

## APPENDIX B

### Annual Governance Statement – half-year review of progress against significant issues identified during 2020-21, to be addressed in 2021-22

Issue	Action	Update 30 September 2021
<p>Implementing the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021</p>	<p>The Council will need to implement measures to comply with the Act. This will include for example changes to the composition and terms of reference of the Governance and Audit Committee from May 2021, the establishment of Corporate Joint Committees, wider performance review and self-assessment, and the introduction of measures to establish public participation. The Council will consider the Welsh Government Commencement Orders and subordinate legislation and will put in place processes for implementing the required changes.</p>	<p>Council received a report on 20 January 2021 outlining the main provisions of the Act together with an Action Plan to ensure that the Council is prepared for the various elements of the Act as they come into force.</p> <p>A report will be presented to Council on 20 October 2021 seeking approval for changes to the membership of the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) to take effect following the Annual Meeting of Council on 18 May 2022. The GAC will receive an information report outlining those changes on 11 November 2021. The GAC has also assumed some of its new responsibilities under the Act, including review of the Complaints process.</p> <p>Discussions are taking place with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRD) Regional Cabinet on the preferred delivery model and governance arrangements for the statutory Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) and this will be taken forward over the coming months.</p> <p>A task and finish group has been established to establish systems to enable the Council to embed and report on a culture of self-assessment, as required under the Act, and work is underway with directorates to ensure a consistent and thorough approach is in place. CMB have received a number of reports and have agreed a consistent approach to scoring and making judgements.</p>
<p>Financial Sustainability</p>	<p>External funding to support additional pressures will be sought where possible from Welsh Government via the Hardship Fund. Earmarked reserves will be reviewed and maintained to support specific Covid-19 costs arising as a result of local decisions, in addition to provision to meet other unfunded pressures such as reductions in council tax income and additional costs of council</p>	<p>Monthly claims have been made to the WG Hardship fund for additional Covid related expenditure since the start of the financial year, along with quarterly claims for loss of income. WG has announced that the Hardship Fund will continue until the end of the financial year. Most claims to date have been paid in full, with only minor amounts disallowed.</p> <p>The Council's Covid Recovery Fund continues to meet the costs of local decisions, such as free car parking, which are approved by Cabinet. This</p>

	<p>tax support. Assumptions for future years' budgets will continue to be reviewed and amended to reflect the changing circumstances.</p>	<p>reserve, along with all other earmarked reserves are reviewed on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Work is progressing on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the ongoing pressures arising from Covid-19 will be taken forward as part of this work. The Local Government Settlement will not be announced until December so there remains a great deal of uncertainty around future budgets.</p>
<p>Review of Financial Procedure Rules</p>	<p>Last updated in 2017, needs review and update to reflect current practices, especially with agile and home working arrangements.</p>	<p>The review of the Financial Procedure Rules is complete, following a thorough review by officers across the Council, and a report will be taken to Council in November to approve the revised version and include them in the Council's Constitution.</p>
<p>Review of Code of Corporate Governance and associated schedule</p>	<p>Last updated in 2017, needs review to ensure it reflects current governance framework.</p>	<p>A review of the Code of Corporate Governance will be undertaken in the second half of the financial year to ensure it is updated in readiness for the new financial year.</p>
<p>To continue to support professional development</p>	<p>To assess skills needs as part of the finance restructure and support continuing professional development at all levels where considered necessary. Also to consider other training to both finance and non-finance staff, as well as Elected Members.</p>	<p>The finance restructure is underway with a focus on moving from temporary arrangements to permanent appointments. This recognises the skills of staff though further opportunities will be considered for additional professional training.</p> <p>A plan for Members' training is in place for the 2022-23 financial year, which is to follow the Local Government Elections in May 2022. This includes Financial Awareness training and Treasury Management specific training, which will be supported by our Treasury Management Advisors.</p>

Digital / management and control of ICT assets with new ways of working	Change control processes – including patch management for all devices and applications across the ICT landscape. Use of Configuration Management Database (CMDB) to store information about hardware and software assets. Independent Audit assessments reviewing the management of the ICT infrastructure inclusive of devices and software.	Reviewed the processes to ensure that any changes are dealt with in a systematic approach for the management of all changes. Ensuring that no unnecessary changes are made, all changes are documented, with an aim that services are not unnecessarily disrupted and resources are used efficiently, providing the relevant levels of protection for the ICT infrastructure inclusive of devices and software.  The Digital transformation Board meets monthly and has developed a full programme of projects to improve the way we deliver services to citizens and drive efficiencies and enhance people’s jobs to remove repetitive processes and make them automatic. We have just formed a Digital Champions network which will help to improve visibility, understanding and cultural issues.
Cyber Fraud	Staff procedures and guidance through IT security policies, e.g. Six Simple Rules, Data Protection training. Corporate blocks on online file storage. Port control and encryption of USB devices. Public Services Network / Certification accreditation.	Training in place alongside physical controls across the IT infrastructure with regards file storage and external USB devices. Currently working with a provider for BCBC’s annual PSN accreditation for the network. Approval due February 2022.
Impact on the Social Care sector of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ending of the hardship funding to the sector	A market stability plan is in development to mitigate the impact on older people’s care homes of the pandemic and ensure that there continues to be sufficiency of quantity and quality of provision in Bridgend.	Market Stability reporting is a specific regulatory requirement, which is being undertaken across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region and coordinated by the regional commissioning unit. Scoping and analysis to inform this exercise is currently underway, and reporting deadlines are for final and approved reports to be published in June 2022
GDPR issues with new ways of working	A Bridgend’s message was circulated in September 2020 on data protection and working from home. It provided guidance on issues such as communicating securely, keeping software up to date, ensuring no personal data is compromised, only using the Council’s approved technology. The Council has strict ICT and Data Protection Act (DPA) policies and the Information Governance Board (with representation from each Directorate) continues to meet quarterly ensuring information	The Information Governance Board continues to meet quarterly and all staff and Members are required to undertake the mandatory DPA / UKGDPR e-learning module

	<p>security remains a top priority during this time. All staff and Elected Members are also required to undertake the mandatory DPA e-learning module.</p>	
<p>Workforce issues / wellbeing</p>	<p>Develop HR policies to support future working arrangements. Develop and implement additional actions to support a wellbeing culture across the organisation. Improve communications to help staff access information relating to Covid-19 and recovery.</p>	<p>HR policies, protocols and guidance have been refreshed to reflect the current working practices, these have been promoted to employees via a new Portal for Covid-19 and Recovery webpage. This incorporates updates on HR matters, practical homeworking advice, resources to support employee wellbeing, information regarding returning to the office and a dedicated Covid-19 guidance section.</p> <p>Meanwhile a project board has been established, chaired by the Chief Executive, with a view to creating a new agile blended model of working. A corporate set of strategic principles has been established which will help guide the effective development and implementation of the future service delivery work programme. These have been shared with staff groups and the trade unions, with a view to setting the parameters and managing expectations for work moving forward.</p>