

Audit and Standards Committee

23rd May 2019

Internal Audit Plan 2019/20

Recommendation(s)

The Committee:

1. approves the proposed plan, and
 2. note that no changes are currently required to the Audit Charter.
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- 1 The Council has a duty to undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of their risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account relevant auditing standards.
 - 2 The role of internal audit is primarily to provide reasonable assurance to the organisation and ultimately the taxpayers that the Council maintains an effective control environment that enables them to manage its significant business risks. Internal Audit does this **by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight**. In addition to providing assurance the audit service also undertakes consultancy and advisory work designed to add value and offer insights that will improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes e.g. acting as a critical friend when process changes are being developed.
 - 3 To ensure the best use of limited audit resources audit work needs to be carefully planned. In accordance with best practice the Committee's role is to review and approve the annual internal audit work plan. The plan is developed in consultation with senior managers and takes account of the organisation's aims, strategies, key objectives, associated risks, and risk management processes (as required by internal audit standards). It also takes into account those topics which have not recently been audited or which feature in the corporate risk register or which, when last audited, received a low opinion. As usual more care has been taken to more explicitly link the internal audit plan with critical risks.
 - 4 Based upon the discussions to date and our professional judgement an indicative priority and an estimated number of days has been allocated to each potential topic. This takes into account a range of factors including: when the topic was last audited, complexity of the topic, and the level of change. The list of potential topics arising from the planning process is included in the attached audit plan document (**Appendix A**) together with those topics we are unable to cover during the year based on existing level of resources. The aim is to give a

high-level overview of audit areas. The Committee will note that as in past years whilst we are able to cover key aspects of very high risk areas we are not able to cover lower rated risks. The Committee is able to accept a plan on this basis, provided this matches its “risk appetite” for independent assurance, also recognising that management have the prime accountability for managing processes and risks (and therefore assurances can be obtained directly from them where necessary).

- 5 Good practice requires us to recognise that the plan should be responsive to changes in risks during the year and it will therefore be reviewed at intervals throughout the year to ensure it remains relevant.
- 6 The Internal Audit function is governed by its Audit Charter, which is a requirement of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and sets out the purpose, authority and responsibility of internal audit. As the Committee will appreciate, it has to be formally agreed and approved by the organisation and periodically reviewed. The Charter establishes the internal audit activity’s position within the organisation, including the nature of the service’s functional reporting relationship; authorises access to records, personnel and physical properties relevant to the performance of engagements and defines the scope of internal audit activities. In accordance with best practice the existing Audit Charter, which was updated in 2017, has been reviewed to ensure it remains appropriate and no changes are proposed at this time.
- 7 This report was also considered by Corporate Board on 2nd May 2019 and meetings with assistant directors are underway to firm up timing of individual assignments.

Background papers

1. None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): Not applicable

Other members: Not applicable