

AUDIT COMMITTEE

(Remotely via Teams)

Members Present: **11 January 2021**

Chairperson: **Councillor J.D.Morgan**

Vice Chairperson: **Councillor L.M.Purcell**

Councillors: J.Miller, R.W.Wood, O.S.Davies, A.N.Woolcock, A.J.Richards, H.C.Clarke, S.Renkes, R.Mizen and R.L.Taylor

Officers In Attendance: C.Griffiths, H.Jones, A.O'Donnell and N.Headon

Representing Audit Wales: G.Gillett and K.Harvard

Voting Lay Member: J.Jenkins

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2020, be approved.

2. LOCAL AUTHORITY ELECTIONS WALES BILL 2020

Members received an update on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill 2020 and how it would impact on the Council.

Officers explained that a Member's Seminar would take place during the next few months this would explain the various elements going forward and would present the Action Plan officers were currently working on as to how the council would implement the new measures.

It was highlighted that there were some specific provisions in respect of Audit Committee, an overview of the changes were detailed in the circulated report. It was noted that there was no firm date as to

when the changes would be implemented, but Members would be kept informed.

Committee Members were requested to keep the Voting Lay Member of Audit Committee informed of any changes.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

3. **AUDIT WALES - VERBAL UPDATE**

Members received a verbal update from Audit Wales.

In terms of Audit Wales Plans:-

- Financial Audit was on-going
- It was anticipated that the audit of Housing Benefits would be completed by the 31 January 2021 deadline.
- Audit Planning had started on the Councils 2021 Statement of Accounts.
- Audit deadlines could be pushed back to September 2021, Audit Wales were in discussion with Welsh Government as to the flexibility of time.
- In terms of Performance Audit Work, the work included in the 2020 Audit Plan had largely been completed, some areas were still being worked on.
- The review of Corporate Performance Management System the draft output was issued during December 2020.
- Workforce Planning review was underway.
- Financial Sustainability Phase 2 work building on work undertaken in 2020 was about to commence and the Assurance and Risk Assessment Project was schedule to be feedback to Corporate Directors during February 2021.
- The audit work completed during 2020 was being summarised in the Annual Audit Summary report which was currently in draft.

National reports recently published included:

- Providing Free School Meals during Lockdown (published November 2020).
- Covering Teachers Absence, follow up from work done previously (published November 2020).

- Welsh Community Care information system (published October 2020)
- National Fraud Initiative (NFI) in Wales 2018/2020 (published October 20), this also included a NFI self-appraisal checklist, which would help officers leading NFI work.
- Work on the Financial Sustainability of Local Government (published October 2020) along with the Commercialisation in Local Government Report (published October 2020).

It was highlighted that plans were being kept under regular review taking into account audit priorities.

RESOLVED: That the verbal update was noted.

4. **AUDIT WALES LETTER TO AUDITED BODIES**

Members received an update from Audit Wales on the letter to all Audited Bodies from Auditor General for Wales outlining our data analytics ambitions and asking for audited bodies support, as detailed in the circulated report.

Members questioned whether officers agreed with the statement made in the letter that the new approach would save time and effort, officers responded that in terms of saving time and effort they would need before commenting.

A discussion took place around data and storage, Audit Wales explained that Audit Wales had a data warehouses hosted in the cloud in Ireland. In terms of data ingestion and changing systems, there were no expectations that Local Authorities would be required to change systems, there were many systems in Local Government and Audit Wales would be working with those systems to ensure Local Authorities could provide the information required.

Audit Wales went onto explain they were looking at the data analytics route to help us provide audit opinions and to provide data informatics to give the public more information on data presented.

Officers highlighted that the council would require a data sharing agreement if the data was used for any specific purposes.

RESOLVED: That the Audit Wales Letter to Audited Bodies, be noted.

5. **AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020**

Members received an overview of the Audit Committee Annual Report 2019/2020, as detailed in the circulated report.

RESOLVED: That approval be granted to forward the Annual Report 2019/2020 to Council.

6. **INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received an overview of the Internal Audit Progress Report for work undertaken since the last Audit Committee during September 2020, as detailed in the circulated report.

Officers highlighted that during the period when Council meetings were suspended all Urgency Actions tested conformed with the Urgency Action Protocol.

Members were happy with the progress of all internal audit work which had been undertaken.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

7. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2020/2021**

The Committee received the Treasury Management Monitoring 2020/2021 information as detailed in the circulated report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

RESOLVED: that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12, 13 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

9. **HIGHER RISK RATING AUDITS**

Members received an update on all audits undertaken since the Audit Committee meeting held during September 2020, which had a risk rating of 3, 4 or 5 applied and all special investigations, as detailed in the private circulated report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

10. **ATTEMPTED CHEQUE FRAUD**

Members were provided with an update, as detailed in the private circulated report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CHAIRPERSON