

Committee: **Audit Committee**

Date of meeting: **29<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

Report Subject: **Code of Governance**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member  
Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer - Resources  
Louise Rosser – Audit and Risk Manager**

| Reporting Pathway           |                           |                          |                 |                               |                    |                     |         |                      |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Executive Committee | Council | Other (please state) |
| 12.03.20                    | 17.03.20                  |                          | 29.09.20        |                               |                    |                     |         |                      |

1. **Purpose of the Report**
  - 1.1 To present to the Audit Committee the revised Code of Governance (attached at Appendix A) for approval.
2. **Scope and Background**
  - 2.1 The report presents the revised Code of Governance to the Audit Committee for consideration and approval.
  - 2.2 The Authority has had a Code of Governance in place since November 2010. The code sets out the governance framework for the Authority and is produced in line with the CIPFA /SOLACE document “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (revised 2016)”.
  - 2.3 The code is reviewed on at least an annual basis to ensure it reflects the current governance arrangements of the Authority. The Code forms the basis against which the Annual Governance Statement is produced. The Audit Committee will receive the draft Annual Governance Statement during a Committee later in the year.
  - 2.4 Responsibility for reviewing and approving the Code has been delegated to the Audit Committee. The revised code was considered and agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) prior to the Covid 19 outbreak. The Code has not been changed in light of the Covid epidemic as the Governance Framework remains the same. Any changes to processes as a result of emergency measures will be reflected in the Annual Governance Statement.
  - 2.5 In line with best practice, the code incorporates the seven core principles of good governance against which the Authority measures its governance arrangements.

### **3. Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 That the Audit Committee review the Code of Governance and consider whether it:
- (1) Accurately reflects the current governance framework of the Authority, and
  - (2) It is fit for purpose as a basis against which to gather evidence for the production of the Annual Governance Statement
- 3.2 The Audit Committee may then choose to:
- Option 1  
Approve and adopt the revised Code of Governance.
  - Option 2  
Propose amendments / alterations to the revised Code of Governance.
  - Option 3  
Not endorse the revised Code of Governance and retain the previous version of the Code.
  - Option 4  
Seek to develop an alternative Code of Governance.

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

- 4.1 The Code of Governance sets out the Authority's Governance Framework as prescribed by the CIPFA / Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016).
- 4.2 Production of the Code assists the Authority in achieving its Corporate Plan Priority of Efficient Council by clearly setting out how the governance arrangements of the Council are structured and operate.

### **5. Implications Against Each Option**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the production of the Code of Governance under Options 1- 3. Option 4 could incur a cost if development of a code was procured from another source. Option 4 would also result in the delay of adopting a current Code of Governance for the Authority.
- 5.2 Failure to review / approve the Code of Governance would result in it being out of date and not reflecting the current governance framework of the Authority. This is mitigated by an annual review and update.
- 5.3 The review of the Code of Governance involves the investment of senior management time. The commitment is met from existing resources.

## **6. Supporting Evidence**

- 6.1 The Code has been amended / updated to reflect the changes to the governance framework of the Authority over the last year. The changes to the Code this year are minimal, mainly concerning updates on regulatory activity.  
Input is received from officers in all directorates to amend the code.
- 6.2 The Code of Governance sets out how the council's governance framework is shaped to ensure engagement with stakeholders and to inform the citizens of Blaenau Gwent as to how the governance arrangements of the Authority operate.
- 6.3 The production of the Code of Governance has a neutral impact against people or groups from the nine protected characteristics.

## **7. Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 An assessment of the Council's performance against the code is undertaken and reported in the Annual Governance Statement which identifies gaps and areas for improvement. This will be considered by Audit Committee later this year.

### **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- Appendix A – Code of Governance