

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

17th MARCH 2023

**JOINT REPORT OF
CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER – H JONES
HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – S REES**

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Audit Wales – Annual Audit Summary 2022

Purpose of Report

1. To receive the Annual Audit Summary 2022 prepared by Audit Wales.

Executive Summary

2. The Annual Audit Summary attached at Appendix 1 sets out the work completed by Audit Wales since the last Annual Audit Summary was issued March 2022. The Summary will be presented to Council on 26th April 2023.
3. **Summary of work undertaken by Audit Wales:**
 - a. **Audit of Neath Port Talbot's 2021-2022 Accounts** – Every year the Auditor General audits the Council's financial statements to make sure that public money is being properly accounted for. On 13th January 2023, the Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Council's financial statements for 2021-2022.
 - b. **Continuous Improvement** - The Auditor General certified that the Council had met its remaining Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 duties for the financial year 2021-22, as saved by an order

made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Audit Wales Certificate of Compliance for the audit of the Council's assessment of performance 2021-2022 was issued in December 2021 and presented to Cabinet on 12th January 2022.

- c. **Assurance and Risk Assessment Review** – Audit Wales have reviewed the arrangements put in place by the Council to secure value for money in the use of its own resources.

The work included the Council's arrangements in relation to the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021, carbon reduction plans and its financial position.

4. **Other Inspectorates** - Audit Wales also consider the reports of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn as well as any subsequent actions taken by the Council in response. No reports have been issued relating to Neath Port Talbot Council since the last Annual Audit Summary in March 2022.
5. **Local Government Studies** - As well as local work at each council, each year Audit Wales also carries out studies across the local government sector to make recommendations for improving value for money. Since the last Annual Audit Summary, the following reports have been published:
- Joint working between Emergency Services (January 2022)
 - Direct Payments (April 2022)
 - 'Time for Change' – Poverty in Wales (November 2022)
 - 'A missed Opportunity' – Social Enterprises (December 2022)
 - 'Together we can' – Community resilience and self-reliance (January 2023)
6. **Planned Work for 2022-2023** - The Annual Audit Summary also sets out the planned work for 2022-23, which includes:
- Assurance and risk assessment work:
 - Recovery Planning
 - Capital programme management
 - Use of performance information – with a focus on service user feedback and outcomes
 - Setting of well-being objectives

- Thematic review – Unscheduled Care. This review covers the health and local government sectors
- Thematic review – Digital
- Local risk work - Scrutiny review

Financial Appraisal

7. The programme of local audit and improvement assessment work undertaken by the Audit Wales during the period has been delivered within the budget allocated for audit and inspection work.

Integrated Impact Assessment

8. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes.

Valleys Communities Impact

9. No implications.

Workforce Impact

10. There are no workforce impacts.

Legal Impact

11. The Auditor General is required to conduct local government value for money studies and assess compliance with the remaining requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Risk Management

12. The findings of Audit Wales are a key input into the Council's corporate governance arrangements and the areas identified for improvement work inform the Annual Governance Statement and the associated improvement action plan.

Consultation

13. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

14. For the Governance & Audit Committee to note the content of the Annual Audit Summary 2022.

Appendices

15. Appendix 1 – Audit Wales – Annual Audit Summary 2022

List of Background Papers

16. None

Officer Contact

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