

Meeting of:	GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	30 JANUARY 2025
Report Title:	GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ACTION RECORD
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	This report seeks to update Members of the Governance and Audit Committee on follow-up actions or further information requested on reports considered by Members and/or requested by Committee, including any other related information in relation to previous agenda items. It also provides an update to the Committee on the proposed approach for any future referrals to Scrutiny.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the Governance and Audit Committee Action Record and an update on collaborative working between the Committee and Scrutiny Committees.

2. Background

- 2.1 An Action Record has been devised to assist the Committee in tracking the decisions made by the Committee in the exercise of its functions.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 In order to assist the Governance and Audit Committee in ensuring that decisions made by the Committee are actioned and implemented, the Action Record is attached at **Appendix A**. The Action Record will be presented to each meeting of the Committee for approval.
- 3.2 Some actions include referrals to Scrutiny Committees and at a previous meeting there was a request for the Chair of the Governance and Audit (G&A) Committee to meet with the three Scrutiny Committee Chairs to discuss how

best to take these referrals forward.

- 3.3 The Chairs met before Christmas and there was a joint understanding of the need for a collaborative approach between Scrutiny and the G&A Committee, however, a recognition that both roles are different. The Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for the Local Government Act 2000, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 states:

'The governance and audit committee role should be more to seek assurance that the budgetary control systems (as an internal control) of the council are working, rather than the actual scrutiny of spend. This may serve as acceptable demarcation between the role of the governance and audit committee and that of an overview and scrutiny committee.'

- 3.4 Following discussion between the Chairs, the following points were agreed:

- On referrals made from the G&A Committee to Scrutiny, it was agreed that a paragraph be included in the Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme (FWP) Update report which highlights this collaborative working and picks up on any of these referrals. The relevant Scrutiny Committee will then consider the referral(s) and whether it/they meet the criteria for the committee's Forward Work Programme (FWP). If an item does, Members will then determine where it fits, in terms of prioritisation, against other items already on the Scrutiny Committee's FWP.
- Feedback to the G&A Committee will be provided via the G&A Committee Action Record with a summary of the Committee's response. This could include feedback such as stating that the item is already included on the FWP or maybe has been considered recently. Where it may be the latter, links will be provided in the action record to evidence the report and the outcome.
- It was noted that Scrutiny FWPs are often very full and focused on key policy and strategic items, often pre-decision which have time constraints upon them relating to Cabinet decisions.
- It was agreed that it is ultimately for the Scrutiny Committee to determine if and when items get added to their FWP, utilising the criteria and agreed priorities.
- In order to assist with developing a strong collaborative relationship between Scrutiny and the G&A Committees, collaboration and communication was key. It was therefore requested that the G&A Committee provide as much detail as possible to their referral, in order that the Scrutiny Committee can clearly understand the rationale and risk associated with the item and can prioritise accordingly. Similarly, it was requested that clear communication back to the G&A Committee via the Action Tracker be provided as to the reasons why any item would not be incorporated into a Scrutiny FWP.

- 3.5 In response to the above, **Appendix A** therefore incorporates some initial responses from Scrutiny to update the G&A Committee on the referrals previously made.

- 3.6 The Scrutiny Chairs and G&A Chair also agreed to meet on a regular basis throughout the year to assist them in this collaborative approach, whereby they can go through any referrals, clarify any queries and agree ways forward

thereby establishing a positive and productive relationship between the Scrutiny Committees and the Governance and Audit Committee.

3.7 In addition to this, there is a need for Scrutiny to link in with regulatory inspection reports and any resulting recommendations. The regulatory tracker is already reported to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee twice a year, following it being reported to the G&A Committee. It is further proposed that any new inspection reports received by the G&A Committee are sent for information to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee as a link in their FWP report. Members of that Committee can then determine if they want to consider the report in detail as a full Scrutiny item on their future FWP and can prioritise it appropriately. Obviously, this could then potentially be accompanied by any comments and potential referrals from the G&A Committee in relation to the inspection report.

3.8 Similarly, if, during the monitoring of the Regulatory Tracker the G&A Committee highlight any issues with any outstanding recommendations, they can potentially refer them on to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee with a clear rationale as highlighted above in paragraph 3.4.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 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.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to note:

- a) the Action Record and provide any comments, as appropriate.
- b) the proposed approach for collaborative working between Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees.

Background documents

None.