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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held
at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th October, 2023 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: Andrew Blackmore (Chairman)
County Councillor Tony Easson, (Vice Chairman)

Lay Members: C. Prosser, M. Veale, R. Guest,

County Councillor: Sara Burch, John Crook, Tony Easson,
David Jones, Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, Peter Strong and
Ann Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Resources
Jan Furtek	Audit Manager
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Charlotte Owen	Audit Wales Officer
Richard Jones	Performance and Data Insight Manager
Rachel Freitag	Audit Wales Officer
Hannah Carter	Performance Analyst

APOLOGIES:

None

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Public Open Forum

No members of the public had requested to participate in the meeting.

3. To note the action list from the previous meeting

The action list from the previous meeting was noted:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/F1tl-spRWnc?si=ViAY1YXYDR0aJIXW&t=44>

1. Finance Team capacity: OPEN
2. People Strategy and Asset Management Strategy: OPEN
3. Whole Authority Complaints Report: OPEN
4. Strategic Risk Register: OPEN
5. Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Data Subject Access Requests:
 - a) Mandatory training: CLOSED
 - b) Policy Governance Arrangements OPEN
 - c) Corporate risk control policies: OPEN
6. Draft Operational Plan: OPEN
7. Governance and Audit Committee Self Assessment: CLOSED

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8. Annual Statement of Accounts, pension liability information: CLOSED
9. Draft Self-Assessment report: CLOSED

4. Counter Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy

The Counter Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy was presented by the Chief Internal Auditor.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/F1tl-spRWnc?si=GCpz2l-t4L9rnUF5&t=364>

ACTIONS:

1. Deputy Chief Executive to raise with the Head of HR, and report back accordingly:
 - i) How concerns are raised under the Whistle Blowing Policy and whether consideration will be given to receipt of concerns at independent board or other appropriate level, also:
 - ii) Taking into account the terms of reference of this committee, how best to report on instances of whistleblowing.
2. Deputy Chief Executive to circulate to the Committee The Auditor General for Wales' report 'Raising Our Game' – Tackling Fraud in Wales.
3. Chief Internal Auditor to add periodic updates to the Forward Work Programme.

As per the report recommendations, the Governance and Audit Committee provided comment before endorsing the revised Counter Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy for Cabinet approval.

County Councillor P. Murphy left the meeting at 14.26

5. Audit Wales Work Programme and timetable quarter 1 update

The Audit Wales Officers presented the Audit Wales Work programme and timetable Q1 update. Members were invited to make comments and ask questions.

https://www.youtube.com/live/F1tl-spRWnc?si=XhlduzvQ-gfx_uwz&t=1515

The report was noted.

6. Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress update

The Data Analyst presented the Council's Progress against the Audit Wales Work programme. Members were invited to make comments and ask questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/F1tl-spRWnc?si=G0V6ZfOtO6jQmBcE&t=2132>

ACTIONS:

1. Deputy Chief Executive to provide the Committee an update on work in progress on the in year deficit, and budget development in terms of the robustness of the process.

In line with the report recommendations:

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1. Members scrutinised the council's response to the Audit Wales work programme, and sought assurance that adequate progress is being made; and.
2. Noted the facility to refer any issues contained within Audit Wales national study to other committees for consideration where they identify there are findings of particular relevance to the council that need further scrutiny.

*Charlotte Owen left the meeting at 14.45
County Councillor A. Webb left the meeting at 14.50*

7. Audit Grants report

The Audit Wales Officer presented the Audit Wales Grants Report. Members were invited to make comments and ask questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/F1tl-spRWnc?si=XZ0WjuAjhtoMHnlt&t=2737>

The report was noted.

8. Annual Audit Plan 22-23 Welsh Church Funds

The Audit Wales Officer presented the Annual Audit Plan 2022-23 Welsh Church Funds. Members were invited to make comments and ask questions.

https://www.youtube.com/live/F1tl-spRWnc?si=n1a8xG8M_8WYbXT_&t=3006

The report was noted.

9. CPR Exemptions upto 30th September 2023

The Chief Internal Auditor presented the CPR Exemptions Report up to 30th September 2023. Members were invited to make comments and ask questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/F1tl-spRWnc?si=HB9kuDYiRws-AexZ&t=3182>

The report was noted. The Committee was unable to agree the recommendations at 2.1 and looks forward to improvements in the process in due course.

10. Internal Audit quarterly progress report

The Chief Internal Auditor presented the Internal Audit Quarterly Progress Report. Members were invited to make comments and ask questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/F1tl-spRWnc?si=ijWD-yVoyctlcJbb&t=3887>

As in the report recommendations:

1. The Committee considered and noted the audit opinions issued; and
2. Noted the progress made by the Section towards meeting the 2023/24 Operational Audit Plan and the Section's performance indicators at the 6-month stage of the financial year which are currently ahead of the profiled target.

County Councillor P. Murphy rejoined the meeting at 15.10

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11. **Governance and Audit Committee Forward Work Plan**

The Forward Work Plan was noted with the additions mentioned in the meeting.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/F1tl-spRWnc?si=O-BYyUJubXAd36J&t=4837>

12. **To confirm minutes of the previous meeting held on the 20th September 2023**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/F1tl-spRWnc?si=NmfzcNH8ig9pQuQW&t=4861>

13. **Date of Next meeting: 23rd November 2023**

The next meeting was moved to Monday 4th December 2023 at 2pm.

Meeting ended at 3.20 pm