



MINUTES OF MEETING

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY, 2022

PRESENT: Councillors C T Jones (Chair)
D Roberts (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: J Amos, D Chaplin, J Davies, D Sammon and
C Tovey

Lay Member:
R Williams (Lay Member)

Other Councillors in Attendance:
G Thomas (Cabinet Member)

Officers:
A Owen (Deputy Chief Executive), S Jones (Head of Finance),
M Thomas (Head of Regional Audit Service), L Cumpston (Audit
Manager, Vale of Glamorgan Council), C Davies (Audit), C Jones
(Property Services), S Jones (Senior Solicitor) and G Lewis
(Complaints Officer)

Outside Bodies:
H Goddard and I Phillips (Audit Wales)

M Morgan (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
662	Apologies for absence	Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Barry and Councillor C Davies Cabinet Member.
663	Declarations of Interest	No Declarations of Interest were made.

664	Audit Wales - Annual Audit Summary 2021	<p>The Chair welcomed Helen Goddard and Ian Phillips Audit Wales to the Meeting.</p> <p>Ian Phillips then led the Committee through the 'Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Annual Audit Summary 2021'.</p> <p>The following questions were then raised on the summary and were responded to by the Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Facts: Political Groups – Make up of the Council - Unseable Financial Reserves – Is the figure acceptable as a measure • Financial Sustainability – Are there plans to look at this to drive forward – Are there any other projects down stream • Discretionary Services – Council Offices are still closed – Are front line Services being provided – Contact Centre • Planned Work for 2021-22 – To look at what to do in a different light – Could more buildings be released – Working from home <p>The Chair then thanked Ian Phillips for the update to the Committee.</p>
665	Audit Wales – Work Programme and Timetable	<p>Ian Phillips led the Committee through the 'Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council' and responded to the following questions raised by the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Payments – What is the publication date • Follow-up on People Sleeping Rough – Why is this work not progressing – Financial impact on all Councils in Wales • Poverty – Who is the nominated Officer • Social Enterprise – Who is the nominated Officer • Follow-up – Is MTCBC involved • Taking Care of the Carers – Did the review include unpaid Carers <p>The Chair then thanked Ian Phillips for the update to the Committee.</p> <p>Ian Phillips also advised that he would circulate an update to the Committee on the queries that had ben raised in the Meeting.</p>
666	Verbal update from the Building & Property Services Manager on the recommendations made In 2020/21 Internal Audit Report.	<p>The Chair welcomed Councillor G Thomas, Chris Jones and Alyn Owen to the Meeting.</p> <p>Chris Jones referred the Committee to the recommendations made in the Property Maintenance Inspection Plans and Regimes 2020/21 RIAS Report and the agreed Audit Action Plan and together with the Officers responded in detail to the following questions raised by the Committee:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 3 – Is Training ongoing • Recommendation 4 – Timeline for this • Recommendation 6 – During the next financial year how many buildings will be surveyed – Is it in priority order – Maintenance Management System or Property Appraisal System – How is a strategy developed for surplus properties – Training in Schools – Is this signed off on the work system • Recommendation 8 – Is it on schedule • Recommendation 12 – Is it all finished now – Have all Schools been completed and fully compliant – Risk Assessment for individual properties – How is this prioritised – Energy Efficiency – Retail Involvement – Appraisal of excess properties – How to maximise Capital income Assessment for the retail sector – How does this fit in with the Business Case – Rising Energy costs <p>Councillor G Thomas then proposed that a report be brought to a future Scrutiny Committee in relation to the structures and strategies going forward.</p> <p>A Committee Member also referred to the development of an Estates Strategy going forward and that the report needed to be in wider terms.</p> <p>Another Member stated that he supported this suggestion together with collaborative work across Committees to include Scrutiny Committees – (Neighbourhood Services) and Governance and Audit.</p> <p>Councillor Thomas advised that he would discuss and pursue this report with Alyn Owen.</p> <p>The Chair then thanked Councillor Thomas for this suggestion and the Committee agreed to proceed with this proposal.</p> <p>The Chair then thanked Chris Jones, Councillor Thomas and Alyn Owen for attending and for the update to the Committee.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The verbal update provided by the Building and Property Services Manager be received.</p>
667	Annual Review and Assessment of Complaint Handling and Effectiveness at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council 2020/21	<p>The Chair welcomed Simon Jones and Gaynor Lewis to the Meeting.</p> <p>Simon Jones then led the Committee through the ‘Annual Review and Assessment of Complaint Handling and Effectiveness at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council 2020/21’ report and advised that in relation to recommendation 2.3 he was not sure that this recommendation was necessary as it could be a duplication of work and would propose an amendment to the recommendation.</p>

		<p>The following questions were raised by the Committee on the report and were responded to in detail by Simon Jones and Gaynor Lewis;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous Improvement – No response of outcome from Manager / Department – Explanation of this figure – How are these being dealt with • Paragraph 6.9 – Recycling / Refuse – What is the Department doing to resolve the complaint – Feedback – What techniques are being learned from this – Awareness of the Assisted Collections Scheme • Lessons Learned – Timescale for this • Quarter 1 – Environment and Environmental Health – What were Statutory Functions – What were the Complaints – Environment or Health – Expansion of details requested for next years report <p>Simon Jones then outlined the proposed amendment in relation to Paragraph 2.3 of the report.</p> <p>Resolved subject to the foregoing that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The contents of the report and Appendices 1 and 2 (Annual Complaints and Compliments Reports) be noted (b) An annual update in relation to Corporate Complaints and Compliments be provided to the Governance and Audit Committee (c) The Governance and Audit Committee report and recommend that future reports to the Governance and Audit Committee provide additional data where service areas record high numbers of reported complaints.
668	Updated Forward Work Programme 2021/22	<p>The Chair welcomed Mark Thomas to the Meeting.</p> <p>Mark Thomas led the Committee through the Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22 report and the Forward Work Programme was agreed.</p>
669	Internal Audit Information Reports	<p>The Chair referred the Committee to the Issued Internal Audit Reports and suggested that the Issued Internal Audit report on 'Vehicle Fuel System' be agendered for the next scheduled Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Vehicles Fuel System be considered at the next Committee Meeting to be held on 4 April 2022.</p>
670	Information Report - Audit Wales Financial Sustainability Data Tool	<p>This report was for Information only.</p>
671	Reflection and	<p>The Chair and the Committee reflected in detail on the</p>

	Evaluation of Meeting	matters that had been considered at the Meeting.
672	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	The Chair advised that there was no business deemed urgent.