

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 22 March 2023
Report Subject	External Regulation Assurance
Report Author	Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council receives regular reports from our external regulators. Under its Terms of Reference, the Governance and Audit Committee ensures that effective systems are in place for setting and monitoring actions in response to these reports.

This report covers the national studies and bespoke local work of Audit Wales (AW) and the work of Care Inspectorate Wales and Estyn in 2022/23.

This summary report gives assurance that the regulatory reports have been considered and responded to.

The Summary report also provides a progress update and RAG status for any reports the Council provided a response to during the previous year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To be assured by our response to external regulatory reports.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE EXTERNAL REGULATORS AND INSPECTIONS REPORT
1.01	The Local Government (Wales) Measure contains provisions for the work of Governance and audit committees. Statutory guidance made under Section 85 of the Measure was issued in June 2012. That guidance advised that Governance and Audit Committees should receive and consider reports from external auditors, other regulators and inspectors.

1.02	<p>Since 2014 arrangements have been made for local reports issued by external auditors, regulators and inspectors to be tracked and reported to the Governance and Audit Committee once a year. This is done to assure the Committee that such reports have been considered and responded to.</p> <p>The Council's reporting protocol sets out the following arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet – makes the Executive response to regulatory reports • Overview and Scrutiny – scrutinises the executive response • Audit Committee – assures the governance arrangements
1.03	<p>Where reports by an external auditor, other regulator or inspector contain specific local recommendations it is important that they receive proper consideration by both officers and members and are responded to.</p> <p>The responses will, on occasion, require an action plan.</p> <p>It should be noted that there is no requirement to report or respond to recommendations within the Audit Wales national study reports, however, the Council does respond as a point of good practice under our protocol.</p>
1.04	<p>It is within the Terms of Reference of the Governance and Audit Committee to ensure that effective processes are in place for setting and monitoring proportionate and effective action plans. The Governance and Audit Committee has the responsibility for ensuring that all external regulatory report recommendations issued by external regulators are implemented where accepted.</p>
1.05	<p>Appendix A provides an overview of the reports received from the Audit Wales, Care Inspectorate for Wales and Estyn during 2022/23, and the summary findings and responses from the Council. The status of any actions is shown as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green – on track / completed • Amber – on track, but within acceptable limits • Red – limited progress
1.06	<p>The Executive response to the following National reports are currently being prepared and will be scheduled on the Forward Work Programme for Cabinet, the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Governance and Audit Committee in due course however, potential reporting dates have been identified for these within the Summary Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Time for change' – Poverty in Wales (November 2022 Report) • 'A missed Opportunity' – Social Enterprises (December 2022 Report) • 'Together we can' – Community resilience and self-reliance (January 2023 Report)

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	External reports are considered by Chief Officers and senior managers to determine the actions needed. Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees perform the roles set out above.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>The work of the external regulators, and the actions in response to their reports provide assurance to the Council that adequate and effective controls are in place to mitigate risks.</p> <p>The Council's protocol in relation to reporting of external assurance reports is attached at Appendix B</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix A: External Assurance Report Summary</p> <p>Appendix B: External Assurance Report Protocol</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Contact Officer: Lisa Brownbill, Internal Audit, Performance and Risk Manager</p> <p>Tel: 01352 702231</p> <p>E-mail: lisa.brownbill@flintshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Contact Officer: Sam Perry, Support Officer, Performance and Risk Management Team</p> <p>Tel: 01352 701476</p> <p>Email: Sam.perry@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Audit Wales: works to support the Auditor General as the public sector watchdog for Wales. They aim to ensure that the people of Wales know whether public money is being managed wisely and that public bodies in Wales understand how to improve outcomes.</p> <p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW): The powers and functions of CIW are enabled through legislation. CIW has the powers to review Local Authority social services at a local and national level, to inform the public whether services are up to standard, to promote improvement of services and to</p>

help safeguard the interests of vulnerable people who use services and their carers. They provide professional advice to Welsh Ministers and policy makers.

Estyn: Estyn is the education and training inspectorate for Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting primary and secondary schools and nursery schools maintained by, or receiving funding from, local authorities.