

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

12 NOVEMBER 2020

### REPORT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER - FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND CHANGE

#### POSITION STATEMENT - 'RAISING OUR GAME – TACKLING FRAUD IN WALES' REPORT

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to submit the position statement, for Bridgend County Borough Council in respect of the recommendations made by Audit Wales in their recent report 'Raising Our Game - Tackling Fraud in Wales'. The report also sets out the Council's plans moving forward.

#### 2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-
- Smarter use of resources – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 In July 2020 Audit Wales produced a report entitled 'Raising Our Game – Tackling Fraud in Wales'. The report identifies seven key themes that all public bodies needed to focus on in raising their game to tackle fraud more effectively. It paints a picture of the current arrangements for preventing and detecting fraud across Wales and made 15 recommendations across the themes.
- 3.2 The key themes are :
- leadership and culture;
  - risk management and control frameworks;
  - policies and training;
  - capacity and expertise;
  - tools and data;
  - collaboration; and
  - reporting and scrutiny.

#### 4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 An exercise has been undertaken to map the current position within the authority against the recommendations made in the Audit Wales report. This position statement is at **Appendix A** and the Audit Wales report is at **Appendix B**.
- 4.2 It can be seen from **Appendix A** that there are many positive aspects identified across all of the themes. High standards for both Members and Officers are set and the authority has always dealt with any allegations or suspicions of fraud, bribery and corruption promptly. This is demonstrated by the current policies in place. Fraud training has recently been improved and an e-learning module is now in place which is being rolled out to Officers and Members. The fraud resource is being increased with an additional post being established within the team. This will increase capacity to assist in making continued progress against the themes.
- 4.3 The next stage is to develop an action plan to strengthen the measures already in place to establish best practice in respect of fraud prevention, investigation and detection in line with the themes and recommendations within the Audit Wales report. The action plan, together with developments and progress made, will be reported to this Committee via the annual fraud report.

## **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 There is no impact on the Policy.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

- 7.1 The wellbeing goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing goals/objectives as a result of this report.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 The financial implications are reflected within this report as any fraud impacts on the resources available to the Council.

## **9. Recommendation(s)**

- 9.1 The Committee is recommended to note the position statement at Appendix A and the Audit Wales 'Raising Our Game - Tackling Fraud in Wales' report, attached at Appendix B.

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**November 2020**

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**Background documents:** None