

REPORT TO AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 10th March 2021

Report of: AUDIT MANAGERS

Title: INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2021/22

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

COUNCIL

1. What is the report about?

1.1 The Audit and Governance Committee has responsibility for approving the annual Internal Audit plan and ensuring that appropriate risk assessments have been carried out when formulating the plan. This report details the proposed areas of work for the 2021/22 year.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 That the 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan be approved.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 To meet the terms of reference of the Audit and Governance committee and the Internal Audit Charter.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources.

4.1 No additional resources implications

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

The audit plan is based on a logical methodology. The proposed plan raises no concerns for the Section 151 Officer.

6. What are the legal aspects?

None identified.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

8. Report details:

- 8.1 The Internal Audit Strategy including the audit rolling plan was established in line with internal control and risk management best practice, and is used to establish the basis of the Audit Plan.
- 8.2 The final Audit Plan has been compiled using risk analysis along with information from the Council's Corporate Risk register, feedback from Strategic Management Board about their priorities and any specific concerns they may have, and also feedback from the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee. In addition, due to changes to the 2020/21 plan that were required during the year as a result of responding to the Covid19 pandemic, a number of areas have been brought forward from last year's plan.
- 8.3 Members are advised that, as a result of the work between Internal Audit and the Housing Benefits team, significant improvements in the internal control environment and improvements in the accuracy of Housing Benefit assessments has led to the Internal Audit risk assessment of Housing Benefit being reduced to medium and therefore, in accordance with the Audit Strategy will not be audited every year.
- 8.4 The detailed plan is at Appendix A

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

- 9.1 An effective internal audit is part of good governance that enables the Council to operate an effective control environment and therefore contributes to the Corporate objectives of 'A well run council' and 'Providing money for value services'.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

- 10.1 Systems of control can only ever provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that control weaknesses and irregularities do not exist, and that there are no risks of material errors, losses, fraud or breaches of laws or regulations. The Council is therefore continually seeking to improve the effectiveness of its systems of internal control.
- 10.2 Risks are further reduced by producing an annual audit plan linked to the Council's corporate risk register and prioritising the plan based on risk. Progress against the plan is reported to this Committee on a quarterly basis.

11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

- 11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
 - advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
 - foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

- 11.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.
- 11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.
- 11.4 In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because: because
- 11.4.1 The report is for information only.

12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

- 12.1 No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

13. Are there any other options?

N/A

Director David Hodgson (Chief Finance Officer)

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires:

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