

Meeting of:	<b>Standards Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Thursday, 08 June 2023</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Internal Audit Report in Respect of Elected Members 2022-2023
Purpose of Report:	To apprise Standards Committee of the outcome of the recent Internal Audit in respect of Elected Members' 2022- 2023
Report Owner:	D. Marles, Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Responsible Officer:	K. Bowen, Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	This report does not require consultation to be undertaken
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for decision by the Standards Committee
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To apprise Standards Committee of the outcome of the recent Internal Audit Report in respect of Elected Members' 2022-2023.</li> <li>The purpose of the audit was to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in respect of Elected Members.</li> </ul>	

## **Recommendation**

1. T H A T the report and the outcome of the internal audit on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control, governance and risk management arrangements that are in place with regards to Elected Members be noted.

## **Reason for Recommendation**

1. Having regard to the purpose of the audit which was to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 An audit of Elected Members was undertaken in accordance with the 2022/23 Regional Internal Audit Service (RIAS) Audit Plan.
- 1.2 The 2022 Vale of Glamorgan Council Election took place on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 to elect 54 Members across the Wards within the Vale of Glamorgan Council.
- 1.3 The purpose of the audit was to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in respect of Elected Members.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1 The purpose of the audit was to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in respect of Elected Members. Audit testing was undertaken in respect of the financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23. The objective of the audit was to ensure that all Elected Members meet the associated qualifying criteria and had fully declared any relevant declarations of interest as per the Council's Code of Conduct.
- 2.2 A report was prepared and provided to Management for review and comment and an opportunity given for discussion and clarification.
- 2.3 For the Standards Committee information, during the audit, it was confirmed that all 54 Elected Members had completed and signed a declaration on their nomination form, had declared that they had met one of the four categories required to stand and that they believed that to the best of their knowledge they were not disqualified from being elected as a Councillor.
- 2.4 All declarations are held in the Elections Office in the Civic Offices. All 54 Elected Members addresses on their register of business interests were agreed with their HR record on Oracle with 53 Elected Members being eligible to stand by having a Vale of Glamorgan address. The remaining Elected Member declared that eligibility criteria Category C (by principal or only place of work during the period of 12 months) was met. When independently checked, the stated employer on the register of interest had an address within the Vale of Glamorgan.

- 2.5** Elected Members are also made aware of the Members' Code of Conduct in the Vale of Glamorgan Council Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2022, Ethics and Standards training covered the Members' Code of Conduct and all 54 Elected Members were recorded as having attended one of these sessions between 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 and 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2022. All 54 Elected Members had signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office agreeing to observe the Code and all declarations were retained within the Democratic Services office.
- 2.6** A report was presented to the Democratic Services Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 which provided an update on the Members Induction and Development Programme. This stated that in January 2023 the programme would move to phase 4 which would include a Learning Needs Analysis. Committee is advised that the Learning Needs Analysis was completed and reported to the Democratic Services Committee at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2023.
- 2.7** Following consideration of the Analysis, the Democratic Services Committee resolved - That a draft of the autumn 2023 onwards Member Development Programme schedule be presented to the Committee prior to sharing with all Elected Members (and Co-opted Members if appropriate) once details of the programme were available.
- 2.8** Standards Committee is also advised that following the internal audit it was confirmed that all Registers of Members' Interests were in place for 54 Elected Members. All Registers of Members' interests once approved by the Monitoring Officer are also uploaded to the Council's website.
- 2.9** It was agreed by Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 that all Elected Members upon taking up their appointments to office would be required to complete a basic DBS check and that some Members who held specific roles and responsibilities completed an Enhanced DBS check. The introduction of DBS checks was to provide transparency and increase confidence in the Council on Member eligibility.
- 2.10** For the Committee's information, Training records showed that 5 Elected Members had not completed all their mandatory training by 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2022. The report that went to Democratic Services Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 highlighted this and it was recommended 'that Group Leaders be requested to ensure that all Group Members have completed all Essential Member Development Topics before 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2022.'
- 2.11** As at 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 there were 5 out of 54 elected Members yet to complete their form for their DBS check including one Member that required an enhanced check.
- 2.12** For Standards Committee's information Democratic Services and Human Resources records show that all Mandatory Training and DBS application forms have been completed.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1** The role of the Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Elected Members, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives.

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1** None as a direct result of this report.

### **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

#### **Financial**

- 5.1** None as a direct result of this report.

#### **Employment**

- 5.2** None as a direct result of this report.

#### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

- 5.3** None as a direct result of this report.

### **6. Background Papers**

None.