

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date Written	May 2024
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Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	3 rd June 2024

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Annual Internal Audit Strategy & Plan 2024-25

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members of the Governance and Audit Committee with the Annual Internal Audit Strategy and Risk Based Audit Plan for 2024-25.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that

2.1 The Committee is recommended to consider and approve the draft Internal Audit Strategy (**Appendix A**) and draft Annual Risk Based Audit Plan for 2024-25 (**Appendix B**).

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

3.1 The United Kingdom Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (Performance Standard - 2010 Planning) provides the framework within which an internal audit plan should be compiled.

3.2 In line with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards the Head of Internal Audit must establish risk-based plans to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the organisation's goals.

3.3 To develop the risk-based plan, the Head of Internal Audit consults with senior management and obtains an understanding of the organisation's strategies, key business objectives, associated risks and risk management processes. The Head of

Internal Audit must review and adjust the plan, as necessary, in response to changes in the organisation's business, risks, operations, programmes, systems and controls.

3.4 In order to produce the Internal Audit plan the following information is taken into account:

- Corporate Risk Register;
- Corporate Plan;
- Key Financial Systems;
- Grant Claims that require Internal Audit certification;
- Follow-up reviews;
- Audit reviews that are carried forward from the previous audit plan;
- Feedback from questionnaires issued to Heads of Service;
- Results of discussions with the Senior Management Team, including the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and other senior officers as necessary.

3.5 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require a risk-based audit plan to be produced to cover the Council's overall control environment including risk, governance and internal controls as far as practicable.

3.6 Considering the sources of information noted above supports Internal Audit to achieve the following:

- Comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards in compiling the draft Annual Audit Plan;
- Enable the Governance and Audit Committee to monitor the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment of the Council for 2024-25 based on the audit reviews set out in the draft Annual Audit Plan; and
- Enables the Head of Internal Audit to form an opinion on the risk, governance and internal controls of the organisation.

3.7 Changes to the way the Council is operating since Covid-19, including any new risks as a result of remote and hybrid working have been considered and included within the draft Audit Plan for 2024-25.

4. Current Situation/Proposal

4.1 Attached at **Appendix A** is the draft Internal Audit Strategy document for 2024-25. It demonstrates how the Internal Audit Service will be delivered and developed in accordance with our Terms of Reference. The Strategy will be reviewed and updated annually in consultation with stakeholders namely the Governance and Audit Committee, Corporate Management Board, External Auditors and Senior Management.

4.2 The 2024-25 draft Annual Risk Based Internal Audit Plan of work has been formulated in compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The draft detailed plan is attached at **Appendix B**.

- 4.3 The proposed Annual Plan is flexible to allow for changing circumstances and events that may occur, such as requests to respond to new issues that may emerge.
- 4.4 Internal Audit work will be undertaken using a hybrid approach of on-site visits and meetings as required for each audit, and also remotely using video conferencing (e.g. Microsoft Teams) and digital solutions as a basis for meetings and sharing documents and data, as required by each audit.
- 4.5 The proposed plan at **Appendix B** will offer sufficient coverage to be able to provide an opinion at the end of 2024-25.
- 4.6 The Governance and Audit Committee will receive updates on how the plan is being delivered and any changes that may be required.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 5.1 There are no resource implications as a direct consequence of this report.

ANDREW WATHAN
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COUNCILLOR ANDREW BARRY
CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Audit Universe	2023-24	Internal Audit Service
Audit Planning Files	2023-24	Internal Audit Service
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No