

Audit Committee

09 July 2024



Title	Internal Audit Plan 2024-25
Purpose of the report	To approve
Report Author	Neil Pitman, Head of Southern Internal Audit Partnership
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Community Addressing Housing Need Resilience Environment Services
Recommendations	Committee is asked to approve the Internal Audit Plan 2024-25
Reason for Recommendation	In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), the Audit Committee are required to approve the Internal Audit Plan.

1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
Each year in conformance with Public Sector Audit standards (PSIAS) Internal Audit produces a risk-based audit plan setting out the programme of work. This aims to provide independent and objective assurance to management and the Audit Committee, in relation to the effectiveness of the framework of internal control, risk management and governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internal audit plan provides the mechanism through which the Chief Internal Auditor can ensure most appropriate use of internal audit resource to provide a clear statement of assurance on risk management, internal control, and governance arrangements. The outcomes of the audit work programme will inform the annual audit opinion for 2024/25.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In producing the Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2024/25 the Chief Internal Auditor has applied a risk-based approach in line with PSIAS and focussed on areas of higher priority that align with the Council's corporate priorities and objectives. (See Appendix A) • Consideration has been given to current and emerging risks (and opportunities) facing the Council during 2024/25, and senior management were consulted in deriving the annual plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Management Team and Group Heads to note the proposed schedule for undertaking planned assurance assignments set out at Appendix A and confirm it is agreeable. • The Audit Committee to approve the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 at the meeting of 9th July 2024. • Progressing delivery of the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25.
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1.1 This report seeks to present the Internal Audit Plan for 2024-25 in accordance with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (Appendix A).

2. Key issues

2.1 The aim of internal audit's work programme is to provide independent and objective assurance to management, in relation to the business activities, systems or processes under review that:

- The framework of internal control, risk management and governance is appropriate and operating effectively; and
- Risks to the achievement of the Council's objectives are identified, assessed, and managed to a defined acceptable level

2.2 The internal audit plan provides the mechanism through which the Chief Internal Auditor (Head of Southern Internal Audit Partnership) can ensure most appropriate use of internal audit resource to provide a clear statement of assurance on risk management, internal control, and governance arrangements.

2.3 Internal audit focus should remain proportionate and appropriately aligned to key areas of organisational risk.

2.4 All auditable areas of review remain within the audit universe and are subject to ongoing assessment. The audit plan will remain fluid to ensure that internal audit is able to react to new and emerging risks along with the changing needs of the Council.

2.5 Other reviews, based on criteria other than risk, may also be built into the work plan. These may include 'mandatory' audits or reviews requested or commissioned by management. Any commissioned review must be able to

clearly demonstrate a contribution to the audit opinion on risk management, control, and governance.

3. Options analysis and proposal

- 3.1 The Audit Committee are requested to approve the risk based Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 in line with PSIAS, to support the provision of independent assurance to the authority on the adequacy of internal control, governance and risk management arrangements.

4. Financial management comments

- 4.1 The Internal Audit Annual Plan includes reviews of functions and systems that are financially material and therefore represent greater risk to the authority. Issues presenting adverse financial consequences or threats to the Council's financial position apply to a range of workstreams on the plan.
- 4.2 To support special investigations (relating to suspected internal fraud or irregularity) there may be a requirement to bring in subject matter experts and Investigators.

5. Risk management comments

- 5.1 In producing the Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2024/25 the Chief Internal Auditor has ensured that a risk-based approach has been applied in line with audit standards (PSIAS) and focussed on areas of higher priority that align with corporate priorities and objectives. Consideration has been given to current and emerging risks (and opportunities) facing the Council during 2024/25. Due regard has been taken of the pending Best Value Inspection to avoid unnecessary duplication.

6. Procurement comments

- 6.1 None

7. Legal comments

- 7.1 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) are mandatory further to the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015. The PSIAS require public bodies to establish and deliver a risk-based internal audit plan and for this to be approved by the Audit Committee.

8. Other considerations

- 8.1 None

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 Equality and diversity are key considerations that feature in the assessment of risk and audit needs.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

10.1 Sustainability is a key consideration and features in the assessment of risk and audit needs.

11. Timetable for implementation

11.1 Applicable for the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

12. Contact

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Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A – Internal Audit Plan 2024-25