

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

15 September 2021

Chairperson: Councillor J.D.Morgan

Councillors: O.S.Davies, S.E.Freeguard, S.Lynch, J.Miller, R.Mizen, S.Renkes, A.J.Richards, R.W.Wood and A.N.Woolcock

Officers In Attendance: H.Jenkins, A.O'Donnell, C.Furlow-Harris and N.Headon

Representing Audit Wales: G.Gillett

Voting Lay Member: J.Jenkins

1. **CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Lynch to Governance and Audit Committee.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

That the minutes of the 28 July 2021, be approved.

4. **AUDIT WALES / ESTYN / CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Officers gave an overview of the proposed process by which the Governance and Audit Committee will be provided with assurance

that the Council is actively considering the findings of reports issued to the Council by Audit Wales, Estyn and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

Officers explained that the diagram attached at Addendum 3 of the circulated report set out the proposed process to provide assurance to the Committee that the Council was actively considering the findings of reports issued to the Council by Audit Wales, Estyn and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

Officers went onto explain that on a quarterly basis the Register of Regulator Reports and Recommendations would be presented to Governance and Audit Committee which will be the Council's key document to demonstrate how accepted proposals for improvement / agreed recommendations received from regulators are being addressed by the Council (template is attached at Addendum 4 of the circulated report).

It was noted that the Register would be updated with the necessary information from April 2021 (to date) and be presented to the next meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee on 26 November 2021, it was noted officers would attend Governance and Audit Committee to present an updated Register.

Officers explained that on receipt of a report from a regulator the Directorate, Senior Management Team and Officers would consider the report, and if agreed a report and action plan would be produced and put into the Forward Work Programme of Cabinet Board.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services explained that the report from the relevant inspectorate will be provided with the relevant papers from each meeting and the responsibility for managing improvements and recommendations would be with Cabinet and overviewed by the relevant Scrutiny Committee, and the responsibility of the Governance and Audit Committee was to ensure that progress and arrangements were in place for monitoring and managing responses to the external audit inspections. It was noted that good assurance was required and the Governance and Audit Committee along with statutory Officers have the responsibility of ensuring best practice and arrangements are in place for delivery of the services that have been inspected.

Officers confirmed there was no target date for this to be up and running,

and Audit Wales confirmed they would work with the Officers and Governance and Audit Committee to further develop the process.

RESOLVED: That the Audit Wales / Estyn / Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Reports and Recommendations, be noted.

5. **INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT**

Members received an overview of the Internal Audit work undertaken since the last Governance and Audit Committee meeting in June 2021.

Officers explained that in relation to School based staff Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks an interim report issued in May 2021 and reported to Members in June 2021, at the time of the interim report being issued it had not been possible to verify if the appropriate DBS clearance had been obtained in the case of ninety-nine school based employees. Further audit work confirmed that in all cases the appropriate DBS certification was now in place for all ninety-nine staff, and all DBS requirements had been complied with.

Officers went onto explain that in regard to agency staff entering Neath Port Talbot schools all necessary checks were undertaken by the agency prior to staff entering schools. The Audit Manager and Head of Participation would be meeting to discuss how to manage the school audits that will need to be undertaken whilst access to schools is restricted due to the pandemic.

RESOLVED: That the Internal Audit Update Report be noted.

6. **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.

7. **SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS**

Members received an update on the private reports issued since the last committee meeting together with details of all current special investigations.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CHAIRPERSON