager Commercial & Business Opportunities
Service Manager – Children’s Services
Data Protection & Governance Officer
Communications & Marketing Manager
Team Leader – School Meals Catering Service
Professional Lead – Risk and Insurance
Senior Auditor

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>Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>Chief Officer Commercial and Customer</p> <p>Mike Jones, Richard Harries, Alice King and Deborah Woods, Audit Wales.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interests or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Governance & Audit Committee held on 12th July, 2023 were submitted.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 12TH JULY, 2023</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 12th July, 2023 was submitted, whereupon:</p>	

Item No. 7 – Forward Work Programme 2023/24 – Refresher Training on the Role and Remit of the Governance & Audit Committee

It was noted that the above training would take place on Tuesday, 10th October, 2023 at 9.30 a.m. via MS Teams. Therefore, this action was now complete.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the Action Sheet be noted.

No. 6

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024

Consideration was given to report of the proposed Forward Work Programme 2023/2024, whereupon:

The following update was provided:

- Annual Report of the Governance & Audit Committee would be considered by the Committee at the November meeting. However, in subsequent years this item would be included on the forward work programme for September.
- Statement of Accounts 2021/2022 – subject to Audit Wales finalising the ISA 260, it was anticipated that this report would be presented to the October meeting of the Committee for consideration.

Following concerns raised by Members regarding the delay in receiving the finalised Statement of Accounts 2021/2022, the Chief Officer Resources advised that a representative of Audit Wales had offered to meet Members of the Committee to provide an explanation in terms of the issues that were currently being experienced.

RESOLVED accordingly.

It was unanimously,

	<p>FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Forward Work Programme be accepted.</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Audit and Risk Manager.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Internal Audit Charter be approved in line with good practice and the requirements of the PSIAS.</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS 2023/2024</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Professional Lead – Internal Audit, whereupon:</p> <p><u>Internal Audit Report – Temporary Accommodation 2022/2023</u></p> <p>Due to the potential financial impact on the local authority and the lack of social housing accommodation in the area, the issue of homelessness would be discussed departmentally to ascertain whether this matter should be included within the corporate risk register.</p> <p>If appropriate, following the assessment of the risk and any potential mitigation measures, updates would be provided to the Committee.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the progress on activities for the period 1st April to 30th June, 2023 be noted.</p>	

No. 9

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER Q1 2023/2024

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

It was noted that Members would have further opportunity to comment on the format of the risk register, the risk management process and the information presented in respect of the Committee's assurance role at the refresher training session on 10th October, 2023.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and following consideration of the information the Committee was assured that the Council had appropriate arrangements in place to manage risk.