

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/24**

<b>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>  <b>29<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM 5</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>COUNCIL PROGRESS UPDATE - IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS REPORTED WITHIN THE AUDIT WALES ANNUAL AUDIT SUMMARY 2023</b>

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Governance and Audit Committee with a progress update on the implementation of recommendations, as set out in the reports referenced in the Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2023.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the position statement of progress made by the Council to implement recommendations set out in the reports referenced in the Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2023 and to consider the adequacy of the progress made to date.
- 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 referral to the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

### **3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AUDIT WALES RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Council recognises the important role that Audit Wales plays in supporting ongoing improvement to governance and service delivery through, for example, undertaking specific review work across services and the issuing of reports and accompanying recommendations, where required.
- 3.2 Further to receipt of finalised Audit Wales reports in relation to the local authority or national reports that relate to local government, these are reported to the Council's Governance and Audit Committee to provide assurance on the arrangements in place to monitor progress and also set out the progress made to implement recommendations.

#### **Governance and Audit Committee**

- 3.3 The Terms of Reference of the Council's Governance and Audit Committee include 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):
- Point O - 'To 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
  - Point P - 'Consider national reports, for example, from Audit Wales, of relevance to the work of the Authority'.
- 3.4 To discharge the above requirements, the Council's Governance and Audit Committee has responsibility for:
- Seeking independent assurance around the arrangements in place within the Council to monitor / evaluate progress against recommendations reported by Audit Wales; and
  - Determining whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further action or attention.
- 3.5 As part of discharging its Terms of Reference, the 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.
- 3.6 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 consideration and feedback, as deemed appropriate. Similarly, where a Scrutiny Committee in delivering its agreed work programme determines there are matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further review, it is also able to refer these to the Governance and Audit Committee for consideration.

#### **4. AUDIT WALES REPORTS**

4.1 The Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2023, being considered as a separate item on the meeting agenda, covers the work completed by Audit Wales since the Annual Audit Summary 2022 (issued March 2023), as set out below.

4.1.1 **Audit of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's 2022-23 Accounts** – The 2022/23 Accounts were approved by full Council on [29th November 2023](#) and the Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Council's financial statements on 30 November 2023, in line with the deadline agreed by Welsh Government.

4.1.2 **Assurance and Risk Assessment: A review of the Council's arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources included a report in respect of 'the use of performance information – service user perspective and outcomes'** – the Audit Wales report was presented to the [24th January 2024 Governance and Audit Committee](#) alongside the actions to be taken by the Council to implement the recommendations.

4.1.3 **Local Project - Digital Strategy – the Council's strategic approach to digital and the extent it has been develop in accordance with SD principle and will help secure value for money.** This project is currently at draft report stage.

4.2 As part of on-going monitoring arrangements, Council Officers have prepared a further progress update in respect of 4.1.2 and is set out at Appendix 1. The Governance and Audit Committee is requested to review the progress update and alongside Members own lines of enquiry:

- Consider whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further action or attention; and
- Consider whether there are any matters of a performance nature that require review by the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

4.3 Subject to Members' consideration of the update, on-going monitoring will be undertaken as part of operational Service Delivery Plan arrangements, noting that should the Committee request further specific information in the future on this area, this will be incorporated into the Committee's workplan.

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

5.1 There are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

## **6. CONSULTATION, ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT**

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

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

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

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

- 8.1 Regular reporting of external audit reports to the Governance and Audit Committee ensures compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016' and the Committee's Terms of Reference, and is in line with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

## **9. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT**

- 9.1 The Governance and Audit Committee's role in overseeing the Council's arrangements to monitor/evaluate progress against recommendations reported by Audit Wales aims to support the delivery of all priorities contained within the Council's Corporate Plan and in doing so aligns with the Sustainable Development principles as set out within the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

## **10. CONCLUSIONS**

- 10.1 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, in line with the 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 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT, 1985**  
**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**  
**GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

29<sup>th</sup> April 2024

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**REPORT OF: Service Director for Democratic Services and Communication**

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