

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

16 June 2023

Chairperson: J.Jenkins

Deputy Chairperson: H.Griffiths

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, M.Spooner, O.S.Davies,
P.D.Richards, P.Rogers and W.Carpenter

Officers In Attendance: D.Mulligan, H.Jones, A.O'Donnell, C.Furlow-Harris, M.Williams and C.Plowman

Representing Audit Wales: D.Williams

Voting Lay Member: A.Bagley

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2023/24**

RESOLVED:

- That Lay Member, Joanna Jenkins, be appointed Chairperson of the Committee for the 2023/24 Civic Year
- That Lay Member, Helen Griffiths, be appointed Deputy Chairperson of the Committee for the 2023/24 Civic Year

2. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENT/S**

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The following Declarations of Interests were receiving during the discussion of the relevant agenda item:

Joanna Jenkins: Agenda Item 9, Draft Statement of Accounts for 2022/23, as she is involved in two charities which have both benefited from grant funding. She did not consider her declaration to be prejudicial, therefore stayed for the discussion thereon.

Cllr Phil Rogers: Agenda Item 11, Internal Audit Update Report, as he is a School Governor at Llangatwg Community School which is mentioned in the circulated report. He had dispensation to speak, therefore stayed for the discussion thereon.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 17th March 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

5. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

6. **AUDIT WALES REGISTER OF REGULATORS REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members were provided with an updated version of the Register of Regulators Reports and Recommendations.

It was highlighted that the circulated report detailed an overview of the Regulators Reports that had been received since the last meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee; and where, if any, action had been taken on recommendations contained in those reports.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

7. **DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022-2023**

The Council's draft Annual Governance Statement 2022-2023 was presented to the Committee.

It was explained that the report was brought to the attention of the Governance and Audit Committee in order for the Committee to

review the information, and to take assurance that the Council had robust governance procedures in place.

Members queried why the Governance Improvement Action Plan for 2023/24 had been signed by the Chief Executive and Leader of Neath Port Talbot Council, but not dated. Officers confirmed that the circulated report was a draft version for review; and will be dated once approved by Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

8. **CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Officers presented the Corporate Risk Management Policy to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

9. **DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2022/23**

Members were presented with the Draft Statement of Accounts for 2022/23.

It was highlighted that the Draft Statement of Accounts had been provided to Audit Wales in order for them to commence their audit work; the accounts will be brought back to the Committee once this work had been completed.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

10. **REVISED ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY**

The revised version of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy was brought before the Committee, in order for Members to assist in discharging their duties in respect of audit services.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

11. **INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT**

The circulated report provided details of the internal audit work that had been undertaken since the last Governance and Audit Committee meeting on 17th March 2023.

It was confirmed that out of all of the reports that had been issued, only one report was issued with limited assurance, detailed in the circulated report as 'Council Buildings'. Officers mentioned that most of the building checks that were required were being carried out and that it was given a limited assurance based on administration.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

12. **INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

The Committee received the Internal Audit Annual Report 2022/23.

It was noted that the circulated report provided assurances on the audit work undertaken and the governance arrangements. Officers confirmed that this year the Head of Internal Audit had issued a reasonable assurance rating; assurance can never be absolute, and this rating is the highest that could be provided.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

13. **DRAFT GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

The draft version of the Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23 was presented to Members; the circulated report had been produced by the Chair of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Governance and Audit Committee Annual report 2022-23, be reviewed and approved by Members, prior to presentation to Full Council.

14. **URGENT ITEMS**

No urgent items were received.

15. **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.

16. **INTERNAL AUDIT - SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS (EXEMPT UNDER PARAGRAPH 14)**

Officers provided an update on all special investigations reports issued since the last meeting; including details of all current special investigations.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

CHAIRPERSON

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