

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker	Audit Committee
Date:	23 July 2020
Title:	Internal Audit Plan 2020-21 & Fraud Plan 2020-21
Report From:	Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit Committee with an overview of the Internal Audit Plan 2020 – 2021 (Appendix 1) and Fraud Plan 2020 – 2021 (Appendix 2).

Recommendation(s)

2. That the Audit Committee are invited to comment on and approve the Internal Audit Plan 2020-21 and the Fraud Plan 2020 - 2021 as attached.

Contextual Information

3. In accordance with proper internal audit practices, the Chief Internal Auditor is required to provide a written report reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control and to assist in producing the Annual Governance Statement.
4. 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 County Council's objectives are identified, assessed and managed to a defined acceptable level

5. The Internal Audit Plan provides the mechanism through which the Chief Internal Auditor can ensure most appropriate use of internal audit resources to provide a clear statement of assurance on risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.
6. Internal audit focus should be proportionate and appropriately aligned, as such, only high and medium priority reviews are incorporated within the Internal Audit Plan.
7. With the unprecedented scale of COVID-19 coupled with the speed of its impact and the wide ranging challenges it has presented, the County Council have had to react promptly and positively to the complex issues raised to ensure that the essential services they provide and the best interest of the people they serve are protected and maintained. The exceptional demands this crisis has placed on the County Council has necessitated new and different ways of working to navigate the unique challenges posed.
8. Such challenges and subsequent resolutions bring with them new and emerging risks that management need to consider, manage, and mitigate. In response, the Southern Internal Audit Partnership has considered and incorporated emerging risk areas within the 2020-21 plan that more prominently present themselves or are born by the necessary or imposed actions to meet and address the crisis we currently face.
9. All low priority review areas remain within the audit universe and are reassessed on an annual basis, however, will not be routinely incorporated in the planning process if continued to be assessed as a low priority.
10. The audit plan will remain fluid to ensure internal audits ability to react to the changing needs of the County Council.
11. 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.

Performance

12. Our 'internal audit charter' ensures the Chief Internal Auditor has sufficient resource necessary to fulfil the requirements and expectations to deliver an internal audit opinion.
13. Significant matters that jeopardise the delivery of the plan, or require changes to the plan are identified, addressed and reported to the Audit Committee.

14. The internal audit team have adopted a matrix style approach to enable the delivery of the plan, by using a resource pool of multi-disciplinary auditors capable of forming into teams as audit projects determine.
15. This approach will ensure seasonal peaks in demand can be effectively managed, an appropriate level of independence in the rotation of audit reviews and the avoidance of over reliance on individual areas of expertise.
16. The Audit Plan 2020 – 21 has been developed to operate at a strategic level providing a value adding, and proportionate, level of assurance aligned to the County Council's objectives.
17. The endorsement and sponsorship of the plan(s) at member / chief officer level will assist in providing the engagement and buy-in of staff at an operational level to ensure the outcome of audit reviews are optimised.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	no
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	no
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because: <i>'Board' consideration and approval of the Internal Audit Plan, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards</i>	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Internal Audit Charter 2020-21	23 July 2020
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Equality objectives are not considered to be adversely affected by the proposals within this report.