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## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held  
at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Monday, 4th  
December, 2023 at 2.00 pm

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

Lay Member: Rhodri Guest

County Councillors: Sara Burch, John Crook, 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
Richard Jones	Performance and Data Insight Manager
Jonathan Davies	Head of Finance
Geraint Edwards	Solicitor
Hannah Carter	Performance Analyst
Matthew Gatehouse	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships.

### APOLOGIES:

County Councillor David Jones, Lay Members Martin Veale and Colin Prosser

#### 1. Declarations of Interest.

None.

#### 2. Public Open Forum.

None.

#### 3. To note the Action List from the previous meeting.

The action list from the previous meeting was noted.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/3GFB7JGWhrw?si=1RQQPHbpeTnHyUxi&t=68>

1. Finance Team capacity: OPEN
2. People Strategy and Asset Management Strategy: OPEN
3. Whole Authority Complaints Report: OPEN
4. Strategic Risk Register: CLOSED
5. Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Data Subject Access Requests:
  - a) Policy Governance Arrangements FOI, DP and DSAR: OPEN
  - b) Corporate risk control policies: OPEN
6. Draft Operational Plan: CLOSED
7. Counter Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy: OPEN

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8. Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress (in-year deficit and budget development): CLOSED

#### 4. **23/24 Q2 Treasury report.**

The Head of Finance presented the Treasury Report for Quarter 2. Committee Members were invited to comment and ask questions.

[https://www.youtube.com/live/3GFB7JGWhrw?si=E\\_lb1UygbK4OJef6&t=1561](https://www.youtube.com/live/3GFB7JGWhrw?si=E_lb1UygbK4OJef6&t=1561)

As recommended, the Governance & Audit committee reviewed the treasury management activities and the performance achieved in the second quarter of 2023/24 as part of their delegated responsibility to provide scrutiny of treasury policy, strategy and activity on behalf of Council. The Committee was content with the information provided.

*(County Councillor Ann Webb from 14.54)*

#### 5. **Effectiveness of Strategic Risk Management Framework.**

The Performance and Data Insight Manager presented a report on the Effectiveness of Strategic Risk Management Framework. Following presentation of the report, Committee Members were invited to ask questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/3GFB7JGWhrw?si=joP9VITv3e-Xwz57&t=3725>

As per the report recommendations, Members:

- used the assessment to seek assurance about the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements; and
- noted the possible further corporate risk control policies identified in 3.8 that the Committee could review and that a further update will be provided to the committee as part of the strategic risk management policy review in April 2024.

#### 6. **The Ombudsmans's Annual Letter - 2022/23.**

The Chief Officer, People, Performance and Partnerships presented the Ombudsman's Annual Letter 2022/23. Following presentation of the Letter, Committee Members were invited to comment and ask questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/3GFB7JGWhrw?si=pYdALkauoayCMhXb&t=4821>

As detailed in the report recommendations:

- Governance and Audit Committee noted the content of the Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) annual letter (Appendix 1) and confirmed that there were no matters required to be advised to the Ombudsman.
- The authority continues to engage with the PSOW complaints standards work, access training for staff and provide the PSOW with complaints data. It was noted that the authority has also fully implemented the PSOW's model complaints policy.

#### 7. **Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).**

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The Solicitor presented a report on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). Following this, Committee Members were invited to ask questions.

[https://www.youtube.com/live/3GFB7JGWhrw?si=DxPE8rSJO4\\_HKWEv&t=5318](https://www.youtube.com/live/3GFB7JGWhrw?si=DxPE8rSJO4_HKWEv&t=5318)

As per the report recommendations, the Committee received the report and noted its contents.

ACTION: Solicitor to provide the Committee with information:

- on the legislation regarding the sale of nitrous oxide, the potential penalties for retailers and information on such items banned from sale outside of today's meeting.
- on the legislation surrounding sale of vapes and vapes products and potential penalties
- The use of social media accounts to detect fraud e.g. benefits.

#### **8. Governance and Audit Committee Forward Work Plan.**

The Forward Work Plan was noted.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/3GFB7JGWhrw?si=Wk8wm-VWW-UIQcRo&t=5907>

#### **9. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th October 2023.**

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

<https://www.youtube.com/live/3GFB7JGWhrw?si=S9y1qllir1nRg0QK&t=5924>

#### **10. Date of the Next Meeting: 11th January 2024.**

**Meeting ended at 3.38 pm**

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