



## Report of the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee

Council – 6 July 2023

### **Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23**

<b>Purpose:</b>	This report provides the Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report for the 2022/23 Municipal year.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Legal, Finance and Access to Services.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	It is recommended that:  i) the Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23 is approved.
<b>Report Authors:</b>	Paula O'Connor, Simon Cockings, Jeremy Parkhouse
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Ben Smith
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Tracey Meredith
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Rhian Millar

#### **1. Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23**

- 1.1 The Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report for 2022/23 prepared by the Chief Auditor, Democratic Services and the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee can be found in Appendix 1. The report provides an overview of the Governance and Audit Committee's work in the municipal year 2022/23.

#### **2. Integrated Assessment Implications**

- 2.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

2.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

2.4 The completion of the Integrated Impact Assessment Screening revealed that:

- The Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report has a low positive impact across all groups.
- It has been subject to consultation with Legal, Access to Services and the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee.
- All Well-being of Future Generations Act considerations are positive and any risks identified are low.
- The overall impact of the Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report is positive as it will support the Authority in its requirement to protect public funds.

### **3. Financial Implications**

3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **4. Legal Implications**

4.1 Part of the role of the Governance and Audit Committee as set out by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 is to make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's financial affairs, including an assessment of the risk

management and corporate government arrangements and the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements.

**Background Papers:** None.

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report  
Appendix 2 – Governance and Audit Committee Terms of Reference  
Appendix 3 – Integrated Impact Assessment



# **Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23**

**City & County of Swansea**



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## **1. Foreword by Mrs Paula O'Connor, Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee**

- 1.1 I am pleased to present this report prepared by the Chief Auditor and Democratic Services that reflects on the work of the Governance & Audit Committee. The report provides an overview of the Governance & Audit Committee's work in the municipal year 2022/23. On 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022 the Governance & Audit Committee considered the election of Chair for 2022/23 Municipal Year where it was resolved that Paula O'Connor be elected Chair. At the same meeting Councillor P R Hood-Williams was elected Vice-Chair for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.
- 1.2 The full Council agreed that the Governance & Audit Committee would be set at 15 members with one third of those being Lay Members to comply with the requirements of the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act. This resulted in the Council seeking to recruit a further three Lay Members. By May 2022 an additional two new Lay Members were successfully recruited – Mr Phillip Sharman and Mr Gordon Anderson. In March 2023 the Council was successful in appointing the fifth Lay Member, Mr David Roberts who assumed his position in April 2023, thus making the Committee fully compliant with legislative requirements.
- 1.3 In addition, Cllr Lesley Walton was elected by the Governance & Audit Committee to be the Representative on the Governance Group. This Group ensures that the Annual Governance Statement is complete and accurate and is in harmony with the work of the Governance & Audit Committee. The Annual Governance Statement was presented together with the Annual Report of the Governance & Audit Committee at 17 May 2023 meeting and will be presented to Council on 6 July 2023.
- 1.4 A formal Training Programme has been in place throughout the year to ensure the Committee Members understand their roles and responsibilities. This also provides a clear understanding of the roles of Corporate Performance and of Scrutiny.
- 1.5 The Local Government and Election (Wales) Act requires careful coordination between Governance & Audit Committee and the Scrutiny Committee. To aide this, the Work Programme of both Committees are appended to every meeting of the Governance & Audit Committee.
- 1.6 In addition, the Chair of Scrutiny attends the Governance & Audit Committee to present the Annual report. Similarly, the Council's Performance Report was brought to the attention of the Governance & Audit Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 by Cllr Chris Holley, Chair of the Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Panel in order to give assurance to the Committee that it had been subject to review and challenge by the Panel.
- 1.7 The Chair has assured the Council that every effort will be made to gain maximum effectiveness in the work of scrutiny and audit in order to avoid

stepping outside of the remits of their terms of reference. More recently, on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023 the Chair attended the Scrutiny Programme Committee to discuss Governance & Audit Committee and Scrutiny relationships to reinforce and clarify those responsibilities. The terms of reference are reviewed annually in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer to ensure that they reflect the most up to date legislation. The Committee terms of reference form part of each Agenda as an aide to ensure that Members are sighted of its role.

- 1.8 The Chair would note that the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee was established early 2022 to meet the requirements of Part 5 of the Local Governance and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Further insight was given to Members as to the current status and progress of the CJC at the September 2021 Governance & Audit Committee and then in December 2021 the Governance & Audit Committee were informed of progress and next steps being taken in establishing a formal governance framework. At that time, it was envisaged that the status and progress of the work of the CJC would be brought back to the Governance & Audit Committee during the early part of 2022 when consideration would be given to any further changes to Terms of Reference of the Governance & Audit Committee. In March 2023 the Committee received a report on the Governance and Assurance Arrangements of Swansea Council's Strategic Partnerships. One of the Partnerships was the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee, the Leader of the Council, Cllr Rob Stewart is the Council's representative. The Chair confirms that the Governance and Audit Sub-Committee of this Partnership met on 11 November 2022 to agree Terms of Reference, but no further meetings have taken place since this date. The Council's representatives on this Committee are Paula O'Connor, Chair of Governance & Audit Committee, Cllr Lesley Walton and Cllr Jeff Jones. However, recent notification indicates that a July 2023 meeting is being arranged. As a result, the Terms of Reference for the Council's Governance & Audit Committee will need to be kept under review.
- 1.9 The Governance & Audit Committee has continued to express concern around the absence of the Workforce Strategy and the challenges placed on resources. In February 2022 the Strategic HR&OD Manager confirmed that a proposed Workforce Strategy has been developed for the financial year April 2022-2023. It was also confirmed that the Strategy took into consideration the Council's Corporate Plan "Delivery of a Successful and Sustainable Swansea" as well as the provisions of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Strategy was agreed by Cabinet in October 2022 and arrangements are in place to roll out the Strategy.
- 1.10 Subsequently, a key report was presented to the Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022 informing the Committee of the Council's Transformation Goals and Strategy. This report noted that the first two phases of Achieving Better Together strategy and goals ended in May 2022 with the development of the council workforce strategy amongst other activities. However, to deal with the challenges ahead the Council declares that "between 2022 and 2027 the Council will deliver at least the same if not better outcomes for our population and improve our efficiency by making significant changes to the way we work and



how our services are designed and delivered”. The Governance & Audit Committee will receive future updates.

- 1.11 The Committee noted that a number of key staff changes took place during the year including the departure of the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services. As a result, Interim arrangements were put in place, but this did not impact on the access that the Chair had to Senior Officers. The Chair has continued to speak regularly to the new Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services.
- 1.12 The Chair also highlights that the Committee has previously reported on the shortfall in assurances being received around the Council’s Risk Management arrangements. However, the Chair has ensured that the Service Directors have attended the Governance & Audit Committee during the year to provide assurance to the Committee that individual functions are exercised effectively, and there is economic, efficient, and effective use of resources and effective governance. The Director of Corporate Services has been reviewing the risk management system with the aim of enhancing the current reporting to the Committee.
- 1.13 The Governance & Audit Committee terms of reference states that the Committee “oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.
- 1.14 In March 2022 the Chief Internal Auditor presented the Draft Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23 and methodology applied. The Chair commented that the Committee was able to support approval of the Plan to Council with the caveat that assurances had been obtained from the Chief Internal Auditor that the Plan was risk based and complied with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The Committee continued to seek further understanding of the scope of the reviews during 2022/23.
- 1.15 The Committee has received reports regularly during the year from the Chief Internal Auditor who also explained the staff resource pressures throughout the year and also advised that at the year-end 62% of the plan would be completed which would be sufficient to provide the Head of Internal Audit Opinion. The Chair has expressed her gratitude to the Chief Auditor and his Team in progressing with the plan during a period of unplanned staff absences. During 2022/23 the Chief Auditor reported a number of Moderate Assurance audit reports that resulted in those responsible attending Governance & Audit Committee to give assurance that appropriate action was being taken where significant weaknesses in control were identified. During the year the Chief Internal Auditor updated the Governance & Audit Committee of those audit assignments that had to be deferred. The final Chief Internal Auditor opinion is due to be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in May 2023.
- 1.16 Audit Wales presented their 2022 Audit Plan to the Governance & Audit Committee on 15th June 2022, and has provided the Committee with regular updates to their work. Their Quarterly update to 30 September 2022 was presented to the December 2022 Committee meeting. Also, the update to 31

December 2022 was presented to the March 2023 Committee meeting. Audit Wales have encountered staffing pressures throughout the year and have kept the Committee and full Council abreast of the situation.

- 1.17 The Committee has repeatedly checked progress with the development of the tracker to give focus to completion of external audit recommendations. Until this tracker is fully developed and put into place the Scrutiny Committee has a role in challenging non implementation of Audit Wales recommendations as well as the Governance & Audit Committee. The Council has also implemented a system whereby they are able to track who was allocated Audit Wales reports for actioning recommendations.
- 1.18 On 13 July 2022 the Committee received the 202/23 Fraud Function Annual Plan. The 2021/22 Anti-Fraud Annual Report was received at the same meeting. In December 2022 the Corporate Counter Fraud Function presented their mid-year update report on progress against the plan. This report identified the Teams limited resources that impacts on their ability to be proactive in certain areas albeit the National Fraud Initiative work is considered proactive.
- 1.19 The Council has continued to face significant challenges during 2022/23. However, Audit Wales confirmed at the March 2023 meeting that an unqualified opinion on the 2021/22 accounts would be issued.
- 1.20 We face significant challenges around workforce (sickness, retention, recruitment, local government pay relativities, demand (both growing demand/demography and bounce back demand/recovery post Covid), constrained overall budgets and the erosive real terms effect of persistently high inflation.

## **2. Role of the Governance and Audit Committee**

- 2.1 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act became law in January 2021. The Act superseded parts of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. The Act also extended the remit of the Governance and Audit Committee, with Members now having additional responsibility to review and assess the Council's performance management and complaints handling procedures.
- 2.2 The Measure requires the Governance and Audit Committee to:
  - Review and scrutinise the Council's financial affairs.
  - Make reports and recommendations in relation to the Authority's financial affairs.
  - Review and assess the risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements of the Authority.
  - Make reports and recommendations to the Authority on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements.
  - Oversee the Council's internal and external audit arrangements and review the financial statements prepared by the Authority.

- Review the Council's draft response to the Panel Performance Assessment Report, and make any appropriate recommendations for changes.
- Review and assess the Authority's ability to handle complaints effectively and to make any associated reports and recommendations in relation to the Authority's ability to handle complaints effectively.

- 2.3 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 also stipulates that at least one third of the Governance and Audit Committee must be Lay Members. The current Chair of the Committee is a Lay Member and a further four Lay Member have been appointed to the Committee to satisfy the requirements of the Act.
- 2.4 The work of the Governance and Audit Committee is structured so that the Committee can gain assurance over the areas identified above and to comply with its terms of reference as amended to reflect the changes introduced by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Terms of Reference of the Committee can be found in Appendix 2.
- 2.5 This report describes the assurance that has been gained by the Governance and Audit Committee from various sources during 2022/23 and also outlines a number of other areas where briefings have been provided to the Committee.
- 2.6 The Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23 was reported to the Committee on 17 May 2023 to allow Members the opportunity to give their views on the assurances received and to identify the key messages arising from the work of the Committee during the year.
- 2.7 Comments made at the meeting on 17 May 2023 are included in the report, which the Chair will present to Council.

### **3. Work of the Governance and Audit Committee in 2022/23**

- 3.1 The Governance and Audit Committee has received regular reports in relation to standard agenda themes and received reports of interest based on risk, governance and internal control. Each aspect is reported on below.

#### **Standard Items**

##### Internal Audit Assurance

- 3.2 The Governance and Audit Committee approved the Internal Audit Charter 2022/23 as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- 3.3 The Committee also approved the Internal Audit Annual Plan 2023/24 and has received quarterly monitoring reports from the Chief Auditor showing progress against the 2022/23 Audit Plan.
- 3.4 The quarterly monitoring reports identified any audits that received a moderate or limited level of assurance along with an outline of the issues which led to the audit receiving the negative assurance level. A second quarterly report has also been presented to the Committee to allow members to review and monitor the

implementation of the recommendations made in the internal audit reports that had been issued during the year.

- 3.5 From April 2018 the relevant Head of Service and Service Manager (or Headteacher and Chair of Governors) have been required to attend the Governance and Audit Committee following a moderate or limited audit report being issued in order to provide an update to members as to what action is being taken to address the issues that have been highlighted by the audit.
- 3.6 The Internal Audit Annual Report for 2021/22 was reported to the Committee in May 2022. The report included a review of actual work completed compared to the Annual Plan.
- 3.7 The Internal Audit Annual Report for 2021/22 also included the Chief Auditor's opinion on the internal control environment which stated that based on the audit testing carried out reasonable assurance could be given that the systems of internal control were operating effectively and that no significant weaknesses were identified which would have a material impact on the Council's financial affairs.
- 3.8 The Internal Audit Annual Report of School Audits 2021/22 was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in July 2022. This report summarised the findings of the thematic audits and a small number of school audits undertaken during the year and identified some common themes across the schools that had been included in the audits undertaken.

#### Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

- 3.9 The draft Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 was presented to the Committee in May 2022, prior to being reported to Council for approval.
- 3.10 A Governance Group was established by the Council in 2018/19 comprising of the Deputy Chief Executive, the Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Strategic Delivery and Performance Manager and the Chief Auditor (in an advisory capacity). A member of the Governance and Audit Committee is also a member of the Group. The Group is tasked with overarching responsibility for ensuring existing corporate governance arrangements are effective across the Council.
- 3.11 The presentation of the draft Annual Governance Statement gave the Committee the opportunity to review and comment upon the Statement to ensure it properly reflected the assurances provided to the Committee.

#### Annual Statement of Accounts 2021/22

- 3.12 The Deputy Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer presented the draft Statement of Accounts 2021/22 for the Council in March 2023. Officers answered a number of queries raised by members of the Committee.
- 3.13 Following completion of the audit of the Statement of Accounts 2021/22, Audit Wales presented its ISA 260 reports on the audit of financial statements of the Council to the Governance and Audit Committee prior to the report going to full

Council. The report presented the detailed findings of the audit and stated that Audit Wales's view was that the accounts gave a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council with an unqualified audit opinion.

#### External Audit Assurance

- 3.14 As well as the Audit of the Statement of Accounts (ISA 260) reports mentioned above, Audit Wales also provided update reports at a number of the scheduled meetings. The reports outlined the progress being made in financial and performance audit work to the Committee providing assurance by presenting the following reports:
- Audit Wales - 2022 Audit Plan – City and County of Swansea Council.
  - Joint Presentation - Audit of the Council's coming out of COVID activities.
  - Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – City and County of Swansea Council – Quarters 1-4.
  - Audit Wales - Assurance & Risk Assessment (ARA) Progress Update Letter.
  - Audit Wales Reports - Readiness of the Public Sector for Net Zero Carbon by 2030.
  - Audit Wales - Assurance and Risk Assessment 2021-22 Financial Position Update.

#### Implementation of Audit Recommendations

- 3.15 An important role undertaken by the Governance and Audit Committee is monitoring the implementation of agreed audit recommendations arising from both internal and external audit.
- 3.16 The implementation of any Internal Audit recommendations arising from fundamental audits is reported to the Governance and Audit Committee in the Recommendations Tracker Report. For 2021/22, the results of the tracker exercise showed that 67% of agreed recommendations had been implemented by September 2022.
- 3.17 The implementation of any high or medium risk recommendations arising from non-fundamental audits that received a moderate or limited level of assurance are subject to follow up visits by Internal Audit to confirm they have been implemented. The results of the follow up audits are reported to the Governance and Audit Committee in the Quarterly Internal Audit Monitoring Reports.
- 3.18 The Internal Controls Report presented to the Governance and Audit Committee by the external auditors includes any recommendations made as a result of their work and the action taken by management to implement the recommendations.

#### Governance and Risk Management

- 3.19 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 makes the overview of risk management a function of the Governance and Audit Committee
- 3.20 The Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager provided regular updates to the Committee in relation to Risk Management throughout the year via the Quarterly Overall Status of Risk Reports.

3.21 A new Risk Management System was introduced in December 2019. Following the introduction of the new system, work was undertaken to embed in the new risk management processes across the Council. The Strategic Delivery and Performance Manager began presenting reports outlining the contents of the new Risk Management System from February 2021 and work has continued in year to enhance the reporting functionality of the system. This remains one of the key areas of focus for the Governance and Audit Committee in 2023/24.

#### Relationship with Scrutiny Function

3.22 The Governance and Audit Committee has continued to develop a relationship with the Scrutiny function. The relationship is intended to ensure the following:

- Mutual awareness and understanding of the work of Scrutiny and the Governance and Audit Committee.
- Respective workplans are coordinated to avoid duplication / gaps.
- Clear mechanism for referral of issues if necessary.

3.23 The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee attended the Governance and Audit Committee to provide an update on the work of Scrutiny in October 2022. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee is Councillor Peter Black.

3.24 The Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee has also attended the Scrutiny Programme Committee and provided an update on the Governance & Audit Committee / Scrutiny Relationship in March 2023. This was part of ongoing efforts to strengthen that relationship and closer working.

#### Anti-Fraud

3.25 A Corporate Fraud Function was established during 2015/16 within the Internal Audit Section. The Corporate Fraud Function Annual Report 2021/22 and Corporate Fraud Anti-Fraud Plan for 2022/23 were presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in July 2022. The Fraud Function Annual Report for 2022/23 is due to be presented later in the 2023/24 Municipal Year. The Governance and Audit Committee also received a Mid-Year Fraud Function Update Report in December 2022.

#### Governance and Audit Committee Reports

3.26 The Governance and Audit Committee received a number of reports during 2022/23, agendas and reports can be located at: -

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=123&Year=0&LLL=0>

- Internal Audit Annual Report 2021/22.
- Draft Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22.
- Draft Annual Governance Statement 2021/22.
- Election of Governance & Audit Committee Representative on the Governance Group.
- Internal Audit Annual Plan 2021/22 - Monitoring Report for the Period 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022.
- Response to the Freedom of Information Audit 2022.
- Service Centre – Accounts Receivable – Moderate Report.
- Internal Audit Recommendation Follow-Up Report Q4 2021/22.

- Internal Audit Section - Fraud Function Annual Report 2021/2022.
- Internal Audit Section - Fraud Function Anti-Fraud Plan for 2022/23.
- Annual Report of School Audits 2021-22.
- Update Report South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.
- Internal Audit Report - Accounts Receivable Action Plan.
- Workforce Strategy.
- Annual Complaints Report - Six Month Update.
- Local Code of Corporate Governance: Framework of Assurance.
- Overview of the Governance and Assurance arrangements of Partnerships and Collaborations.
- Internal Audit Monitoring Report Q 1 2022/23.
- Internal Audit Recommendation Follow-Up Report Q1 2022/23.
- Corporate Risk Overview 2022/23 - Quarter 1.
- Education Directorate: Internal Control Environment 2022/2023.
- Absence Management Audit Report Update.
- Employment of Agency Staff Audit Report 2019/20 - 2022 Update.
- Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter to the Council for the Period 2020-21.
- The Annual Review of Performance 2021-22.
- Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22 & Scrutiny Work Programme.
- Joint Presentation - Coming Out Of COVID. Fraud Function Annual Report 2020/21.
- Internal Audit Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2022/23.
- Moderate Report - Destination Lettings 2022/23.
- Corporate Risk Overview - Quarter 2 2022/23.
- Finance Directorate: Internal Control Environment 2022/2023.
- Social Services Directorate: Internal Control Environment 2022/23.
- Internal Audit Recommendation Follow-Up Report Quarter 2 2022/23.
- Fundamental Audits 2021/22 Recommendation Tracker.
- Response to the Rechargeable Works Report 2022/23.
- Western Bay Adoption Service Report 2022/23.
- Internal Audit Section - Corporate Fraud Function Mid-Year Update Report for 2022/2023.
- Transformation Goals & Strategy Reviews.
- Annual Complaints Report 2021-22.
- Accounts Receivable.
- Report on the Audit Wales 'Time for Change' – Poverty in Wales Report Recommendations.
- Internal Audit Monitoring Report - Quarter 3 - 2022/23.
- Internal Audit Recommendation Follow-Up Report Quarter 3 2022/23.
- Corporate Risk Overview 2022/23 - Quarter 3.
- Place Directorate: Internal Control Environment 2022/2023.
- Social Services Absence Management Audit Report Update.
- Employment of Agency Staff Audit Report 2019/20 - February 2023 Update.
- Draft Statement of Accounts 2021/22.
- Internal Audit Annual Plan Methodology.
- Draft Internal Audit Annual Plan 2023/24.
- The Governance and Assurance Arrangements of Swansea Council's Strategic Partnerships.
- Progress on the Upgrade of Oracle.

- Public Participation Strategy.
- Update on the Council's Transformation Programme, including Governance.
- Draft Internal Audit Charter 2023/24.
- Internal Audit Strategy & Annual Plan 2023/24.
- Corporate Risk Overview - Quarter 4 2022/23.
- Corporate Services Directorate: Internal Control Environment 2022/23.

#### Governance and Audit Committee Training

3.27 The Governance & Audit Committee Training Plan 2022/23 was approved by the Committee on 12 April 2022. Councillors and Lay Members received the following training throughout the Municipal year: -

- Governance and Audit Committee Induction Training.
- Organisational Knowledge / Committee Role & Function / Financial management & accounting / External audit / Values of good governance.
- Corporate complaints / Governance / Performance management & monitoring.
- Counter fraud.
- Corporate complaints Update / Cyber Security.
- Understanding Financial Statements.

## **4. Looking Forward**

4.1 Looking ahead to 2023/24 the Governance & Audit Committee's membership and responsibilities will need to be kept under review to ensure that a Training Programme continues to be in place that reflects the needs of new Councillors and Lay Members. Governance & Audit Committee Members completed an assessment of performance in March 2023 and the outcome of this self-assessment was considered at the meeting held on 17 May 2023. If the self-assessment identifies any additional Member needs, this will be added to the Training Programme.

4.2 The Committee's concerns expressed during the 2022/23 Municipal year will be appropriately reflected in the Annual Governance Statement and will include performance against the Transformation Strategy, and the further improvements required to embed the risk management arrangements and enhanced reporting of risk. In addition, for those Moderate or Limited Assurance Internal Audit reports issued during the year the Committee will seek further updates to ensure all internal audit recommendations have been actioned. Also, the Significant Governance issues noted in the Annual Governance Statement will be considered by the Committee and will include Workforce capacity and capabilities (including Agency use and Sickness), Performance Management review, ICT Disaster Recovery and Procurement.

## **5. Committee Membership & Attendance**

5.1 The membership of the Governance & Audit Committee at the start of the 2022/23 Municipal Year consisted of 4 Lay Members and 10 Non-Executive Councillors elected by Council. Lay Members are appointed for no more than two administrative terms with Council Members reappointed annually. The



Committee now includes 5 Lay Members as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. A Lay Member is also the Chair of the Committee.

5.2 The Committee is serviced by Council Officers, principally the Director of Finance / Section 151 Officer, Deputy Chief Legal Officer, Strategic Delivery & Performance Officer, Chief Auditor and Democratic Services. Representatives from the Audit Wales also attend Committee meetings.

5.3 During 2022/23 the Committee has followed a structured workplan which covered all areas of the Committee's responsibilities with the aim of obtaining assurance over the areas included in its terms of reference.

5.4 The Governance and Audit Committee met on 11 occasions up to 12 April 2023, during the 2022/23 Municipal year. The meeting agendas, minutes and recordings can be located at:

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=123&Year=0&LLL=0>

5.5 Committee Member attendance in 2022/23 is shown in the following table:

<b>Attendance 2022/23</b>	<b>Possible</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Independent Lay Members</b>		
Mrs Paula O'Connor (Chair)	11	10
Gordon Anderson	11	7
Julie Davies	11	10
Phil Sharman	11	11
David Roberts	1	1
<b>Non-Executive Councillors</b>		
Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams (Vice Chair)	11	10
Councillor Alan Jeffrey	11	8
Councillor Terry Hennegan	11	3
Councillor Jeff Jones	11	11
Councillor Mike Lewis	11	8
Councillor Michael Locke	11	11
Councillor Sam Pritchard	11	11
Councillor Kelly Roberts	11	7
Councillor Lesley Walton	11	10

Councillor Mike White	11	11
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## 6. Future Governance and Audit Committee Meetings

- 6.1 As agreed by the Head of Democratic Services, the Council Diary for the 2023/2024 Municipal year includes Governance and Audit Committee meetings on a six-weekly basis. The Chair has confirmed that the impact of the six weekly meetings will be kept under review as it is likely that the meetings will extend beyond the current two-hour timeframe.
- 6.2 Additional/special meetings may need to be held at certain times of the year to ensure the smooth delivery of the Committee's work programme. The Committee also has the ability to call further additional meetings when required.

## 7. Governance and Audit Committee Contact Details

<b>Paula O'Connor</b> Chair of Governance and Audit Committee	<a href="mailto:Chair.Audit@swansea.gov.uk">Chair.Audit@swansea.gov.uk</a>
<b>Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams</b> Vice Chair of Governance and Audit Committee	<a href="mailto:Cllr.Paxton.Hood-Williams@swansea.gov.uk">Cllr.Paxton.Hood-Williams@swansea.gov.uk</a> 01792 872038
<b>Ben Smith</b> Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer	<a href="mailto:Ben.Smith@swansea.gov.uk">Ben.Smith@swansea.gov.uk</a> 01792 636409
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