

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE
1ST DECEMBER, 2023**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC OFFICER

PRESENT: JOANNE ABSALOM (CHAIR)

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

Martin Veale

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officer Resources
Service Manager Commercial and Business Opportunities
Audit and Risk Manager
Data Protection & Governance Officer
Professional Lead – Risk and Insurance
Service Manager – Adult Services

AND: Representing Audit Wales
Ms. Charlotte Owen

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>Councillor Derrick Bevan, Mrs. Cheryl Hucker, Interim Corporate Director of Social Services, Chief Officer Commercial and Customer, Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships, Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance, Professional Lead – Internal Audit, Senior Business Partner – Capital & Corporate Accounting and Deborah Woods, Mike Jones – 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 18th October, 2023 were submitted, whereupon:</p> <p><u>Item No. 11 – Public Interest Report – Assurance Review Findings</u></p> <p>It was noted that the job title detailed in the first sentence should be amended to read Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing correction, that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 18TH OCTOBER, 2023</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 18th October, 2023 was submitted.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Action Sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<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>It was noted as there were no items of business scheduled to be considered at the Committee on 20th December, 2023 this meeting would be cancelled.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Forward Work Programme be accepted.</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Data Protection and Governance Officer.</p> <p>In reply to a question, the Data Protection and Governance Officer advised that whilst there was no formal requirement for the report to be considered by Council, in the interests of good practice, the report would be submitted to a future meeting of Council for information purposes.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the information be accepted which was given as assurance that appropriate oversight and monitoring was taking place and any shortfalls had appropriate controls in place to make the necessary improvements.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>AUDIT WALES – WELLBEING OBJECTIVE SETTING EXAMINATION – BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Interim Chief Executive.</p> <p>Following a discussion, it was requested at the appropriate time, regular updates against the delivery requirements be provided to the Committee. The Committee also broadly emphasised the importance of engagement and in doing so supported that the Council embark on engagement with the public in terms of the objectives.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Committee was assured that the Council’s Management Response, identified in Appendix 2, would appropriately respond to the Audit Wales recommendations.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT – USE OF POWERS UNDER THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA) 2000</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the information in the report was accepted which was given as assurance that appropriate</p>	

	oversight and monitoring was taking place.	
No. 10	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS 2023/2024</u></p> <p>The report of the Professional Lead – Internal Audit was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the progress on activities for the period 1st July to 30th September, 2023 be noted.</p>	
No. 11	<p><u>CORPORATE RISK REGISTER – QUARTER 2 2023-2024</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Resources, whereupon:</p> <p>Mr. Martin Veale joined the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p><u>CRR14 – Failure to improve staff attendance rates within the Council will lead to an unacceptable impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services effectively and financially</u></p> <p>At the appropriate time, the Risk Owner provide an update to Committee in respect of the above risk.</p> <p>Members were advised that Absence Management was the subject of a current internal audit which was due to conclude in the near future and the findings of this audit together with progress would be presented to Committee in due course.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the Committee was assured that procedures were in place to monitor the management of significant risks.</p>	

No. 12

DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2022/2023

The report of the Chief Officer Resources was submitted for consideration.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Draft 2022/2023 Statement of Accounts be received for information, prior to consideration for approval on completion of the financial audit.