

Audit Committee

30th May 2023



Report of: Chief Internal Auditor

Title: Internal Audit 2023/24 Q2 Priorities

Ward: N/A

Officer Presenting Report: Simba Muzarurwi – Chief Internal Auditor

Recommendation

The Audit Committee review and approve the proposed Internal Audit 2023/24 Q2 priorities. In doing so, the Committee should consider:

- whether the priorities address the Committee's assurance needs;
- whether the Plan captures key areas that would be expected in Q2; and
- whether there are any significant gaps in the Plan for Q2.

To support consideration of Q2 priorities, high level areas for potential review later in the year are also provided. Consistent with the agreed quarterly planning approach, areas for audit review in future quarters will be agreed before the start of each quarter. This will ensure audit resource is effectively targeted and coverage remains relevant and timely to the risk environment in which the council is operating.

Summary

Internal Audit have moved from annual to quarterly work planning as discussed and agreed at the January 2023 Audit Committee. This report provides the Committee with the proposed priorities for Q2.

The significant issues in the report are:

- The Q2 proposals have been developed following consultation and risk analysis
- More audit time on providing embedded assurance in the top four corporate programmes
- One of the key priorities in Q2 is to support management in the implementation of agreed management actions
- Priorities of the rest of the year will be agreed in future Committee meetings.
- The proposed Internal Audit 2023/24 Q2 priorities are Appendix 1 of this

Policy

1. Audit Committee Terms of Reference.

Consultation

2. Internal

- The Corporate Leadership Board
- Executive Member
- Executive Directorate Management Teams
- Monitoring Officer
- S.151 Officer
- Other Management

3. External

- External Auditors – Grant Thornton
- Internal Audit Strategic Partner - KPMG

Context

4. The Audit Committee has a strategic role to ensure that the Council's assurance framework is operating effectively. To this end, it should seek assurance that the key areas that contribute to this framework are operating properly.
5. The Council's Internal Audit service is a key component of the assurance framework and the Committee's Terms of Reference includes a requirement to provide independent assurance to the Council in relation to internal audit activity. The Committee need to consider if the planned Internal Audit work is appropriate and sufficient to provide the Committee with the assurance it requires. Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2013 include guidance that the Committee should review and approve the Internal Audit work plan.
6. In January 2023, the Committee approved a flexible approach to audit planning. Under this approach, we have moved from annual audit planning to quarterly audit planning which allows us to keep upcoming work under review, to ensure we are targeting audit resources to those areas in most need. It also builds in flexibility, by enabling us to respond quickly to emerging issues or to commence work on other areas of importance when risks and priorities change.
7. In March 2023, the Committee approved the Internal Audit 2023/24 Q1 priorities and received a detailed report on how audit priorities are determined.
8. The Q2 planning process has been informed by a number of factors such as the council's risk registers, relevant national issues, professional outlook, and our wider audit knowledge, including the results of recent audit work and consultation with senior management.
9. The proposed Q2 plan is at Appendix 1. Areas of key audit activities include embedded assurance in key programmes, continuous auditing and monitoring, implementation of agreed management actions, grant certifications and fraud prevention.

10. Appendix 2 provides an extensive list of areas that may require assurance in future quarters subject to ongoing risk assessments and agreement with the Committee.
11. In undertaking this work, Internal Audit comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Proposal

12. The Committee review and approve the proposed audit priorities for Quarter 2 in 2023/24. In doing so, the Committee should ensure that the proposal reflects the areas for which they will require assurance from Internal Audit in the first half of 2023/24.

Other Options Considered

13. None necessary.

Risk Assessment

14. An adequate and effective internal audit service, as well as a statutory requirement, is an integral part of good governance. A sound Internal Audit planning process minimises the risk of non-compliance with statute and good practice, and at the same time maximises the value that Internal Audit adds to the Council's governance arrangements and internal control environment.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 8a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
 - i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in

any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

8b) No equalities assessment necessary for this report.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal – Not applicable

Financial

(a) Revenue – Not applicable

(b) Capital – Not applicable

Land/Property - Not applicable

Human Resources - Not applicable

Appendices:

- **Appendix 1 – Internal Audit 2023/24 Q2 Priorities**
- **Appendix 2 – Potential Areas of Review in Q3 and Q4**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

Audit Planning Files, Corporate Strategy, Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers, Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.