



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/24**

<b>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM 4</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>COUNCIL PROGRESS UPDATE - RECOMMENDATIONS REPORTED BY AUDIT WALES: USE OF PERFORMANCE INFORMATION - SERVICE USER PERSPECTIVE AND OUTCOMES (Local Report)</b>

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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 in respect of the Council's 'Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes' and to set out the actions to be taken by the Council to implement the recommendations.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the findings and recommendations within the Audit Wales Local Report – 'Use of performance information: service user perspective and outcomes' (Appendix 1) and the Council's response to the recommendations (Appendix 2).
- 2.2 Consider whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further action or attention by the Governance and Audit Committee.
- 2.3 Consider whether there are any matters of a performance nature that require review by the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

3. **ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AUDIT WALES PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT/RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Council recognises the important role that Audit Wales plays in supporting on-going improvement to governance and service delivery, with the Governance and Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committees overseeing the arrangements and the monitoring of progress.

### **Governance and Audit Committee**

- 3.2 The Terms of Reference of the Council's Governance and Audit Committee (contained within Section 3(i) Responsibility for Functions of the [Council's Constitution](#)), includes the following responsibilities in relation to reports from the Council's External Auditor (for the purposes of this report the External Auditor being Audit Wales):

*'The Committee will:*

- *O - receive and consider reports of the External Auditor in relation to matters of financial probity and corporate governance and providing the opportunity for direct discussion with the auditor(s) on these'; and*
- *P - consider national reports, for example, from Audit Wales, of relevance to the work of the Authority'.*

- 3.3 To discharge the above requirements, the Council's Governance and Audit Committee has responsibility for:

- Providing independent assurance that there are adequate controls in place to mitigate key risks; and
- Determining whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further action or attention.

- 3.4 As part of discharging its Terms of Reference, Governance and Audit Committee should also take account of the conclusions and findings from each Audit Wales report when forming an opinion on the adequacy of internal control/governance arrangements in place.

- 3.5 In addition to the above, where the Governance and Audit Committee considers there are performance related matters that require further review, it is able to refer these to the designated Scrutiny Committee for review.

### **Scrutiny Committees**

- 3.6 Members will note the Council's Scrutiny function has a different, albeit, complementary role, in respect of overseeing the reports issued by Audit Wales i.e. to review and challenge the progress the Council is making toward implementing agreed actions.

- 3.7 Where a Scrutiny Committee determines there are matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further review, it is able to refer these to the Governance and Audit Committee for consideration.

#### **4. AUDIT WALES REPORT**

4.1 Set out at Appendix 1 is the Audit Wales report in respect of Council's 'Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes'.

4.2 The report includes information on the scope of the review, this being focussed on the performance information provided to senior officers and senior members (senior leaders) about service user perspectives and outcomes, and how this information is used. The report also includes information on areas that the review did not cover i.e.: a full review of the Council's performance management arrangements; an in-depth review of the quality of the data that the Council collects; and focus on engagement with service users on specific service changes or the development of policies and strategies.

4.3 The report concludes that:

*'Overall, we found that performance information provided to senior leaders does not generally enable them to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of the Council's activities.'*

4.4 This finding is broadly in keeping with the Council's own findings set out in the Council's annual [Self-Assessment](#) for 2021/22 and more recently the 2022/23 draft Self-Assessment considered by Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting [in December 2023](#).

4.5 The Audit Wales report includes three recommendations in respect of Service User Perspective and Outcomes, as noted below, and Appendix 2 sets out the actions the Council is taking to support improvement in these areas.

- *The Council should strengthen the information it provides to its senior leaders to enable them to understand how well services and policies are meeting the needs of service users.*
- *The Council should strengthen the information provided to senior leaders to help them evaluate whether the Council is delivering its objectives and the intended outcomes.*
- *The Council needs to assure itself that it has robust arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of the information it provides to senior leaders relating to service user perspective and outcomes.*

#### **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

5.1 This report provides an update on the work being taken by the Council to progress recommendations reported by Audit Wales; therefore, an Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment is not required.

#### **6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no Welsh language implications as a result of the recommendations set out in this report.

## **7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT**

- 7.1 There are no consultation implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

## **10. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 10.1 The Council's work in respect of continuing to strengthen the use of organisation data and intelligence is key to the delivery of the Corporate Priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan, '[Making a Difference – 2020-24](#)' and is informing and shaping the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan which will be in place from April 2024.

## **11. CONCLUSIONS**

- 11.1 Audit Wales reports play an important role in supporting on-going improvement to the Council's governance and service delivery arrangements. As part of this process, the Council utilises its Governance and Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committees, in line with their Terms of Reference, to oversee the arrangements in place and monitor the progress made by Council Services to implement recommendations reported by Audit Wales.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND  
COMMUNICATION**

Audit Wales - [Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes](#)

Item: 4

Background Papers

None.

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