

For General Release

REPORT TO:	GENERAL PURPOSES & AUDIT COMMITTEE 25 March 2015
AGENDA ITEM:	11
SUBJECT:	Internal Audit Monitoring Report April 2014 to January 2015
LEAD OFFICER:	Head of Governance
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Simon Hall Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: Internal Audit's work helps the Council to improve its value for money by strengthening financial management and supporting risk management. Strengthening value for money is critical in improving the Council's ability to deliver services which, in turn helps the Council achieve all its visions and aims. The external auditor relies on the work from the internal audit programme when forming opinions and assessments of the Council's performance.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT The Internal Audit contract for 2014/15 is a fixed price contract of £451,000 and appropriate provision has been made within the budget for 2014/15.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to note the Internal Audit Report for April 2014 to January 2015 (Appendix 1).

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report details the work completed by Internal Audit so far during 2014/15 and the progress made in implementing recommendations from audits completed in the years 2010/11 to 2014/15.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The Internal Audit report (Appendix 1) includes the following:

- a list of all audits completed so far in 2014/15; and
- lists of follow up audits completed and the percentage of priority one, and other audit recommendations implemented.

3.2 Internal Audit is responsible for conducting an independent appraisal of all the Council's activities, financial and otherwise. It provides a service to the whole Council, including Members and all levels of management. It is not an extension of, nor a substitute for, good management. The Internal Audit Service is responsible for giving assurance on all control arrangements to the Full Council through the General Purposes & Audit Committee and the Chief Financial Officer (also known as the Section 151 Officer), who is currently the Director of Finance & Assets. It also assists management by evaluating and reporting to them the effectiveness of the controls for which they are responsible.

3.3 The results of planned internal audit work undertaken and finalised for the year to January show that only **45%** of the audits finalised to date gained full or satisfactory assurance. In line with the same period last year, the picture is, however, more nuanced than that. Only **14%** of school audits finalised to date have obtained satisfactory assurance and must result in **Limited** assurance being given for schools overall. It should be born in mind, however, that for the third year running schools are selected for audit based on a risk assessment to make the most focused use of limited audit resources. For non-school audits that have been finalised at this point in the year **73%** of these have obtained full or satisfactory assurance for which an overall assurance level of **Satisfactory** is given.

4. FOLLOW-UP REVIEWS

4.1 When Internal Audit identifies risks, recommendations are made and agreed with service managers to mitigate these. The Council then needs to ensure that action is taken to implement audit recommendations. The Council's targets for audit recommendations implemented are 80% for all priority 2 and 3 recommendations and 90% for priority 1 recommendations. The performance in relation to the targets set for 2010/14 audits are shown Table 1.

Table 1: Implementation of Audit Recommendations

	Target	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Implementation of priority one recommendations at follow-up	90%	100%	100%	97%	88%
Implementation of all recommendations at follow-up	80%	88%	93%	91%	86%

5. PROGRESS AGAINST THE AUDIT PLAN

5.1 By 31 January 2015 **79%** of the 2014/15 planned audit days had been delivered and **62%** of the draft audit reports due for the year had been issued. This follows a similar position in previous years when the contractor has gone on to deliver all of the planned work in-year. The contractor has given assurances that the necessary resources are available to achieve this again.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The outcome of all audit work is discussed and agreed with the lead service managers. The final reports and audit recommendations are sent for consideration by Departmental Management Teams (DMT). Details are circulated and discussed with Directors on a quarterly basis.

7. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The fixed price for the Internal Audit Contract is £451,000 for 2014/15 and there is adequate provision within the budget. There are no additional financial considerations relating to this report
- 7.2 Internal Audit's planning methodology is based on risk assessments that include using the Council risk registers processes.

(Approved by: Dianne Ellender, Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer)

8. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

- 8.1 The Solicitor to the Council comments that information provided in this report is necessary to demonstrate the Council's compliance with requirements imposed by Regulation 6 of the Local Government Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 which are made in accordance with Section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. The Council is required to undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with the proper practices in relation to internal control on an annual basis..

(Approved by: James Derby, Corporate Solicitor, on behalf of the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer)

9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 9.1 There are no human resources impacts arising from this report.

(Approved by: Approved by: Heather Daley, Director of HR)

10. EQUALITIES, ENVIRONMENTAL AND CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACTS

- 10.1 When Internal Audit is developing the Annual Audit Plan or individual audit programmes the impacts of the issues above are considered depending on the nature of the area of service being reviewed. Issues relating to these impacts would be reflected in the audit reports and recommendations.

CONTACT OFFICER: Simon Maddocks, Head of Governance

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: Internal Audit report for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 January 2015 (appendix 1)