

AUDIT COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 26 March 2024

TITLE OF REPORT: INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT – FEBRUARY 2024

Report of: Executive Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer

Cabinet Portfolio: Finance

Key Decision No

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Audit Committee with an overview of internal audit activity against assurance work completed in accordance with the approved audit plan and to provide an overview of the status of 'live' reports.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To note the Internal Audit Progress Report (February 2024) as attached

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Under the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, the Council is responsible for:

- ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of functions and includes arrangements for the management of risk; and
- undertaking an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards and guidance

3.2 In accordance with proper internal audit practices (Public Sector Internal Audit Standards), the Chief Internal Auditor is required to provide a written status report to the Audit Committee, summarising:

- The status of 'live' internal audit reports (outstanding management actions)
- an update on progress against the annual audit plan
- a summary of internal audit performance, planning and resourcing issues
- a summary of significant issues that impact on the Chief Internal Auditor's annual opinion.

3.3 Appendix A summarises the activities of internal audit for the period up to February 2024.

4 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

Monitoring internal audit progress in the delivery of the internal audit plan contributes towards the Corporate Plan priority of 'Building a Resilient Council'.

Service Plan

Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	Yes
Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	Yes
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

Legal and Constitutional Issues

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to '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'.

The public sector internal audit standards require that the Chief Internal Auditor provide written status report(s) to the Audit Committee

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

The internal audit service is not compliant with the public sector internal audit standards and there is a lack of clarity and transparency over the role, independence, accountability and reporting lines of the internal audit function.

5 EQUALITIES

5.1 There are no equalities issues arising from this report.

6 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations'

7 ACTION

7.1 The Internal Audit Progress Report – February 2024 is noted.

Contact Details: Neil Pitman, Head of Southern Internal Audit Partnership

Appendices

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Internal Audit Progress Report – February 2024							

Background papers: None