

**Minutes of the Meeting of GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
held remotely via video-conference on Monday, 17 January 2022**

PRESENT; Councillor Elizabeth Evans (Chair), Councillors Peter Davies MBE, Keith Evans, Rowland Rees-Evans and Prof Ian Roffe

Also in attendance: Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn, Rhodri Evans, Catherine Hughes, Gareth Lloyd and Ray Quant (Cabinet Members) Councillor Ceredig Davies, Gethin Davies, Ifan Davies, Lyndon Lloyd MBE, Dai Mason, Lynford Thomas and Wyn Thomas

Officers in attendance: Mr Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, Mr Barry Rees, Corporate Director, Mr Russell Hughes-Pickering, Corporate Lead Officer – Economy and Regeneration, Miss Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer- Democratic Services, Ms Elin Pryor, Corporate Lead Officer-Legal and Governance & Monitoring Officer; Mrs Alex Jenkins, Corporate Manager- Internal Audit, Mrs Julie Brown

Ms Hannah Rees- Governance Officer, Mr Alan Davies, Corporate Manager – Planning Services, Mrs Sarah Groves-Phillips, Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic Services and Standards Officer

Audit Wales: Ms Non Jenkins, Audit Manager and Ms Bethan Hopkins, Senior Auditor

1 Apologies

Councillor Matthew Woolfall-Jones and Gareth Davies apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2 Personal Matters

Sincere condolences were extended to Councillor Gareth Davies and his family on the loss of their son

3 Disclosures of Personal / Prejudicial interest

Councillor Rowland Rees-Evans had received a dispensation to speak only on item 4, Report on Audit Wales Review of the Planning Service Ceredigion County Council 2020-21

Councillor Peter Davies MBE had received a dispensation to speak only on item 4, Report on Audit Wales Review of the Planning Service Ceredigion County Council 2020-21

4 Report on Audit Wales Review of the Planning Service - Ceredigion County Council 2020-21

Consideration was given to the Report on Audit Wales on the review of the Council's Planning Service during April to July 2021. Ms Non Jenkins, Audit Manager & Ms Bethan Hopkins, Senior Auditor presented the report and recommendations broadly, in order to receive feedback from Members.

The Chair of the Development Control Committee, Councillor Lynford Thomas presented the views of the Committee regarding the report's

findings and expressed his disappointment that the views from the meeting between AW and Councillors were not included in the report. In response, the Audit Manager stated that their views had been collated and were included in the context of the report. It was suggested that the points raised by Councillor Thomas be sent to the Corporate Lead Officer – Economy and Regeneration to discuss with AW for a full response on each point, to then be circulated to all Members and relevant officers accordingly.

Other Members of the Committee queried and commented on the content of the report to include issues in relation to the Corporate Strategy, Sustainability and Rurality. It was emphasised that a mechanism to better demonstrate the links to the Corporate Strategy and other key strategic documents in the reports presented to the Development Control Committee was required.

The Corporate Lead Officer – Economy and Regeneration presented the Council's Management Response in detail and emphasised the importance of the work and commitment of the Task and Finish Group which had been established prior to the publication of the AW report and that significant progress had been made.

The Task and Finish group chair, Councillor Rhodri Evans summarised the work of the group and the issues discussed. He reported on the 'cooling off' process which has been established to further consider the points raised by the Development Control Committee prior to making a recommendation to the Committee for further consideration. It was noted that this process had worked very well to date.

The Chair noted the work of the Task and Finish Group, welcoming the progress made to date and noted that there was clear direction of travel for addressing the report's recommendations.

Following question from the floor, it was AGREED:-

- (i) to note the content of the Audit Wales Review of the Council's Planning Service 2020-21 and the 10 recommendations provided;
- (ii) to note the Council's Management Response and Action Plan; and
- (iii) that the Committee to be provided with an update at the March meeting, in order that the new administration in May be informed of the current position in relation to the recommendations within the report

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held
10 March 2022**

Chairman: _____

Date: _____