

REPORT TO AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: **6th MARCH 2024**

Report of: **AUDIT MANAGERS**

Title: **INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2024/25**

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

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 2024/25 year.

2. Recommendations:

That the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan be approved.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

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

No additional resources implications

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

The plan has been developed following consultation with SMB. As the Council is hoping to join the South West Audit Partnership next year, the plan is subject to change and designed this way. Additional days will be allowed, for example for Counter Fraud work. Any changes will be brought back to the Committee for approval.

6. What are the legal aspects?

The requirement for an internal audit function is implied by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 which states, inter alia, that authorities shall 'make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall ensure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs'. Internal audit is a statutory service in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015. Members will note the reasons for the internal audit process and the process for managing risk as set out in this report together with the internal audit plan for 2023-25. Further details on the internal audit function are set out in Exeter City Council's Internal Audit Charter.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

Whilst the audit plan may be subject to change, auditor's reports are valuable because they provide independent insight/assessment of service areas ultimately leading to:

- Business/system improvements;
- Compliance with statutory requirements and regulations;
- Detection and prevention of fraud;
- Added credibility;
- Financial assurance.

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.

8.3 The detailed plan is at Appendix A

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

9.1 Good governance contributes to the Council's purpose of a "Well Run Council".

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

N/A

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:

11.4.1 The report is for information only

12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

13. Are there any other options?

N/A

Director Finance, David Hodgson

Author: Audit Managers, Helen Putt and Helen Kelvey

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires:
Democratic Services (Committees)
Room 4.36
01392 265275