

Audit Committee

31st May 2012

Internal Audit Progress Report Quarter Ended 31st March 2012



Report of Manager of Internal Audit & Risk

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of work carried out by Internal Audit during the period April to March 2012.
- 2 The report aims to:
 - Provide a high level of assurance, or otherwise, on internal controls operated across the Council that have been subject to audit
 - Advise you of significant issues where controls need to improve to effectively manage risks
 - Advise you of any other types of audit work carried out such as grant certification or consultancy reviews where an assurance on the control environment may not be applicable
 - Advise you of amendments to planned work
 - Advise you of unplanned work carried out or to be carried out
 - Track progress on the response to audit reports and the implementation of agreed audit recommendations
 - Advise you of any changes to the audit process
 - Provide an update on our performance indicators comparing actual performance against planned where measurable at this stage

BACKGROUND

- 3 Internal Audit is an independent, objective assurance and consultancy activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations.
- 4 To help improve the audit planning process, a revision to the annual audit planning cycle was approved by Audit Committee in February 2011. The audit planning year now covers the period July to June to allow audit plans to be developed following the approval of service plans and the MTFP.

- 5 As a consequence of this change, an interim audit plan covering the period April to June 2011 was approved by Audit Committee in March 2011.
- 6 A 5 year strategic audit plan together with the annual plan for July to June 2012 was approved by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Audit Committee on the 8th June and the 30th June 2011 respectively.
- 7 The interim plan and work programmed for the first 3 quarters of the annual plan determine the audit programme of work for the financial year 2011/12 for performance monitoring and reporting purposes to inform the annual audit opinion.
- 8 In accordance with our Internal Audit Charter, we will give an assurance opinion on the effectiveness of internal controls each time we complete an assurance review. Details of how our assurance opinions are derived are given in Appendix 3.
- 9 It is managers' responsibility to ensure that effective controls operate within their service areas. However we undertake follow up work to provide independent assurance that agreed recommendations arising from audit reviews are implemented in a timely manner.
- 10 The method of audit follow up will vary according to the priority of recommendation.
- 11 Audit recommendations are allocated a priority ranking reflecting the significance of the audit findings to which they relate. Details of how we define the significance of audit findings are also given in Appendix 2.

PROGRESS AGAINST PLANNED WORK

- 12 Details of the status of each audit as at 31st March 2012 is given below:
 - 3 of the 11 counter fraud reviews are complete and a further 5 are in progress. One has been deferred.
 - 62 out of 107 planned assurances due to be carried out this financial year are complete. A further 33 are in progress.
 - 15 out 32 planned advice and consultancy type reviews are complete and a further 13 are in progress.
 - 95 unplanned reviews have been added to the plan to address new or emerging risks. 69 of these relate to investigations.
 - All planned grant certification work is complete.
- 13 A number of unplanned audits have also been carried out this quarter to address new or emerging risks.

RESPONSE TO AGREED AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14 To provide independent assurance that adequate progress is made in the implementation of agreed recommendations at the appropriate service operational level, all high and medium recommendations contained within

actions plans within individual audit reports are followed up by internal audit. In addition, listings of all recommendations outstanding at the end of each month are produced and issued to a nominated representative to assist management monitoring processes.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 15 A summary of our actual performance compared to agreed target performance indicators is given in Appendix 3.

62 out of 107 planned assurance reviews initially scheduled to be complete by 31st March have been undertaken, (58%). However, 13 reviews expected to be undertaken in this period have been cancelled or deferred reducing the expected total to 94 (66%). In addition, 33 reviews were in progress as at 31st March. On average audits in progress are 53% complete – equivalent to a further 18 audits. Consequently, when work in progress is taken into account performance is increased to 85%. (75% is no adjustment for work deferred or cancelled).

- 16 Performance in delivering the approved audit plan covering the planning year July 2011 to June 2012 has also been calculated to demonstrate performance against the approved plan as at 31st March 2012. Actual performance is 60% including work in progress. Savings from current temporary vacancies are being utilised to bring in additional resource to address the slippage during the current quarter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 17 Members are asked to note the progress made on delivering the internal audit plan for 2011/12 to gain assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment.

Contact: Avril Wallage Tel: 0191 383 3537

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising for the Council as a result of this report, although we aim through our audit planning arrangements to review core systems in operation and ensure through our broad programme of work that the Council has made safe and efficient arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs.

Staffing

None

Risk

This report requires no decision and so a risk assessment has not been carried out

Equality and Diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and disorder

None

Human rights

None

Consultation

None

Procurement

None

Disability Discrimination Act

None

Legal Implications

None