

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Audit Committee – 26 September 2024

Report Title

Internal Audit Progress Report for the period 1st May to 31st July 2024

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This Progress Report provides the Committee with an up to date position on the Internal Audit Plan, a summary of Internal Audit work completed during the period 1st May to 31st July 2024 and the key issues that have arisen from it, along with the status of actions arising from audits. It also provides information regarding the performance of the Internal Audit function during the period.

Recommendations

That the Audit Committee is asked to:

1. Note the Internal Audit work undertaken since the last Audit Committee, 1st May to 31st July 2024, and the key issues that have arisen from it.
2. Approve the performance objectives of Internal Audit and the actions being taken by audit management in respect of meeting the performance objectives.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix A – Internal Audit Progress report and Plan 2024/25
Appendix B – Summary of work completed since the last meeting
Appendix C – Internal Audit Performance Dashboard
Appendix D – Client Satisfaction Survey responses
Appendix E – Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme
Appendix F - Investigation completed

Background Papers

Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Associated Local Government Application Note.
Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

Appendix F Partially exempt

An exemption is sought for Appendix F under Paragraph 7 (Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime)

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1. Background

- 1.1 CIPFA guidance for Audit Committees in Local Authorities gives the Audit Committee a clear role in supporting the effectiveness of the internal audit process. This role is reflected in the Terms of Reference of the committee. To fulfil this role the committee receives updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work. In addition, it receives information on performance relative to the audit plan.
- 1.2 Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require that the Head of Internal Audit reports periodically to the Audit Committee. This is reflected in the Audit Charter which provides for Progress Reports to be presented to the Audit Committee regarding the audit plan and progress against it; resource requirements; the results of audit activities; the tracking of audit recommendations; and the performance of the audit team. This report includes the position up to the end of July 2024 on the completion of the audit plan for 2023/24, commencement of the 2024/25 audit plan, the reports finalised between May and July 2024 and performance indicators for the team.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Internal Audit produced a risk-based Audit Plan for 2024/25 and presented it to the Audit Committee at its meeting on 12th March 2024. The plan is included at **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 Audit opinions and a brief summary of all audit work concluded since the last Audit Committee are set out in **Appendix B**. Fourteen audits have been finalised since the last Audit Committee. The review of current performance indicators and changes proposed are included at **Appendix C** and are summarised at Section 6.4 of **Appendix A**. Client satisfaction questionnaires and results have been included in **Appendix D**. The Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan is included at **Appendix E** and will be included in each progress report rather than annually as was previously the case. **Appendix F** sets out the findings from an investigation that has been completed.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 This report is presented to enable the Audit Committee to fulfil its responsibility for overseeing the work of Internal Audit. It provides a summary of Internal Audit work completed and the key issues arising from it for the period from 1st May to 31st July 2024 and information about the performance of the Internal Audit function during this period.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The Internal Audit plan was produced after consultation with management teams. All Internal Audit reports referred to in this report have been discussed and agreed with management in the respective service areas.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The Audit Committee is asked to receive this report at its 26th September 2024 meeting. The budget for the Internal Audit function is contained within the budget for the Finance and Customer Services Directorate.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial or procurement implications arising from this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The provision of Internal Audit is a statutory requirement for all local authorities that is set out in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015. These state:

“A relevant authority must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.”

- 7.2 Internal Audit also has a role in helping the Council to fulfil its responsibilities under s.151 of the Local Government Act 1972, which are:

“each local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs”

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from the report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 This document includes a report of progress against delivery of the Internal Audit Plan. A significant proportion of the Plan is devoted to the examination of risks facing Children and Young People’s Services and Adult Social Care.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 There are no direct Equalities and Human Rights implications arising from this report.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no direct CO₂ and Climate Change implications arising from the report.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 Internal Audit is an integral part of the Council's Governance Framework, which is wholly related to the achievement of the Council's objectives, including those set out in the Council Plan.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 An effective Internal Audit Service helps to minimise the Council's exposure to risk.

Accountable Officer(s)

Louise Ivens, Head of Internal Audit

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