

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

22 APRIL 2021

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE REGIONAL INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

PROGRESS AGAINST THE INTERNAL AUDIT RISK BASED PLAN 2020-21

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide members of the Committee with a position statement on progress being made against the audit work included and approved within the Internal Audit Risk Based Plan 2020-21.

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 – ensuring 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 accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Head of Internal Audit is responsible for developing a risk-based annual audit plan which takes into account the Council's risk management framework. Within the Standards there is also a requirement for the Head of Internal Audit to review and adjust the plan, as necessary, in response to changes in the Council's business, risks, operations, programmes, systems, controls and resources. The Head of Internal Audit must also ensure that Internal Audit resources are appropriate, sufficient and effectively deployed to achieve the approved plan.
- 3.2 The Internal Audit Plan for 2020-21 was submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee for consideration and approval on 10th September 2020. The Plan outlined the assignments to be carried out which will provide sufficient coverage to provide an opinion at the end of 2020-21 whilst having regard to the unprecedented impact of the COVID pandemic.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 Progress made against the plan during 2020-21 is attached at **Appendix A**. It must be noted that this is a draft position as some work is in the process of being completed and the outcome of this work will be included in the Head of Audit's Annual Internal Audit Report 2020-21 which will be brought to a future Governance and Audit Committee.

- 4.2 **Appendix A** details the status of each planned review, the audit opinion and the number of any high or medium recommendations made to improve the control environment. It should be noted that some reviews listed have no audit opinion, for example advice and guidance, Governance and Audit Committee and Corporate Management Board (CMB) reporting. This is because the audit work carried out in respect of these items is planned but the nature of the work does not lead to testing and the formation of an audit opinion.
- 4.3 **Appendix A** illustrates that to date 26 items of work have been completed of which 19 audits have resulted in an opinion being provided. A total of 13 audits are currently on-going and will be included within the final annual opinion report.
- 4.4 Based on the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the areas examined through testing of the effectiveness of the internal control environment an audit opinion of substantial assurance has been given to 2 completed reviews and an opinion of reasonable assurance to 16 completed reviews. The remaining completed audit review was given an audit opinion of limited, that is only limited assurance can be placed on the current system of internal control. This was discussed in the last Governance and Audit Committee meeting on 12th November 2020.
- 4.5 **Appendix A** identifies that a total of 28 medium (significant) recommendations have been made to improve the control environment of the areas reviewed. The implementation of these recommendations will be monitored to ensure that improvements are being made.
- 4.6 It is recognised that some service areas are currently under intense pressure and where possible planned audit work is rearranged to accommodate any service requests. **Appendix A** shows that some of the planned audit reviews have been deferred following a request from the service department and will be considered in the following year's plan. However, from the work undertaken there has been sufficient coverage to form an audit opinion for 2020-21 which will be included in the Head of Audit's Annual Internal Audit Report.

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

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.

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 well-being 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 well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. **Financial implications**

8.1 Effective Audit planning and monitoring are key contributors in ensuring that the Council's assets and interests are properly accounted for and safeguarded.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That members of the Committee note the content of the report and the progress made against the 2020-21 Internal Audit Annual Risk Based Plan.

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Background Documents :

None