

## AUDIT COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 9 September 2020
<b>Report Subject</b>	Quarterly Update on the Response to the Pandemic
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Executive and Chief Officer (Governance)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chief Executive made a full presentation on how the Council had responded to the emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic at the July meeting.

The Committee requested a quarterly report on the continued management of the emergency response and recovery phases for information and assurance.

This report briefly summarises the ongoing work around risk management, service resumption, the control environment and restoration of democratic governance.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1 | That the Committee is assured by the arrangements in place for the emergency response and recovery phases. |
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## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY</b>
1.01	Since mid-March the Council has been engrossed in responding to the emergency caused by the pandemic. The Council is now in transition from responding to the disruption caused by the pandemic to planning medium and longer-term recovery.
1.02	At the meeting of the Committee held on 23 July the Chief Executive made a full presentation on how the Council had responded to the emergency caused by Covid-19 pandemic, and summarised the emergency operating model which it had quickly established to manage our response. This presentation was supported by a second presentation from the Internal Audit team on how the control environment had been protected and maintained during the emergency - to ensure the correct and appropriate use of decision-making, and the proportionate use of finance and resources. Both presentations gave the Committee a high level of assurance and confidence.
1.03	The plans for response and recovery have moved with urgency and speed in the interim period. The Council is now in the recovery phase. The following paragraphs summarise the progress made under the headings of risk management, service resumption, the control environment and restoration of democratic governance.
1.04	<b>Risk Management:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have developed a suite of business recovery plans and recovery risk registers with mitigation actions for the corporate organisation and for each of the five service portfolios;</li><li>• Risk management has been a key management tool for planning and action;</li><li>• Risk management has been transparent with regular reports to the Member Recovery Board, and effective as evidenced by the reducing number of risks and the improving risk trends in the latest internal report;</li><li>• Ongoing and open risks will be reported to Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees from October as part of the implementation of the Council's Recovery Strategy.</li></ul>
1.05	<b>Service Resumption:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most services have now resumed according to national guidance on health and safety and occupational standards;</li><li>• The remaining services - such as the full resumption of libraries services and the reopening cultural services are subject to national direction.</li></ul>
1.06	<b>Control Environment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The presentation made to the previous meeting of the Committee from the Internal Audit team gave a high level of assurance and confidence over the protection and maintenance of the control environment;</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Internal Audit team is returning to scheduled audit work, and the revised annual Audit Strategic Plan is included on the agenda for this meeting;</li> <li>• All control systems have been maintained without interruption e.g. finance procedural rules, contract management rules, procurement, budget control and management, workforce management, payroll;</li> <li>• Critical statutory duties have been met on time and to standard e.g. completion of the annual accounts;</li> <li>• The Council has complied fully with the temporary legal regulations to either suspend or vary certain activities or to take on new ones e.g. enforcement.</li> </ul>
1.07	<p><b>Democratic Governance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The officer response and recovery structure has been maintained throughout to ensure business continuity. Lines of accountability at Gold-Silver-Bronze levels are clear;</li> <li>• A Member Recovery Board (an advisory sub-committee to the Cabinet) has been meeting throughout the summer months to oversee the work on recovery planning;</li> <li>• Regular contact has been maintained with the Council leadership, Cabinet and Group Leaders throughout the response and recovery phases;</li> <li>• The Cabinet, Planning Committee and Audit Committee are all now fully functioning with the aid of technology;</li> <li>• The Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been convened selectively for key briefings, and will all resume a full meeting schedule from mid-September;</li> <li>• The Council Annual General Meeting will be held in early September and meetings of the full Council will resume;</li> <li>• A full Council diary for the second half of the 2020/21 Council Year has been finalised;</li> <li>• Full democratic governance will resume in September and the officer support infrastructure for recovery will give full support.</li> </ul>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	There are no specific resource implications from this report.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	None specific as this report is based on documented response and recovery work.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	This report specifically covers emergency situation risk management.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Interim Assurance letter from Audit Wales

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Colin Everett <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702101 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:chief.executive@flintshire.gov.uk">chief.executive@flintshire.gov.uk</a>