

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

9 SEPTEMBER 2021

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

AUDIT WALES GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to submit to the Committee reports from Audit Wales, including an update on the financial and performance audit work undertaken, and due to be undertaken, by Audit Wales.

2. Connections 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.
- 2.2 The Council's performance is an important element in determining the extent to which the well-being objectives can be delivered.

3. Background

- 3.1 Audit Wales undertakes a programme of work during the year to help the Auditor General discharge his duties under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004. The Auditor General's functions include auditing accounts and undertaking local performance audit work at a broad range of public bodies, alongside conducting a programme of national value for money examinations and studies. The Auditor General also assesses the extent to which public bodies are complying with the sustainable development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives.
- 3.2 Part 2 of the 2004 Act sets out the powers and duties of the Auditor General to undertake studies in relation to local government bodies in Wales. The most widely used of these provisions is section 41, which requires the Auditor General to undertake studies designed to enable him to make recommendations for, among other things, improving the value for money in the provision of services.
- 3.3 In accordance with Section 89 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the Authority is required to keep under review the extent to which it is exercising

its functions effectively, using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively and ensuring its governance is effective for securing these performance requirements.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 Audit Wales has produced a number of reports for the Governance and Audit Committee to consider. These are:

- **The Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable - (Appendix A)** - , under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Auditor General is required to produce a work programme update for each financial year for each principal council covering both his functions and those of 'relevant regulators' (CIW and Estyn). As reported at the last meeting, Audit Wales will provide this to the Council on a quarterly basis. The report was last produced as at 30th June 2021, and presented to the Committee in July 2021, so is presented again for information and only a verbal update will be provided at the meeting, where appropriate, and a full update as at 30th September 2021 provided to the Committee in November.
- **Financial Sustainability Assessment – Bridgend County Borough Council - (Appendix B)** - this follows the national summary report '*Financial Sustainability of Local Government as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic*', published in October 2020, and concludes phase 2 of Audit Wales' financial sustainability assessment work during 2020-21, which has resulted in a local report for each of the 22 principal councils in Wales. Audit Wales is also in the process of compiling a national report on financial sustainability and this should be finalised shortly, and will be presented at the next meeting of the Committee in November 2021.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of 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 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That the Committee notes the Audit Wales Governance and Audit Committee Reports at **Appendix A and Appendix B**.

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Background Documents: None