



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 30TH JULY 2019 AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE COMMITTEE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors S. J. Baxter, A. J. B. Beaumont, S. G. Hession, J. E. King, A. D. Kriss, L. C. R. Mallett, C. J. Spencer, K. J. Van Der Plank and P. J. Whittaker

Parish Councillors: Councillor C. Scurrall

AGENDA

1. Election of Chairman
2. Election of Vice Chairman
3. Apologies for Absence and Named Substitutes
4. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Arrangements

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
5. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee meeting held on 14 March 2019 (Pages 1 - 6)
6. Standards Regime - Monitoring Officers' Report (Pages 7 - 10)
7. Dispensations Report (Pages 11 - 16)
8. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) Report (Pages 17 - 22)
9. Grant Thornton External Audit - Audit Findings Report 2018/19 - To Follow
10. Grant Thornton (external audit) Audit Fee Letter 2019/20 (Pages 23 - 28)

11. External Assessment Progress Report (Pages 29 - 46)
12. Internal Audit Plan 2019/20 (Pages 47 - 58)
13. Internal Audit - Annual Report 2018 - 19 (Pages 59 - 90)
14. Financial Savings Monitoring Report for January to March 2019 (Pages 91 - 94)
15. Statement of Accounts 2018/19 - to follow
16. Annual Appointment of Risk Management Champion for the Committee
17. Audit, Standards and Governance Committee Work Programme (Pages 95 - 96)

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

22nd July 2019

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

14TH MARCH 2019, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, S. R. Peters,
S. P. Shannon and P.L. Thomas

Observers: Councillor B. T. Cooper and Neil Preece

Officers: Mr. A. Bromage, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr C. Forrester,
Ms F. Mughal and Ms. J. Pickering

42/18 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors C. J. Bloore and M. Thompson. Members were advised that Councillor S. Shannon was in attendance as a substitute for M. Thompson.

43/18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest nor of any whipping arrangements.

44/18 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2019**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee held on 24th January, 2019 were submitted.

The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services advised the Board that the Constitution Review Working Group would be reviewing the questions from the public/candidates in March, 2019 and if deemed necessary, any changes could be included in the Constitution.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee held on 24th January, 2019 be approved as a correct record.

45/18 **STANDARDS REGIME - MONITORING OFFICERS' REPORT**

The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services presented the Monitoring Officer's report, and in doing so highlighted the following points:

- There had been no further Member complaints since the last meeting of the Committee.

- There had been no further training events held. Both the Member Development Steering Group and Constitution Review Working Group continued to meet regularly.

Members were advised that there was a training programme prepared for the new municipal year and Members were asked, if there was any additional training that was required to contact Democratic Services. Clarity was sought if it was compulsory for new Members to attend the training sessions. Members were advised that any Members that were sitting on regulatory committees would be required to have the relevant training. Members would be encouraged to attend any training that was provided to them, such as Social Media and the Code of Conduct. However, the Group Leaders had the responsibility to endorse this to Members.

RESOLVED that the Monitoring Officer's report be noted

46/18

GRANT THORNTON - EXTERNAL AUDIT - PROGRESS REPORT AND SECTOR UPDATE

Neil Preece from Grant Thornton presented the sector update and audit progress update report which outlined the key issues emerging in the public sector. It was reported that CIPFA had proposed a financial resilience index to provide reassurance to Councils who were financially stable and to highlight areas that might need further consideration in relation to financial modelling and funding.

Members were asked to note the progress work of Grant Thornton as at February 2019. It was stated that Grant Thornton was pleased with the audit work to date and had no concerns as yet. Neil Preece expressed his gratitude to the Finance team for their hard work. The Progress as at February 2019, was highlighted as follows:

- Financial Statements Audit - A detailed audit plan had been delivered, and an interim audit had taken place in January 2019. This interim audit covered areas such as the control environment, core financial systems understanding and early substantive testing.
- Value for Money - There was one significant value for money risk identified which was the financial sustainability of the Council and audit work was currently being undertaken with regards to this.
- Other areas - Regular meetings with finance staff were taking place to ensure emerging issues were identified at an early stage.

Grant Thornton further reported that relevant training had been delivered to the Finance Team which had been well received.

Councillor B Cooper, Portfolio Holder of Finance and Enabling reiterated the hard work undertaken by the Finance team.

Neil Preece reassured the Committee that Bromsgrove District Council was in a strong position with regards to financial stability compared to other Councils and that the Council would have a significant reserve after the next four years.

Grant Thornton explained that they could not offer financial advice to the Council. However, the Council could contact other audit firms to seek financial advice.

RESOLVED that the Grant Thornton Sector Update and Audit Progress Report be noted.

47/18

INTERNAL AUDIT - PROGRESS REPORT

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Services presented a report that informed the Committee of the outcomes of the performance for the period of 1st April, 2018 to 31st January, 2019.

The report highlighted the review for Treasury Management which identified some of the areas of the system that were working well and where controls could be strengthened. Members noted that the report made reference to Redditch Borough Council in relation to the audit testing and that this needed to be amended Bromsgrove District Council.

Members noted the delivery against Internal Audit Plan for 2018/19 1st April 2018 to 31st January 2019 and the key performance indicators.

It was reported that there had been significant improvements to the follow up and assurance was given to the Committee that appropriate actions were in place to ensure that management continued to monitor the progress of implementation.

The Committee considered the Internal Audit Progress Report - 1 September to 28 October 2018. The details were set out in the report.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were made:

- Responses from managers with regards to the outstanding audit recommendations had been received;
- It was agreed at SMT that management responses and final approval should be received by Audit within ten working days;
- Further information on ongoing audits would be presented to the next meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee meeting.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Progress Report be noted.

48/18

INTERNAL AUDIT - AUDIT PLAN 2019/20

The Head of the Internal Audit Shared Service presented the Audit Plan Report 2019/20. Members were informed that at the last Senior Management Team meeting, the management had suggested some amendments to be made. During the presentation of this report a number of key points were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- Additional areas in relation to Business Continuity, Leisure Contract management and markets were to be included in the plan;
- Benefits audits included the customer journey to ensure the service supported claimants

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Plan be noted.

49/18

FINANCIAL SAVINGS MONITORING REPORT

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources presented the Financial Savings Monitoring Report 2018/19 covering the period April to December. This report provided Members with details of the savings delivered and projected for the full year against those identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

It was reported that £580k of savings had been identified for the financial year 2018/19; with a risk around £2k of savings from additional cross boundary partnership working.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were highlighted:

- That the Council would have a balance budget at the end of the financial year 2023/24. The Council was in a better financial position compared with other Councils.
- The Council had no unidentified savings.

RESOLVED that the financial position for savings be noted.

50/18

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Financial Services Manager presented the proposed accounting policies to be used for the closure of the 2018/19 accounts. This was prepared in line with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2018/19 (the Code).

There were three significant changes to the accounting policies:

- The Going Concern assumption under general principles had been updated to clarify that it was still relevant in the case of local government re-organisation.
- Accruals of Income and Expenditure had been retitled 'Revenue and Expenditure Recognition' and rewritten to reflect the requirements of IFRS 15 (Revenue from contracts with Customers). The key change being that income was only recognised as received when all specific performance obligations had been satisfied.
- Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities had been amended to reflect the changes of IFRS 9 (Financial Instruments), however this would not affect the Council.

In response to a Member's question it was stated that the local authority made a contribution to the Worcestershire Pension Fund. It was further stated that the contribution rates were set and the scheme was administered by Worcestershire County Council.

RESOLVED that the Council's proposed Accounting Policies be approved and adopted in completing the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts

51/18 **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19**

The Chairman presented the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's Annual Report 2018/19. Members were advised that the report outlined the Committee's activities during the municipal year. The Chairman would present the report for Members' consideration at a meeting of Council in June 2019.

Members expressed concern that the comprehensive work of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee was not reflected in the annual report.

Councillor Cooper reiterated that Members did raise concerns at Council meeting last year that the report did not give a true reflection of the work carried out by the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.

RESOLVED that the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's Annual Report 2017/18 be noted

52/18 **DRAFT ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF RISK CHAMPION - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources advised the Committee that the role and responsibilities of the Risk Champion had been reviewed in order to look at best practice. This would be incorporated in the Internal Audit Report and subsequently submitted to the Committee in the new municipal year for Members' consideration.

53/18 **AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Members received the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee Work Programme for 2018/19.

Councillor Colella extended his thanks to all Members of the Committee and officers for their contribution to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.

RESOLVED that the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee work programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.

Chairman

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MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro (for Governance)
Portfolio Holder consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Wards affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor consulted	N/A

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report sets out the position in relation to key standards regime matters which are of relevance to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee since the last meeting of the Committee in March 2019.
- 1.2 It is proposed that a report of this nature be presented to each meeting of the Committee to ensure that Members are kept updated with any relevant standards matters.
- 1.3 Any further updates arising after publication of this report, including any relevant standards issues raised by the Parish Councils' Representative(s), will be reported on orally by Officers/the Parish Representative(s) at the meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That, subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Localism Act became law on 15th November 2011. Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 ('the Act') introduced a new standards regime effective from 1st July 2012. The Act places a requirement on authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted (with voting rights) Members of an authority. The Act also requires the authority to have in place arrangements under which allegations that either a district or parish councillor has breached his or her Code of Conduct can be investigated, together with arrangements under which decisions on such

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allegations can be made. The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 were laid before Parliament on 8th June 2012 and also came into force on 1st July 2012.

Service / Operational Implications

Member Complaints

- 3.3 There have been no member complaints reported to the Monitoring Officer since the last meeting of the Committee and there are no complaints currently outstanding.

Member training

- 3.4 The following sessions have been delivered as part of the induction programme for Members since the local elections in May 2019:
- Induction night, which provided an opportunity for new Members to meet with the Corporate Management Team.
 - Planning training, which was a joint training session with Redditch Borough Council.
 - Licensing training, provided to Members of the Licensing Committee.
 - Code of conduct training.
 - Overview and Scrutiny training.
- 3.5 Both the Member Development Steering Group and the Constitution Review Working Group continue to meet regularly.
- 3.6 The Member Development Steering Group is currently carrying out a review of Members' use of IT equipment and its suitability.
- 3.7 The Constitution Review Working Group reviewed the Licensing Code of Practice, Members' role Descriptors and the role of the Worcestershire Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in respect of Members' allowances at a meeting in April 2019.
- 3.8 The Constitution Review Working Group continues to working very effectively in enabling constructive changes to the constitution to be made and in keeping all Members informed.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.9 There are no direct implications arising out of this report. Details of the Council's arrangements for managing standards complaints under the

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Localism Act 2011 are available on the Council's website and from the Monitoring Officer on request.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- Risk of challenge to Council decisions; and
- Risk of complaints about elected Members.

5. APPENDICES

None.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Claire Felton

Email: c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

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LOCALISM ACT 2011 – STANDARDS REGIME – DISPENSATIONS

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To consider the granting of any new Individual Member Dispensations (IMDs) requested by Members up to the point of the meeting, and which will be detailed by the Monitoring Officer at the meeting.
- 1.2 To consider granting General Dispensations and Outside Body Appointment Dispensations, to remain valid until the first meeting of the Committee following the District Council Elections in 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) **any Individual Member Dispensations (IMDs) and Outside Body Appointments dispensations requested by Members up to the point of the meeting, and as advised by the Monitoring Officer at the meeting, be granted under section 33 (2) of the Localism Act 2011, to allow those Member(s) to participate in and vote at Council and Committee meetings in the individual circumstances detailed;**
- 2) **the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee grant a dispensation under Section 33 (2) of the Localism Act 2011 to allow Members to address Council and Committees in circumstances where a member of the public may elect to speak;**

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- 3) subject to the caveat set out in paragraph 3. of this report in relation to setting the Council's Budget, the Audit, Standards and Committee grants dispensations under Section 33 (2) of the Localism Act 2011 to allow all Members to participate in and vote at Council and Committee meetings when considering the setting of:
 - a) the Budget;
 - b) Council Tax;
 - c) Members' Allowances; and
 - d) Non-Domestic Rates – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy and Guidance affecting properties within the District;
- 4) it be noted that all dispensations granted by the Committee take effect on receipt of a written request from Members for such a dispensation and where Members may have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the matter under consideration, which would otherwise preclude such participation and voting; and
- 5) it be noted that the dispensations referred to at resolutions (1), (2) and (3) will remain valid until the first meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee following the next District Council Elections in 2023.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 None.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 provides that dispensations can be granted in respect of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests ("DPIs").
- 3.3 Section 33 (1) requires that a Member must make a written request for a dispensation.
- 3.4 Section 33 (3) provides that a dispensation must specify the period for which it has effect and that period may not exceed 4 years.

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Service / Operational Implications

Background

- 3.5 Under s31 (4) of the Localism Act 2011 a Member who has a DPI in a matter under consideration is not permitted to participate in the discussion or vote on the matter unless s/he has first obtained a dispensation under s33.
- 3.6 Section 33 (2) includes a number of situations where a dispensation can be considered, but should be granted "only if, after having regard to all relevant circumstances" the Committee considers that one of those situations applies. The consideration of whether to grant a dispensation under s33 was previously delegated to the former Standards Committee.
- 3.7 The statutory grounds under s33 (2) for the granting of a dispensation are where the authority –
- “(a) considers that without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited by section 31(4) from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business,
 - (b) considers that without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business,
 - (c) considers that granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority’s area,
 - (d) if it is an authority to which Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 applies and is operating executive arrangements, considers that without them dispensation each member of the authority’s executive would be prohibited by section 31(4) from participating in any particular business to be transacted by the authority’s executive, or
 - (e) considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.”
- 3.8 Since the introduction of the current standards regime in 2012, the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee has been responsible for considering the granting of dispensations in circumstances where the Monitoring Officer feels that a dispensation may be warranted. This function was previously carried out by the former Standards Committee.

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- 3.9 Dispensations, all of which require the advance approval of the Committee and a subsequent written request from the Member to the Monitoring Officer, currently fall within three categories:
- (i) General Dispensations
 - (ii) Council Tax Arrears
 - (iii) Individual Member Dispensations
 - (iv) Outside Body Appointment Dispensations
- 3.10 It should be noted that under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 there is a caveat that any Member who is 2 months (or more) in arrears with their Council Tax payments cannot participate in any Council meeting concerning the budget. In the event that any Members were affected by the provisions of section 106, the statutory rule that they be barred from taking part in the budget decisions would prevail and any dispensation granted under this report would not apply.
- 3.11 The table below sets out the IMDs and Outside Body appointment dispensations that have been requested by Members. Further requests for dispensations may be made after the publication of the agenda for this meeting and will be reported by the Monitoring Officer for Members' consideration. Subject to approval by the Audit, standards and governance committee, these dispensations will apply until the next District Council elections in 2023.

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Councillor(s)	Relevant DPI	Reason for dispensation
S Baxter	Chairman of the National Association of local Councils.	To allow participation in debates involving Parish Councils within the district.
S Baxter	President of the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils.	To allow participation in debates involving Parish Councils within the district.
L. Mallett	Officer for Unison or spouse/partner to officer for Unison	To allow participation in debates concerning employment / staffing issues in relation to the authority
L. Mallett	Employee of CLIC Sargent	To allow participation in discussions in respect of the impact of cancer on children and young people.
A. Beaumont, S. Douglas, .J King, and S. Webb	Amphlett Hall Management Committee	To allow participation in debates concerning the Amphlett Hall generally but not in relation to funding issues.
S. Webb	Bromsgrove and Redditch Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	To allow participation in debates concerning the CAB generally but not in relation to funding issues.
S. Douglas, M. Glass, H. Rone-Clarke, M. Sherrey, P. Whittaker	The Artrix Holding Trust (Bromsgrove Arts Development Trust)	To allow participation in debates concerning the Artrix theatre generally but not in relation to funding issues.
C. Spencer	The Artrix Operating Trust (Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust – charitable company)	To allow participation in debates concerning the Artrix Theatre generally but not in relation to funding issues.

- 3.12 In relation to IMDs, Officers have contacted all Members to ask whether they wish to seek to add any dispensations.

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Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.16 None.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The granting of general dispensations by the Committee will, subject to receipt of a written request from Members for such a dispensation, clarify, for the avoidance of any doubt, Members' ability to participate in and vote at Council and Committee meetings on certain matters as part of the Council's decision-making process, where such Members have a DPI which would otherwise preclude them from so participating / voting.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.
- Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- Reports to Standards Committee on 28th November 2012, 10th October 2013, 9th January 2014 and 9th October 2014.
- Reports to Audit, Governance and Standards Committee on 16th July 2015, 16th June 2016, 15th June 2017 and 23rd July 2018.
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AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Jess Bayley
Title: Senior Democratic Services Officer
Email: jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 64252 Ext: 3268

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REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Wards affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council, along with other public bodies, has powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 [“RIPA”] to carry out covert surveillance in certain circumstances.
- 1.2 The Council has recently undergone a review of its RIPA policy and activity by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner’s Office.
- 1.3 This report is to update members on the outcome of that review and to comply with the requirement set out at 1.3 below. It is proposed that a report of this nature be presented annually to the Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

2.1 the Council’s RIPA Policy as reviewed, be endorsed; and

2.2 the update on RIPA activity be noted.

NOTE Members are requested to read and review the Council’s policy electronically. There will be a hard copy available on the evening of the committee meeting and beforehand in the Members’ room.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Policy is lengthy and costly to print, so a small number of printed copies will be made available in the Members’ Room.

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- 3.2 There will be a cost to providing the training that has been recommended by the Commissioner.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 [“RIPA”] gave local authorities powers to conduct covert surveillance under certain circumstances. The Act also regulates the use ‘Covert Human Intelligence Sources’ [“CHIS”] and obtaining certain Communications Data.
- 3.3 Local Authority powers are at the lower end of the scale and changes in legislation since the Act was originally introduced, have resulted in further restrictions on their use:
- the use of surveillance was restricted to criminal investigations and in 2012;
 - the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 introduced a requirement for local authorities to obtain approval from the Magistrates Court for any proposed surveillance activity;
 - A threshold for the level of crime being investigated was raised to include only ‘serious crime’ (as defined).
- 3.4 The regime is overseen by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner’s Office, and includes inspections of organisations by an Inspector appointed by the Commissioner, usually about every three years.
- 3.5 The revised Code of Practice for Covert Surveillance and Property Interference 2018 (paragraph 4.47) advised that elected members should at least on an annual basis review the RIPA policy and the authority’s use of the Act.
- 3.6 Any organisation which had investigatory powers under RIPA is required to have in place a Policy governing all aspects of the regime, including the need for updating and officer training, regardless of whether the powers are exercised. The Council’s Policy is regularly updated to comply with any changes in the legislation, guidance and codes of practice which apply to the regime. Changes are notified to the Council by an external trainer and RIPA expert, who also provides training and advice on RIPA issues.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.7 From the outset, the Council’s use of RIPA powers was always low. There are a number of reasons for this: A rigid process has to be followed to establish that a proposed surveillance activity is both “necessary” and

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“proportionate”; a senior officer has to evaluate the proposal against a number of criteria and would now have to be referred to the Magistrates Court to be confirmed. Then there would have been major resource implications for any authorised surveillance to have been undertaken.

3.8 Since the changes introduced in 2012 as described in 3.3 above, the Council has not exercised its powers under RIPA at all. The Surveillance Commissioner has noted that in recent years authorities like ours have granted far fewer RIPA authorisations and some have granted none at all in the last three years. The reasons include the legislative changes and also reduced resources, greater access to data-matching and overt, rather than covert law enforcement,

3.9 At the time of the Council’s last physical inspection, in 2015, RIPA powers had not been exercised by the Council since 2012. This year, a further three years on, during which no RIPA activity had been undertaken, the Surveillance Commissioner notified the Council in January that he was taking a more flexible approach to inspections and would decide on the basis of a pre-assessment questionnaire, whether a physical inspection was required.

3.10 On the basis of the responses to the questionnaire, the Commissioner advised that a physical inspection would not be required. However, there were a number of points of feedback that he made, as follows:

- 1) Acknowledgement that whilst RIPA awareness training has been undertaken and is refreshed with staff on an annual basis, there is a clear need to have training delivered forthwith to those staff within the Trading Standards services, and in order that those who are most likely to engage RIPA powers remain “match fit”.

Trading Standards are enforced by Worcestershire Regulatory Services. The Head of WRS has been advised of this recommendation for him to organise.

- 2) The revised Code of Practice for Covert Surveillance and Property Interference 2018 (paragraph 4.47) advised that elected members should at least on an annual basis review the RIPA policy and the authority’s use of the Act: Hence this report.
- 3) A reminder of the importance of regular, ongoing internal oversight of the actual or potential use of these powers, which should be managed through your Senior Responsible Officer. The Inspector advised that officers need to maintain their levels of training lest, however remote a possibility it may appear, the powers need to be used.

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The Senior Responsible Officer [SRO] is Jayne Pickering, Director of Finance and Resources, who holds meeting every six months to review any RIPA issues, consider any training or other issues relating to RIPA. These meetings used to take place quarterly, but due to the lack of RIPA activity, the SRO decided that twice a year would be sufficient. The Inspector has been advised of this and has not raised a concern.

- 4) The Inspector also drew attention to the increasing usefulness and accessibility of social media, which can offer initial investigative leads and assist with your enforcement or other responsibilities, but it behoves you to ensure that such resources as these are used in a controlled, auditable, and well understood manner.

The Council is extremely vigilant in reminding officers of the risks attached to checking social media and possible inadvertently straying into “surveillance” territory because the Council is regarded as “the State” when it comes to looking at people’s social media platforms to glean information about them for investigatory purposes. This is included in annual data-protection refresher training for all staff and is also included periodically in the staff newsletter.

- 3.11 It is not possible for the Council to ‘opt out’ of the RIPA regime, which means that although we have not used these powers for years, we are still required by the Commissioner to keep our officers briefed on it, aware of its potential use and crucially, trained in the completion of applications and their approval.
- 3.12 The Council is a member of the National Anti-Fraud Network [NAFN], which is hosted by Thameside MBC and which provides data and intelligence services under the RIPA regime to public sector organisations in relation to fraud investigations. Over 90% of local authorities are members of NAFN. Membership enables the Council to avail of its expertise, without having to have our own staff for the purpose.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.13 There are no direct implications arising out of this report, providing information to elected members and seeking their approval of the Council’s RIPA policies and procedures.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

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The Council is required to comply with the statutory provisions and guidance governing the RIPA regime and any recommendation made by the Inspector. on behalf of the Commissioner.

Officers need to be aware of the RIPA powers so that there is no risk of surveillance or CHIS activity being undertaken without the correct approvals being in place.

5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Council's RIPA Policy

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Clare Flanagan, Principal Solicitor.
Email: clare.flanagan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 64252 Ext: 3173

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AUDIT STANDARDS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 30th July 2019

GRANT THORNTON – AUDIT FEE LETTER 2019/20

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering – Executive Director Finance and Resources
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non–Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To present Members with the Audit Fee letter for 2019/20 from the Councils External Auditors Grant Thornton and to approve the level of fee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that the fee be agreed.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The 2019/20 budget assumes the level of fee of £37,484 as set in the attached letter. The fee in relation to the Housing Benefit Grant certification is to be confirmed.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 None as a direct result of this report. The Council currently has a contract with Grant Thornton to provide the External Audit service. This continues to the audit of the 2019/20 accounts.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3 External Auditors have a duty to carry out all work necessary to meet their statutory responsibilities in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice.
- 3.4 The areas of work include
- Audit of Financial Statements
 - Value for Money Conclusion
 - Work on Whole Of Government Accounts

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Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.5 There are no implications arising out of this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 As part of all audit work the auditors undertake a risk assessment to ensure that adequate controls are in place within the Council so reliance can be placed on internal systems.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Grant Thornton Audit Fee Letter

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Individual internal audit reports.

7. KEY

N/a

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Chris Forrester
E Mail: chris.forrester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: 01527-881673

Our ref: 2019-20 audit fee

Jayne Pickering
Executive Director
Bromsgrove District Council
Parkside
Market Street
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

15 April 2019

Grant Thornton UK LLP
The Colmore Building
20 Colmore Circus
Birmingham
B4 6AT
T +44 (0)121 212 4000
F +44 (0)121 212 4014

Dear Jayne

Planned audit fee for 2019/20

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) provides the framework for local public audit. Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) has been specified as an appointing person under the Act and the Local Authority (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 and had the power to make auditor appointments for audits of opted- in local government bodies from 2018/19.

For opted- in bodies PSAA's responsibilities also include setting fees and monitoring the quality of auditors' work. Further information on PSAA and its responsibilities are available on the [PSAA website](#).

All grant work, including housing benefit certification, falls outside the PSAA contract, as PSAA no longer has the power to make appointments for assurance on grant claims and returns. Any assurance engagements will therefore be subject to separate engagements agreed between the grant-paying body, the Council and ourselves and separate fees agreed with the Council.

Scale fee

PSAA published the 2019/20 scale fees for opted-in bodies at the end of March 2019, following a consultation process. Individual scale fees have been maintained at the same level as in 2018/19, unless there were specific circumstances which required otherwise. Further details are set out on the [PSAA website](#). The Council's scale fee for 2019/20 has been set by PSAA at £37,484 which is the same as in 2018/19.

PSAA prescribes that 'scale fees are based on the expectation that audited bodies are able to provide the auditor with complete and materially accurate financial statements, with supporting working papers, within agreed timeframes'.

The audit planning process for 2019/20, including the risk assessment, will continue as the year progresses and fees will be reviewed and updated as necessary as our work progresses.

Scope of the audit fee

There are no changes to the overall work programme for audits of local government audited bodies for 2019/20. Under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office (NAO) is responsible for publishing the statutory Code of Audit Practice and guidance for auditors.

Audits of the accounts for 2019/20 will be undertaken under this Code. Further information on the NAO Code and guidance is available on the [NAO website](#).

The scale fee covers:

- our audit of your financial statements;
- our work to reach a conclusion on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources (the value for money conclusion); and
- our work on your whole of government accounts return (if applicable).

PSAA will agree fees for considering objections from the point at which auditors accept an objection as valid, or any special investigations, as a variation to the scale fee.

Value for Money conclusion

The Code requires us to consider whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This is known as the Value for Money (VfM) conclusion.

The NAO issued its latest guidance for auditors on value for money work in November 2017. The guidance states that for local government bodies, auditors are required to give a conclusion on whether the Council has put proper arrangements in place.

The NAO guidance identifies one single criterion for auditors to evaluate:

In all significant respects, the audited body had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.

Billing schedule

Fees will be billed as follows:

Main Audit fee	£
September 2019	9,371
December 2019	9,371
March 2020	9,371
June 2020	9,371
Total	37,484

Outline audit timetable

We will undertake our audit planning and interim audit procedures in January to March. Upon completion of this phase of our work we will issue a detailed audit plan setting out our findings and details of our audit approach. Our final accounts audit and work on the VfM conclusion will be completed in June and July and work on the whole of government accounts return in July.

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Phase of work	Timing	Outputs	Comments
Audit planning and interim audit	January to March	Audit plan	The plan summarises the findings of our audit planning and our approach to the audit of the Council's accounts and VfM.
Final accounts audit	June & July	Audit Findings (Report to those charged with governance)	This report sets out the findings of our accounts audit and VfM work for the consideration of those charged with governance.
VfM conclusion	January to March	Audit Findings (Report to those charged with governance)	As above.
Whole of government accounts	July	Opinion on the WGA return	This work will be completed alongside the accounts audit.
Annual audit letter	September	Annual audit letter to the Council	The letter will summarise the findings of all aspects of our work.

Our team

The key members of the audit team for 2019/20 are:

	Name	Phone Number	E-mail
Engagement Lead	Richard Percival	0121 232 5434	richard.d.percival@uk.gt.com
Engagement Manager	Neil Preece	0121 232 5292	neil.a.preece@uk.gt.com
In Charge Auditor	Denise Mills	0121 232 5306	Denise.F.Mills@uk.gt.com

Additional work

The scale fee excludes any work requested by the Council that we may agree to undertake outside of our Code audit. Each additional piece of work will be separately agreed, and a detailed project specification and fee agreed with the Council.

Quality assurance

We are committed to providing you with a high quality service. If you are in any way dissatisfied or would like to discuss how we can improve our service, please contact me in the first instance. Alternatively, you may wish to contact Mark Stocks, our Public Sector Assurance regional lead partner, via mark.c.stocks@uk.gt.com.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard".

Richard Percival
Engagement Lead
For Grant Thornton UK LLP

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EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT UPDATE REPORT.

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Chris Forrester, Financial Services Manager
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non–Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1 To present:

- An update on implementation progress made against the 2017/18 External Assessment.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 **The Committee is asked to note the report and implementation progress.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

Legal Implications

3.2 The Council is required under Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 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”.

Service / Operational Implications

3.3 To provide an update from the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service in regard to the implementation progress made against the Internal Audit External

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Assessment that took place during the 2017/2018 financial year. The involvement of Members in progress monitoring is considered to be an important facet of good corporate governance, contributing to the internal control assurance given in the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

- 3.4 Tilia Solutions were appointed for the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service Assessment. The review was undertaken by the independent assessor during early October 2017 and a report was produced identifying areas which would enhance the Internal Audit Service provision overall. The final report was presented on the 20th October 2017. The report was presented to the Client Officer Group during November 2017.
- 3.5 A progress report was brought before Committee for information approximately 12 months ago with the understanding that regular reporting would be undertaken until the areas identified were satisfactorily completed.

External Assessment.

- 3.6 Although not a statutory requirement all Internal Audit Services are obliged to comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards as amended and undergo an independent external assessment every 5 years to ensure compliance with the Standards.

Progress to June 2019.

- 3.7 The action plan was broken down into three elements; recommendations, compliance and suggestions. A summary of these can be found in **Appendix 1**. This shows that all action points raised by the external assessment have now been addressed. All improvements outlined in the summary will be maintained until the next assessment, which is due in 2021/22, although WIASS will continue to seek ongoing improvement through the Client Officer Group and its service planning processes.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

There are no implications arising out of this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The main risk associated with the details included in this report is:

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the continuous provision of an internal audit service is not maintained to a required standard.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 ~ Action Plan Summary

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Tilia Solutions Assessment Report

7. KEY

N/a

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Andy Bromage
Head of Internal Audit Shared Service - Worcestershire Internal
Audit Shared Service
E Mail: andy.bromage@worcester.gov.uk
Tel: 01905 722051

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Appendix 1

Action Plan and Position as at June 2019

Key:

Completed
Ongoing
Not Started

Recommendations:

No.	Recommendation	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
R1	Include a requirement in each anti-fraud and corruption policy to inform the HIASS of all suspected frauds	Anti-fraud and corruption policies to be updated as appropriate. Request to be made to update policies.	By Dec 2017	All partners have been contacted in regard to current policies. Actions are dependant on position and planned updates. Policies mainly require a small tweak of the current wording to satisfy this recommendation but no immediate risk presenting itself. Partners will address this issue fully when update cycles permit.	
R2	Safeguards, including independent audit arrangements, should be put in place to manage audit's independence and objectivity where they carry out non-audit activities and these should be	Independence is managed closely within the team e.g. different people working on areas and not auditing those areas, annual conflict	Circa June 2018. Ongoing - to be included in the annual reporting cycle for all Partners.	Safeguarding, independence and integrity included in the 2018 Charter	

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No.	Recommendation	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
	discussed with and approved by the relevant audit committees. They should be included in the Audit Charter	of interest checks, quality assurance, quality assurance in process and Team Leader & HIA consideration. Charter will be updated and discussion can take place with Cttee on an annual basis with safeguards specifically identified.			
R3	Ensure fraud risks are considered more extensively in planning audits and give audit staff support to enable them to do this	The planning area of audit work as well as the annual plan was identified as an area that required transforming in May 2017 and a paper was placed before COG setting out how WIASS was to improve this. WIASS will indicate clearly the potential fraud risks and include in the brief. There will also be a greater emphasis on risk focus. Workshops undertaken re.	Apr-18	November 2017 (https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z_of_fraud) advised to all Auditors November 2017 via email so that full use can be made of it and the benefits it can provide going forwards. February 2018 Team Meeting advised that expected to use website and other resource as part of the planning element so there is more extensive consideration of this aspect in all the reviews undertaken. Has become an intrinsic part of the brief.	

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No.	Recommendation	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
		Service transformation during 2017 along with methodology impact therefore part of consideration.			
R4	<p>In discussion with the auditee, broaden individual audit planning to cover the matters indicated and record the relevant matters on the audit brief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Achievement of the organisation's strategic objectives o Strategies and objectives of the activity under review o Reliability and integrity of financial and operational information o Risks to the activity under review o Risk management arrangements <p>Governance arrangements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Making strategic and operational decisions o Overseeing risk management and control o Promoting appropriate ethics and values o Ensuring effective organisational performance 	<p>The planning area of audit work as well as the annual plan was identified as an area that required transforming in May 2017 and a paper was placed before COG setting out how WIASS was planning to improve this. WIASS looked at broadening the audit brief to make it more succinct and linked in to corporate priorities and strategic objectives. A greater emphasis on risk focus was also to be included. During 2017 workshops held re. Service transformation and methodology impact therefore part of consideration.</p>	Circa June 2018	<p>November 2017 onwards: Completely new approach adopted for annual planning. 2018/19 planning went through SMT with a key emphasis on risk and linkage to corporate priorities /promises as well as corporate and service risk registers as well as service plans. Plans signed off at SMT level for all Partners with HIASS in attendance to present the plan(s). This methodology continues to be used.</p> <p>February 2018 onwards: February 2018 Team Meeting introduced the revised methodology and talked through the annual plan approach. Team expected to deploy new method of working, use methodology and deliver audits on time and within budget as the process has been significantly streamlined without losing the integrity of the working papers.</p> <p>01 June 2018 onwards: Revised methodology key point of discussion on Team Meeting agenda to review how revision is working, and to identify any further points for</p>	

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No.	Recommendation	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
	management and accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Communicating risk and control information to appropriate areas of the organisation o Effectiveness and efficiency of operations and programmes o Safeguarding of assets o Compliance with laws, regulations, policies, procedures and contracts o Potential errors and non-compliance o Opportunities for value for money and to make improvements in the activity's processes. 			consideration and development. Development of methodology has continued through team discussion and feedback from Partner's and will continue to do so. New methodology is now embedded and has been used for 12 months. May 2019: Methodology continues to evolve.	
R5	Undertake self-assessments against the LGAN and PSIAS	To be undertaken annually. To commence at the end of 2018/19.	Self Assessment towards end of 2018/19 after transformation has taken place. Diarised for early February 2019 with reporting to be included as part of the annual report cycle for all Partners.	Self assessment completed April 2019. Plan to evidence them as the new years documents emerge and others will be checked for continuing relevance. Updates to text and hyperlinks made on an ongoing basis with self assessment completed annually.	Links to R6
R6	Ensure that the results of self-assessments against PSIAS are reported to audit committees and CoG, together	Self-assessment results to be reported to COG and Cttee as part of annual	Circa July 2019 To be included as part of the annual report cycle and overall	Self assessment completed April 2019. Self assessment completed on an evidence based approach, and to be	Links to R5

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No.	Recommendation	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
	with the action planned so that these bodies can monitor progress	reporting. To commence at the end of 2018/19 financial year and for reporting 2019/20.	assurance provision to those in governance of the integrity of WIASS as a service.	reported as part of the annual reporting cycle for 2018/19.	
R7	Ensure audit plans are driven by each client's strategic objectives and priorities and refer to all the required areas	See recommendation response at 4.	April 2018 onwards	Completed as part of the 2018/19 planning process; direct links established between corporate risk register, service risk register and Corporate Strategies. Links included in the plan for transparency. Paragraph included in committee reports as to the process followed in the formulation of the plan and the resource requirements.	
R8	The HoIASS should have regular meetings with senior management teams to consult on items for inclusion in the annual plan, activities against the plan, any significant issues (fraud, risks, governance, etc.) that may have wider relevance and year-end outcomes	Although HoIASS has engaged in the past in regard to the annual plans with Head of Service, s151's, arrangements to attend Senior Management Team meetings as part of the process will be arranged.	Immediate action i.e. for 18/19 Plan and ongoing.	Established that HoIASS now regularly attending SMT or equivalent at Partner organisations.	
R9	Include examination of ethical issues in all relevant audits, bringing this work together at the year end to form an opinion on ethical activities	To become part of the brief and then report outcomes in annual report.	During 2018/19 & circa June 2019 opinions.	<u>Culture and Ethics\Auditing Culture and Ethics.docx</u> Embedded in the working papers of the reviews.	
R10	Include work on IT governance in the audit plan, buying in expertise if necessary	To seek assurance on this from other work undertaken within IT	Nov 17 COG.	Discussed at November 2017 COG. Assurance from existing arrangements e.g. ethical hacking, etc, but audit	

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No.	Recommendation	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
		(i.e. third-party assurances), along with external audit work and consider whether it is sufficient. Buying in a resource will have resource implications.		budgets to be included in the 18/19 plans for non technical audit work.	
R11	Finalise the Place Partnership agreement as a matter of urgency	Agreed. November 2017 with WCC Legal who are continuing to work on Agreement.	Draft to be available w/c 13/11/17 for PPL consideration. Finalisation circa end of December 2017.	Contract retendered during 2018/19 therefore events overtook this action. No further requirement/action to be taken in regard to this recommendation.	
R12	Combine the current planning documents and broaden them to create a work programme specifying the tests to be undertaken. Ensure that the work programme is approved before testing starts	Currently holding workshops re. Service transformation and methodology impact therefore part of consideration. This directly links with R3 and R4.	July 2019. Being worked on by Team Leader to combine working documents to simplify the arrangements.	New methodology introduced April 2018 and includes planning and testing as a combined document. Implemented for 2018/19 audit review . Development continuing through feedback and focussed training sessions at team meetings. Continuing the development of the methodology to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Sign off of planning discussed at team meeting ready to deploy Q2 re. 2019/20 reviews.	
R13	Address the reasons for the lengthy delays in finalising reports, incentivising auditees to respond promptly	Delay can be due to 'good cause' and will be managed accordingly to circumstances. Where there is unjustified and undue delay then escalation to be instigated using the	Immediate action	Continuing to monitor and work with Partner's as there remain examples of undue delay in some areas. Appropriate escalating processes in place and Partners are actively encouraging 10 day turnaround.	

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No.	Recommendation	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
		senior management team at the Partners.			
R14	The annual audit opinion should be succinct and stand out. It should cover risk management, controls and governance. If no conclusion can be drawn on a specific area, then that should be identified. The form of the opinion should be discussed and agreed with audit committees and senior management	The current annual audit opinion, along with other Audit Cttee reports are shared with senior management teams as part of the reporting process. However, format to be changed to give more emphasis and clarity in regard to the opinion and outcomes.	Circa June 2018. To be included in the annual reporting cycle for all Partners.	2017/18 Audit Opinion format was changed to provide better clarity and reported outcomes. Continual evolution to date.	
end					

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Compliance:

No	Recommendation	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
C1	Include the mandatory mission statement in the Charter	To include in the Charter to achieve full compliance.	By April 2018	Internal Audit Charter was revised and placed before the Partner Committees for approval September/October 2018 with regular updates since.	
C2	Include, as a minimum, a reference to the Seven Principles in one of the key audit documents. Ideally, refer to all seven principles and what they mean in an audit context	To include in the Charter to achieve full compliance.	By April 2018	Internal Audit Charter has been revised and was placed before the Partner Committees for approval September/October 2018 with regular updates since.	
C3	Include a reference to assurance provided to parties outside the partnership in the Charter	To include in the Charter to achieve full compliance.	By April 2018	Internal Audit Charter has been revised and was placed before the Partner Committees for approval September/October 2018 with regular updates since.	
C4	Include information about the Core Principles in the Charter, including how audit delivers against them	To include in the Charter to achieve full compliance	By April 2018	Internal Audit Charter has been revised and was placed before the Partner Committees for approval September/October 2018 with regular updates since.	
C5	Include a positive confirmation of audit's independence in the annual audit reports	Although already included this will be given more emphasis in the annual reports.	Circa June 2018. To be included in the annual reporting cycle for all Partners.	Included initially in annual report 2018 and continuing. Extended to progress reports as well to emphasise independence.	

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No	Recommendation	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
C6	Develop an over-arching Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) strategy to cover quality assurance activities, including how often, who is involved and their scope.	Adopt PSIAS as the standard WIASS wish to work to as a Service. Develop a QAIP strategy to indicate quality assurance activity.	By June 2018	QAIP draft created July 18 but further development was ongoing for completion by July 2019. QAIP agreed as part of the self assessment April 2019 and will be used as an element of the Service Development Plan.	
C7	<p>Ensure audit plans are driven by each client's strategic objectives and priorities and refer to all the required areas:</p> <p>The need to produce an annual opinion</p> <p>Links to an assurance framework and other assurance providers</p> <p>How the service will be developed</p> <p>The WIASS Charter</p> <p>Links to organisational objectives and priorities</p>	<p>The annual plan was identified as an area that required transforming in May 2017 and a paper was placed before COG setting out how we were planning to do this and the fact that we needed to link the plan directly to the strategic objectives, priorities and risk registers. WIASS will seek to incorporate this in the 2018/19 plans.</p> <p>Although risk registers are used as part of the current planning direct links will be made to clearly indicate to committee.</p>	Circa June 2018 i.e. 2018/19 planning process so immediate but ongoing action.	2018/19 onwards Plans driven by corporate risk, service risk, service plans, and linked to overall Corp. objectives and identified in the audit plans. Discussed at SMT level prior to Committee and presented at Committee for consideration and an opportunity to influence the plan.	
C9	Include guidance on informing management when key issues arise during an audit	There has always been an agreement that s151 Officers/Heads of Service would be informed in regard to significant/key issues arising from reviews	By April 2018 Included in the current Charter at 4.6in regard to the s151 and HIASS	Internal Audit Charter has been revised and is before the Partner Committees for approval September/October 2018 with regular updates since. Auditors are aware that any material issues are to be raised at the time. Agreement in place	

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No	Recommendation	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
		if it was considered an immediate action was required or there was a risk of, or actual, fraud taking place. This can be formalised and included in guidance notes for compliance.	liaison but to include management as well Included in the revised Charter for 2018.	that HoIASS would consult s151 if considered appropriate.	
C10	Make the link between the PSIAS, LGAN and activities undertaken in performing an audit clear, for example, by quoting specific standards	Can include in brief. Currently holding workshops re. service transformation and methodology impact therefore part of consideration. Links directly to Recommendation 4	By April 2018	See notes in Recommendation 4. In brief document referenced the IIA PSIAS and Ethical Standards under the Independence and Ethics section. Embedded practice for all reviews having been used for circa 12 months and continues to evolve.	
C11	Develop a retention scheme for HWFRS and finalise the MHDC scheme	WIASS uses a retention scheme in regard to all Partners but can seek to finalise schemes with specific partners with specific linkage to General Data Protection Regulation requirements.	By May 2018	Appropriate action undertaken and continuing liaison with Partner's to ensure all schemes are linked and remain appropriate.	
C12	Ensure that all coaching notes are signed off and dated	Agreed. All coaching to be signed off and dated in a timely manner to achieve full compliance.	Immediate action. Support post created to assist with the overall	Review of 2017-18 reports completed, all planning and fieldwork documents signed off 2018-19 tracking ongoing as part of	

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Agenda Item 11

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Date: 30th JULY 2019

No	Recommendation	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
			Service administration. Post duties to include a review of all coaching notes and track them at final report stage to ensure they are satisfied and signed off.	support post plus other additional monitoring duties within the Service to ensure there is no breach of sign off protocol and housekeeping measures remain appropriate and robust.	

end

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Suggestions:

No	Suggestion	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
S1	Amend the Charter to state that audit's remit extends across the entire control environment of each organisation	Agreed. Charter to be updated to include a statement.	By April 2018	Included in the revised draft Charter for 2018. Completed Sept 2018 and regular updates since.	
S2	Introduce annual formal private meetings between audit committees and the HoIASS	This can be incorporated as part of the annual report position. COG discussion	November 2017	Different Partners have different requirements. Where the meetings are required, wanted and add value these are being held. Chair briefings are occurring as well where appropriate.	
S3	Invite appropriate staff, for example CoG, to be included in the quality assurance programme periodically	COG is included as part of the quality assurance programme at least once a year during COG meeting. QA is always requested from clients on the completion of the audit. Will seek to widen the scope and formalise the quality assurance programme. COG discussion	November 2017	Feedback from clients after the audit has been finalised was already in place but has been reconsidered to ensure maximum feedback is obtained. Director of Finance / Chair of CoG providing feedback from CoG meetings to HoIASS	
S4	Make greater use of corporate risk registers in developing annual audit plans	Currently considered as part of the process but will provide a direct link to formalise the links between	Circa June 2018 i.e. as part of the 2018/19 planning process so	Completed as part of the 2018/19 planning process; direct links established between corporate risk register, service risk register and	

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No	Suggestion	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
		risk registers, audit plan and corporate priorities for the future.	immediate but ongoing action.	Corporate Strategies. Links included in the plan for transparency.	
S5	Emphasise to audit committee members that the plan is based on strategic risks	To be included in the annual audit plan report and as part of the report presentation with direct linkage to the strategic risks. Links to S6.	Circa June 2018 i.e. as part of the 2018/19 planning process for all Partners	Completed as part of the 2018/19 planning process; direct links established between corporate risk register, service risk register and Corporate Strategies. Links included in the plan for transparency. Paragraph included in committee reports as to the process followed in the formulation of the plan and the resource requirements.	
S6	The annual audit plan should prioritise audit assignment, for example by showing the risk ranking or using H/M/L ratings	To be included in the annual audit plan report and as part of the report presentation with direct linkage to the strategic risks and the risk rating provided. Links to S5.	Circa June 2018 i.e. as part of the 2018/19 planning process for all Partners	Completed January 2018 as part of the 2018/19 planning process with high medium or low, or, a combination of levels where appropriate being included in the plan. Direct links established between corporate risk register, service risk register and Corporate Strategies. Links included in the plan for transparency. Paragraph included in committee reports as to the process followed in the formulation of the plan and the resource requirements and the priority to be applied	

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No	Suggestion	Response	Proposed Implementation Date	Action Taken	Position June 2019
S7	Consider an alternative layout for audit reports that is easier to read	Will consider as part of the workshops and methodology update currently being undertaken. To consider table of findings/ recommendations as landscape rather than portrait with more emphasis on the risk. Links to S8.	Apr-18	Discussed at COG November 2017 and current format to remain as it is liked and can be easily followed.	
S8	Explore ways to make the follow-up process clear to officers and audit committees	Will consider as part of the workshops and methodology update currently being undertaken. Perhaps there needs to be better education at key times during the review to get the message across in regard to the follow up process. This can also be emphasised actually in the reports and during their formal issue in covering emails. Links to S7.	Apr-18	Standard template written for officers to use when issuing Final Reports stating the follow up time frame for that audit. Follow up also added to the 4A - Post Clearance Draft Audit Report template. New report template agreed. Email template distributed for auditors to use.	

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**Date: 30th JULY 2019**THE 2019/20 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN REPORT OF THE HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT SHARED SERVICE, WORCESTERSHIRE INTERNAL AUDIT SHARED SERVICE.**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Chris Forrester, Financial Services Manager
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non-Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1 To present:

- the Bromsgrove District Council Internal Audit Operational Plan for 2019/20
- the key performance indicators for the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service for 2019/20

2. RECOMMENDATIONS2.1 **The Committee is asked to approve the Audit Plan**2.2 **The Committee is asked to approve the Key Performance Indicators.****3. KEY ISSUES****Financial Implications**

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

Legal Implications

3.2 The Council is required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to “undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**Date: 30th JULY 2019**

of its system of internal control in accordance with the proper practices in relation to internal control”.

To aid compliance with the regulation, the Institute of Internal Auditors Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (as amended) details that “Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes”.

Service / Operational Implications**Internal Audit Aims and Objectives**

3.3 The aims and objectives of the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service are to:

- examine, evaluate and report on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control and risk management across the council and recommend arrangements to address weaknesses as appropriate;
- examine, evaluate and report on arrangements to ensure compliance with legislation and the council's objectives, policies and procedures;
- examine, evaluate and report on procedures to check that the council's assets and interests are adequately protected and effectively managed;
- undertake independent investigations into allegations of fraud and irregularity in accordance with council policies and procedures and relevant legislation; and
- advise upon the control and risk implications of new systems or other organisation changes e.g. transformation.

Formulation of Annual Plan

WIASS operates an Internal Audit Charter which sets out the standards to which it operates for this Council. The Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20, which is included at Appendix 1, is a risk based plan which takes into account the adequacy of the council's risk management, performance management, other assurance processes as well as organisational objectives and priorities. It has been based upon the risk priorities per the Corporate and Service risk registers. Large spend budget areas have also been considered, and, direct association has been made

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE****Date: 30th JULY 2019**

to the organisational objectives and priorities. The Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20 has been agreed with the s151 Officer, was considered by the Senior Management Team and brought before Committee in draft form on the 14th March 2019. It has been formulated with the aim to ensure Bromsgrove District Council meet its strategic purposes, delivers it's promises and has directly linked the various aspects to identify the 'golden thread' in regards to the objectives and risk identification to Service delivery. It is brought before the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee in draft format as the involvement of the Committee is considered to be an important facet of good corporate governance, contributing to the internal control assurance given in the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

We recognise there are other review functions providing other sources of assurance, both internally and externally, (e.g. ICT Public Service Network assurance testing) over aspects of the Council's operations. Where possible we will seek to place reliance on such work thus reducing the internal audit coverage as required.

To try to reduce duplication of effort we understand the importance of working with the External Auditors. The audit plan is available to the external auditors for information.

By bringing a draft plan of work, which had been formulated with the aim to ensure Bromsgrove District Council meets its strategic purposes, before the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee in March it allowed Members to have a positive input into the audit work programme for 2019/20 and make suggestions as to where they feel audit resources may be required under direction of the s151 Officer. Due to the continuing changing environment that exists in Local Government the plan must be seen as a framework for internal audit work for the forthcoming year. There is a need for improved flexibility in the plan due to a changing risk profile as well as emerging risks. To ensure flexibility there is the possibility that the plan will be updated during the year in order to address such challenges. If appropriate a review before Senior Management Team will take place to ensure the audit plan remains risk focussed and any required changes can be considered.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE****Date: 30th JULY 2019**Resource Allocation

The Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20 has been based upon a resource allocation of 230 chargeable days, an allocation which has been agreed with the council's s151 Officer. A summary of the days as well as the detailed plan provision has been included at Appendix 1. A number of areas have been included in the plan but due to the resource available priorities have been applied in regard to the plan delivery. Although all areas have been considered an assessment has been made whether to include in the plan based on the overall risk and governance profile. Areas that are considered to have a 'high' priority will be targeted first in regard to the plan delivery. The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service is confident that, with this resource allocation, he can provide management, external audit and those charged with governance with the assurances and coverage that they require over the system of internal control, annual governance statement and statement of accounts. The 230 day allocation is based on transactional type system audits and remains the same number of days as being delivered during 2018/19.

Due to the changing internal environment, ongoing transformation and more linked up and shared service working between Bromsgrove and Redditch the plan continues to be organised in a smarter way in order to exploit the efficiencies that this type of working provides. Although the audit areas will have an allocation of audit days the reviews will continue to be more cross cutting than before and will encompass the different service perspectives that the Services need to deliver. All or part of the budgeted days will be used on a flexible basis depending on the risk exposure the end result being better corporate coverage and ownership of the audit outcomes.

Due to both external and internal audit findings the financial systems have been included as audit areas as it is considered certain risks remain in these areas. It is hoped that in time a 'watching brief' approach can be adopted when there is a confidence in embedded process, control and anti fraud measures thus leading to a reduction in the allocated days. Operational support days are included to give a little flexibility and contingency in the plan e.g. consultancy but are necessary to support the delivery of the plan as a whole.

The Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20 is set out at Appendix 1.

Monitoring and reporting of performance against the Plan

Operational progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20 will be closely monitored by the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service and will be reported to

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE****Date: 30th JULY 2019**

the Shared Service's Client Officer Group (which comprises the s151 officers from partner organisations), and, to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.

The success or otherwise of the Internal Audit Shared Service will be determined by the performance against a set of key performance indicators which have been developed for the service. These have been agreed with the council's s151 Officer and are included at Appendix 2.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

There are no implications arising out of this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

failure to complete the planned programme of audit work for the financial year;
and,

the continuous provision of an internal audit service is not maintained.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 ~ Internal Audit Plan 2019/20

Appendix 2 ~ Key performance indicators 2019/20

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

7. KEY

N/a

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 30th JULY 2019

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Andy Bromage
Head of Internal Audit Shared Service - Worcestershire Internal
Audit Shared Service
E Mail: andy.bromage@worcester.gov.uk
Tel: 01905 722051

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 30th JULY 2019

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF DETAILED PLAN

Planned Days	2019/20
Financial	52
Corporate Work	51
Service Delivery and Operational	91
Sub total	194
Audit management meetings	15
Corporate meetings / reading	5
Annual plans, reports and Audit Committee support	16
Sub total	36
TOTAL Audit Days	230

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AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 30th JULY 2019

2019/20 Internal Audit Plan

Audit Area	Corporate Link (Corporate Priority / Strategic Purpose)	Risk Register Reference	Plan Priority	Include in 2019 / 2020 Plan	Outline Resource Required
FINANCIAL					
Debtors*	Enabling	Lack of robust financial accounting and monitoring arrangement	Medium/ High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	6
Main Ledger/Budget Monitor/Bank Rec	Enabling	Lack of robust financial accounting and monitoring arrangement	Medium/ High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8
Creditors*	Enabling	Lack of robust financial accounting and monitoring arrangement	Medium/ High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	6
Treasury Management	Enabling	Lack of robust financial accounting and monitoring arrangement	Medium/ High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6
Council Tax*	Enabling	Lack of robust financial accounting and monitoring arrangement	Medium/ High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	8
Benefits* (Action plan monitoring)	Enabling	Lack of robust financial accounting and monitoring arrangement	Medium/ High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	10
NNDR*	Enabling	Lack of robust financial accounting and monitoring arrangement	Medium/ High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	8
Sub TOTAL					52
CORPORATE					
IT Audit* (Server patching, disaster recovery & service business continuity)	Fundamental to strategic purpose delivery	ICT 7 & ICT 8	Medium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8
Risk Management* (Critical Friend Support)	Fundamental to strategic purpose delivery	S151 request	Medium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6
Health and Safety* (Training Documentation including Operations and action plan monitoring)	Fundamental to strategic purpose delivery	Non compliance with Health and Safety requirements	Medium/ High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Date: 30th JULY 2019

Audit Area	Corporate Link (Corporate Priority / Strategic Purpose)	Risk Register Reference	Plan Priority	Include in 2019 / 2020 Plan	Outline Resource Required
Compliments and Complaints	Fundamental to strategic purpose delivery	N/a	Medium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8
Procurement* (Training)	Fundamental to strategic purpose delivery	Rolled forward from 2018/19	Medium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5
Document Retention Policies - (Hardcopy)	Fundamental to strategic purpose delivery	N/a	Medium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12
Sub TOTAL					51
SERVICE DELIVERY					
Planning and Regeneration Service					
Planning Application Processing	Keep my place safe and looking good	PLA 4	Low/ Medium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8
Community Service					
Safeguarding	Keep my place safe and looking good	Com 3	Medium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10
Environmental					
Refuse service delivery/scalability (new builds) (Critical Friend)	Keep my place safe and looking good	Env 24	Low/ Medium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12
Leisure					
Markets	Help me run a successful business	N/a	Low	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5
Worcester Regulatory Services					
Dog Warden Services	Statutory and Regulatory Requirement	Head of Service request	Medium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	14
Sub TOTAL					49

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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Audit Area	Corporate Link (Corporate Priority / Strategic Purpose)	Risk Register Reference	Plan Priority	Include in 2019 / 2020 Plan	Outline Resource Required
Other Operational Work					
Advisory, Consultancy & Contingency	Operational support	N/a	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10
Fraud & Investigations incl. NFI	Operational support	N/a	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10
Completion of prior year's audits	Operational support	N/a	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8
Report Follow Up (all areas)	Operational support	N/a	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10
Statement of Internal Control	Operational support	N/a	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4
Sub TOTAL					42
Audit Management Meetings	Operational support	N/a	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15
Corporate Meetings / Reading	Operational support	N/a	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5
Annual Plans, Reports & Committee Support	Operational support	N/a	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16
Sub TOTAL					36
TOTAL CHARGEABLE					230

Explanatory Notes:

*As part of the increasing joint and shared service working between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council the audit budgets and areas will feature in both internal audit plans and be consolidated to deliver a single piece of work covering both Councils. Where practically possible the days will be split equally between the plans. Weighting will, however, be applied if it is considered the focus of the work will major on one Council.

Customer access, journey and support will be considered overall as part of the service audits.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 30th JULY 2019

APPENDIX 2

Performance against Key Performance Indicators 2019-2020

The success or otherwise of the Internal Audit Shared Service will be measured against some of the following key performance indicators for 2019/20. Other key performance indicators link to overall governance requirements of Bromsgrove District Council e.g. KPI 4. The position will be reported on a cumulative basis throughout the year.

	KPI	Trend/Target requirement	2019/20 Position (as at XXXXXXX)	Frequency of Reporting
Operational				
1	No. of audits achieved during the year	Per target	Target = Minimum 13 Delivered = XX	When Audit Committee convene
2	Percentage of Plan delivered	>90% of agreed annual plan	XX	When Audit Committee convene
3	Service productivity	Positive direction year on year (Annual target 74%)	XX	When Audit Committee convene
Monitoring & Governance				
4	No. of 'high' priority recommendations	Downward (minimal)	XX	When Audit Committee convene
5	No. of moderate or below assurances	Downward (minimal)	XX	When Audit Committee convene
6	'Follow Up' results	Management action plan implementation date exceeded (nil)	XX	When Audit Committee convene
Customer Satisfaction				
7	No. of customers who assess the service as 'excellent'	Upward (increasing)	XX	When Audit Committee convene

WIASS conforms to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (as amended).

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 30th July 2019

2018/19 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDIT OPINION

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Chris Forrester, Financial Services Manager
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non–Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1 To present:

- The 2018/19 Internal Audit Annual Report for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 along with the Audit Opinion and Commentary.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 **The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that the report is noted.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

3.1 None as a direct result of this report.

Legal Implications

3.2 The Council is required under Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 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”.

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3 **Appendix 1** provides a summary of allocation in respect of the 225 audit days delivered against the 230 budgeted.
- 3.4 **Appendix 2** provides a breakdown of the audits completed including the overall assurance as well as confirmation of follow up audits undertaken during the year
- 3.5 **Appendix 3** provides the 2018-19 audit opinion and commentary.
- 3.6 **Appendix 4** provides a copy of the Internal Audit Charter for WIASS.
- 3.7 **Appendix 5** provides a copy of the quality assurance improvement programme (QAIP).
- 3.9 The Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service (WIASS) has achieved and delivered the 2018/2019 internal audit plan with minor revisions.
- 3.10 The Internal Audit Plan for 2018/2019 was risk based (assessing audit and assurance factors, materiality risk, impact of failure, system risk, resource risk, fraud risk, and external risk) and reported to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee on the 15th March 2018. It included:
- a number of core systems which were designed to suitably assist the external auditor to reach their 'opinion' and other corporate systems for example governance and
 - a number of operational systems, for example on street off street parking, transport, welfare support and procurement were looked at to maintain and improve its control systems and risk management processes or reinforce its oversight of such systems.
- 3.11 In accordance with best practice the plan is subject to review each year to ensure that identified changes, for example, external influences, risk assessment and process re-engineering are taken into consideration within the annual plan.
- 3.12 The purpose of the 2018/19 Annual Plan was to aid the effectiveness of the Internal Audit function and ensure that:
- Internal Audit assisted the Authority in meeting its corporate purposes by reviewing the high risk areas, systems and processes,

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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- Audit plan delivery was monitored, appropriate action taken and performance reports issued on a regular basis,
 - The key financial systems are reviewed annually, enabling the Authority's external auditors to inform their opinion using the work completed by Internal Audit,
 - An opinion can be formed on the adequacy of the Authority's system of internal control, which feeds into the Annual Governance Statement which is presented with the statement of accounts.
- 3.13 2018/19 was a very demanding year for the internal audit team with four new members of staff settling in from April 2018. The Service has carefully managed its resource and worked with partners to deliver the revised audit programme for Bromsgrove District Council for 2018/19 with regular updates of progress reported before Committee. The s151 Officer was kept fully briefed during the year in regard to overall progress and was instrumental in the plan variance along with enhancing the process to achieve quicker management sign off.
- 3.14 During 2018/19, audit reviews totalled 17. Summaries of the audit reports, plus the Auditors opinion on the effectiveness of the controls operating within those areas and an action plan containing recommendations to address the identified control weakness, have either been reported before the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee on an on-going basis throughout the year or will be reported on finalisation.
- 3.15 Based on the audits performed in accordance with the audit plan the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Services Manager has concluded that, on the whole, the internal control arrangements during 2018/19 effectively managed the principal risks identified in the revised audit plan but there continue to be pockets of risk within the organisation where mitigation work is continuing.

Annual Governance Statement ~ Assurance Checklist Statements 2018/19

- 3.16 It is the responsibility of management to maintain the Authority's internal control framework and ensure that controls are being complied with.
- 3.17 In order to ascertain management's view on this and in order to identify any areas where current or emerging risks in relation to internal controls may exist, all Fourth Tier Managers were asked to complete an internal control checklist covering Strategic and Operational, Human Resources,

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 30th July 2019

Corporate Procedure Documents, Service Specific Procedures, Risk Management and Anti Fraud, Performance Management and Data Quality, Inventories and independent recommendations from outside bodies including audit.

- 3.18 Officers were required to acknowledge their responsibilities for establishing and maintaining adequate and effective systems of internal control in the services for which they are responsible and confirmed that those controls were operating effectively except where reported otherwise.
- 3.19 A review of the returned statements indicates that although work continues there are several areas where work is required to strengthen some control requirements. It is considered that those areas identified do not present a significant and material risk at this time. Nine of the questionnaires did, however, identify a lack of resources as a current or emerging area of risk.

Work of interest to the External Auditor

- 3.20 To try to reduce duplication of effort we understand the importance of working with the External Auditors. The audit plan is shared with the external auditors for information. The result of the work that WIASS has performed on seven systems audits was of direct interest to External Audit. However, all audit reports are passed to the external auditor on request for their information.

External Work

- 3.21 The work to deliver the Place Partnership Ltd internal audit contract was completed during 2018/19. This contract came to a natural end and has not been renewed.

Follow Up Audits

- 3.22 A summary of audit follow ups for the year is provided as part of Appendix 2. This area of work is undertaken to ensure that potential risks to the authority are mitigated. The outcome of this work is reported on an exceptions basis. There has been one exception reported (Disabled Facilities Grants) to the Committee during 2018/19. Follow ups, and any exceptions, will continue to be reported but the number of additional visits

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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to ensure points are satisfied is continuing to decrease compared with the previous years.

Quality Measures

- 3.23 Managers are asked to provide feedback in regard to systems audits that have taken place by completing a questionnaire. At the conclusion of each audit a feedback questionnaire is sent to the Responsible Manager and an analysis of those returned along with anecdotal evidence during the year shows very high satisfaction with the audit product – see **Appendix 2**.
- 3.24 To further assist the Committee with their assurance of the overall delivery and that Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service conforms to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (as amended). All staff work to a given methodology and have access to the internal audit reference material and charter which are updated regularly to reflect the requirements of the standards and the changing environment that WIASS is auditing in. A copy of the Audit Charter is included at **Appendix 4** for information.

Independence and Safeguards

- 3.25 Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service Internal Audit activity is organisationally independent. Internal Audit reports to the s151 Officer but has a direct and unrestricted access to senior management and the Chair of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.
- 3.26 Further quality control measures embedded in the service include individual audit reviews and regular Client Officer feedback. Staff work to a given methodology and have access to the internal audit reference material and Charter which have been updated to reflect the requirements of the standards. The Charter is included as part of this report at **Appendix 4**. Where WIASS provide assistance with the preparation of areas of work such as risk management there are clear safeguards in place to ensure independence is not compromised. Safeguards include review within the audit service by an independent person to those who have completed the work as well as independent scrutiny by the Executive Director – Finance and Resources of the authority. Audit Committee can also challenge the reported findings and the minutes would record this.
- 3.27 The Client Officer Group which is the management board for the Service and is made up of partner s151 Officers meet on a regular basis and

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consider the performance of the Shared Service including progress against the Service Plan as well as actively promoting the continuous improvement of the Service. Further improvement has been identified through the self assessment process which was carried out in April 2019 and a quality assurance improvement plan (QAIP) has been formulated and is reported for information at **Appendix 5**.

Risk Management

- 3.28 Heads of Service periodically provide Risk Management updates before the Audit Committee for consideration along with verbal updates from the Financial Services Manager to provide assurance. Development of the risk management system continues under the Directorship of the Executive Director –Finance and Resources.

Assurance Sources

- 3.29 We recognise there are other review functions providing other sources of assurance (both internally and externally) over aspects of the Council's operations. Where possible we will seek to place reliance on such work thus reducing the internal audit coverage as required.

Other Operational Work

- 3.30 Work is continuing in respect of the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) exercise. Appropriate action is being taken and work is progressing to identify any potential fraudulent activity for example overpayment for housing benefits, income support, etc. The last significant data extract was during 2018/19 and the results continue to be worked on. The next is scheduled for December 2019/20.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.31 There are no implications arising out of this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The main risks associated with the details included in this report are.

- Non-compliance with statutory requirements.

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 30th July 2019

5. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 ~ Delivery against plan 2018/19
- Appendix 2 ~ Audits completed with assurance for 2018/19 and audit follow up work
- Appendix 3 ~ Audit Opinion and Commentary
- Appendix 4 ~ Internal Audit Charter
- Appendix 5 ~ Quality Assurance Improvement Programme (QAIP)

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

7. Key

N/a

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Andy Bromage
Head of Internal Audit Shared Service ~ Worcestershire
Internal Audit Shared Service

Tel: 01905 722051

E Mail: andy.bromage@worcester.gov.uk

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 30th July 2019

APPENDIX 1

Delivery against Internal Audit Plan for 2018/19 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019

Audit Area	2018/19 PLANNED DAYS	2018/19 DAYS USED
Core Financial Systems (see note 1)	52	52
Corporate Audits	39	39
Other Systems Audits (see note 2 and 4)	103	105
TOTAL	194	196
Audit Management Meetings	15	13
Corporate Meetings / Reading	5	5
Annual Plans, Reports and Audit Committee support	16	11
Other chargeable (see note 3)		
TOTAL	36	29
TOTAL (see note 4)	230	225

Note:

Days are rounded to the nearest whole.

Note 1: Core Financial Systems were audited using a rolling programme throughout the year in order to provide a larger sample to maximise the assurance provided for Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts.

Note 2: Budgets contained in this area include draw down/contingency budgets which by their nature may or may not be used e.g. fraud and special investigations, consultancy and advisory.

Note 3: 'Other chargeable' days equate to times where there has been significant disruption to the ICT provision resulting in lost productivity.

Note 4: The small variation in planned days to actual days was due to a combination of factors including the need to spend extra time in two audit areas.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Date: 30th July 2019

Performance against Key Performance Indicators 2018-2019

The success or otherwise of the Internal Audit Shared Service will be measured against some of the following key performance indicators for 2018/19. Other key performance indicators link to overall governance requirements of Bromsgrove District Council e.g. KPI 4 to KPI 6.

	KPI	Trend/Target requirement	2017/18 Year End Position	2018/19 Year End Position	Frequency of Reporting
Operational					
1	No. of audits achieved during the year	Per target	Target = 13 (minimum) Delivered = 16	Target = 13 (minimum) Delivered = 17 (including 1 @ draft report)	When Audit Committee convene
2	Percentage of Plan delivered	>90% of agreed annual plan	83%	98%	When Audit Committee convene
3	Service productivity	Positive direction year on year (Annual target 74%)	74%	*67%	When Audit Committee convene
Monitoring & Governance					
4	No. of 'high' priority recommendations	Downward (minimal)	7	**16	When Audit Committee convene
5	No. of moderate or below assurances	Downward (minimal)	5	10	When Audit Committee convene
6	'Follow Up' results (Using 2017/18 reviews onward)	Management action plan implementation date exceeded (nil)	Nil to report	1	When Audit Committee convene
Customer Satisfaction					
7	No. of customers who assess the service as 'excellent'	Upward (increasing)	10x issued 7x 'excellent' 2x satisfactory 1x awaited	4x issued 3x returned 'excellent' 1x awaited	When Audit Committee convene

WIASS conforms to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards as amended.

* Below target figure due to 4 new starters in April 2018 therefore settling in and training requirements in the early part of the year but showing a positive trend increasing from a revised 60% in Q1 to 76% at the end of Q4 providing an average of 67% for the year.

** Does not include Health and Safety audit results as predominantly related to Redditch Borough Council.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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Appendix 2

Audit Opinion Summary Analysis ~ Audits completed during financial year 2018/2019:

Audit Report / Title	Final Report issued	Assurance
Treasury Management	17th January 2019	Significant
On Street Off Street Parking	12th March 2019	Significant
Main Ledger	3rd April 2019	Significant
Creditors	3rd April 2019	Significant
Debtors	16th April 2019	Significant
National Non Domestic Rates	6th June 2019	Significant
Council Tax	6th June 2019	Significant
Worcestershire Regulatory Services	10 th May 2019 (D)	Significant (D)
Welfare Support	23rd November 2018	Moderate
General Data Protection Regulations	13th March 2019	Moderate
Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency Fund	26th April 2019	Moderate
Universal Credits	17th June 2019	Limited
Procurement	7th June 2019	Limited
Benefits	14th June 2019	Limited
Transport	19th June 2019	Limited
Risk Management	28th June 2019	Limited
Health and Safety	Discussed at CMT January 2019	Limited

Note: (D) = draft report but no variance expected.

Follow Up Audits:

Audit Area	Latest Date for Follow Up	Position
Equality and Diversity 2014/15	September 2018	Satisfied
Consultancy and Agency 2015/16	July 2018	Satisfied
Human Resources and Development 2016/17	June 2018	Satisfied
Dash Board & Performance Measures 2016/17	January 2019	Satisfied
Building Control 2017/18	July 2018	Satisfied
Customer Services 2017/18	May 2018	Satisfied
Cash Collection 2017/18	May 2018	Satisfied

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Payroll	May 2018	Satisfied
Disabled Facilities Grants	Feb 18	Ongoing
All core financial audits		

Summary of 2018/19 Audit Assurance Levels from 17 audits.

Number of Audits	Assurance	Overall % (rounded)
0	Full	0%
8	Significant	47%
3	Moderate	18%
6	Limited	35%
0	No	0%
0	To be confirmed	0%
0	Critical Friend	0%

Client Feedback Analysis ~ IA Reporting

Feedback is sought after the issue of the final audit report via a feedback questionnaire. Sometimes this is reported back verbally rather than in the written form. The feedback is used to assess the effectiveness of internal audit and to help improve and enhance the internal audit function. Feedback during the 2018/19 financial year has been received indicating that:

- the auditee was happy with the process and format of the audits. This continues to be further developed.
- recommendations made would help to support and give assurance on recently implemented changes.
- Anecdotal evidence indicates a high satisfaction rate with the audit product from the data received.

Comments received included:

- [The Auditor] was professional, well organised, friendly and diligent in completing the audit.
- [The Auditor] Professional and keen to support the department with its audit needs.
- Liaised well with staff and were very supportive in the development of the brief and the findings report was easily understood, clear and insightful.

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Overall Conclusions:

- The 2018/19 Internal Audit Plan as agreed by the Audit Committee on the 15th March 2018 along with any subsequent revisions has been delivered.
- 65% of the audits undertaken for 2018/19 which have received an assurance allocated returned an assurance of 'moderate' or above.
- Clients are satisfied with the audit process and service from the data received.
- Independent assurance has been brought before the Committee for consideration in respect of the finalised audits throughout 2018/19 and one exception was reported in regard to 'follow up' audit work.
- To assist the Committee to draw further assurance from the work that Internal Audit undertakes clear reference is contained in the final audit report to identify whether a direct link exists to corporate priorities and the risk register entry in connection with the audited service provision. This information has been, and will continue to be, reported to the Committee as part of the summary reporting in 2019/20.
- On-going dialogue will be maintained with the s151 Officer and the Client Officer Group. The Client Officer Group for the Internal Audit Shared Service comprises all the partners' s151 Officers whom actively encourage the on-going development of the service.

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APPENDIX 3

Audit Opinion and Commentary 2018/19

1. Overall Conclusion

- 1.1 Based on the audits performed in accordance with the approved plan, the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service has concluded that the internal control arrangements during 2018/19 effectively managed the principal risks in a number of areas, but not all, and can be reasonably relied upon to ensure that the Council's corporate objectives have been met in the main. Close monitoring of deployed measures are set to continue but the need to reduce the overall risk and work towards a better approach beyond 2018/19 will be critical to create better transparency, expectation and accountability. This will be necessary in order to ensure the District manages risk management effectively, and, ensure other areas which attracted a 'limited' assurance develop and deploy a sound control environment where there is the potential for emerging risk.

2. Risk Management Conclusion

- 2.1 The Head of Internal Audit can confirm the development of the formal risk management system is set to continue in the organisation under the Direction of the Executive Director - Finance and Resources with a view to achieving a better embedded approach in the future.

3. Audit Opinion

- 3.1 The internal audit of Bromsgrove District Council's systems and operations during 2018/19 was conducted in accordance with the Internal Audit Annual plan which was approved by the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee on 15th March 2018 and any subsequent revision.
- 3.2 The Internal Audit function was set up as a shared service in 2010/11 and hosted by Worcester City Council for 5 district councils and increased to 6 partners with the inclusion of Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority from April 2016. The shared service conforms with CIPFA guidance and the Institute of Internal Auditors Public Sector Internal Audit Standards as amended and objectively reviews on a continuous basis the extent to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Council's objectives and contributes to the proper, economic and effective use of resources.

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- 3.3 The Internal Audit Plan for 2018/19 was risk based (assessing audit and assurance factors, materiality risk, impact of failure, system risk, resource risk fraud risk, and external risk). It included:
- a number of core systems which were designed to suitably assist the external auditor to reach their 'opinion' and other corporate systems for example governance, and,
 - a number of operational systems, for example, On street and off street parking, GDPR, Transport , Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency Fund, were looked at to maintain and improve control systems and risk management processes or reinforce oversight of such systems.
- 3.4 The 2018/19 internal audit plan and any revision thereto was delivered providing sufficient coverage for the s151 and the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service to form an overall opinion.
- 3.5 In relation to the 17 reviews that have been undertaken, 16 have been finalised and 1 is at draft report stage. Areas that returned an assurance level of 'limited' included Health and Safety, Universal Credits and Housing Benefits, Procurement, Risk Management and Transport.
- 3.6 A clear management action plan has been formulated to address the issues identified in all the other audit areas along with discussion at the Corporate Management Team where 'limited' assurance was identified to mitigate the risk. Where audits are to be finalised a comprehensive management action plan will be required and agreed by the s151 Officer.
- 3.7 As part of the process of assessing the Council's control environment, senior officers within the Council are required to complete an annual "Internal Control Assurance Statement" to confirm that the controls in the areas for which they are responsible are operating effectively. Officers were required to acknowledge their responsibilities for establishing and maintaining adequate and effective systems of internal control in the services for which they are responsible and confirming that those controls were operating effectively except where reported otherwise. No areas of significant risk have been identified in addition to those already identified in the audit work completed. Any concerns raised by managers will be assessed and addressed by the Corporate Management Team. However, a reoccurring theme reported across several Services was the impact of staff shortages.

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- 3.8 The majority of the completed audits have been allocated an audit assurance of either 'moderate' or above meaning that there is generally a sound system of internal control in place, no significant control issues have been encountered and no material losses have been identified. However, there were 6 audits allocated a 'limited' assurance which indicates weaknesses in the design and / or inconsistent application of controls potentially putting the achievement of the organisation's objectives at risk in those areas reviewed. Any assurance provided is limited to the few areas of the system where controls are in place and are operating effectively. The District must be aware of the potential for emerging risks especially in those areas where the assurance is 'limited' or below.
- 3.9 WIASS can conclude that no system of control can provide absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss, nor can Internal Audit give that assurance. This statement is intended to provide reasonable assurance based on the audits performed in accordance with the approved plan and the scoping therein.

Andy Bromage
Head of Internal Audit Shared Service
Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service
July 2019

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APPENDIX 4



Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service (WIASS)

Internal Audit Charter

Bromsgrove District Council

Definitions

1. Management refers to the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Heads of Service and Service Managers
2. Board refers to the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee

This Charter was last reviewed April 2017 and was approved by the Audit Standards & Governance Committee on 11th October 2018.

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1. Introduction

Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this charter is to define what Internal Audit is and explain its purpose, role and responsibilities.

Provision of Internal Audit Services

- 1.2 WIASS covers five district authorities Wychavon, Malvern Hills, Bromsgrove, Redditch and Worcester and one Fire Service, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority. WIASS will provide internal audit services to third parties under contractual arrangements.

Worcester City Council hosts the Shared Service provision under an on-going Administrative Collaborative Agreement. It is governed by a Client Officer Group (COG) which is made up of the district and Fire Service s151 officers each having an 'equal say'. The Client Officer Group meets approximately 4 times a year.

- 1.3 For line management matters internal audit will report to the Corporate Director of Resources (s151 Officer within Worcester City Council) and the Monitoring Officer in their prolonged absence.

2. Mission and Definition

- 2.1 Mission:

"To enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight".

Additional information can be found on the local intranet site:

<https://staffroom.worcester.gov.uk/internal-audit>

- 2.2 Definition:

Internal Auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bring a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

3. Scope and Authority of Internal Audit Work

- 3.1 Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 No. 234 Part 2 Regulation 5:

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(1) A relevant authority must 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.

(2) Any officer or member of a relevant authority must, if required to do so for the purposes of the internal audit—

(a) make available such documents and records; and

(b) supply such information and explanations;

as are considered necessary by those conducting the internal audit.

(3) In this regulation "documents and records" includes information recorded in an electronic form.

To aid compliance with Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom 2006 details that "Internal Audit should work in partnership with management to improve the control environment and assist the organisation in achieving its objectives".

Internal Audit work should be planned, controlled and recorded in order to determine priorities, establish and achieve objectives.

3.2 In the course of their reviews internal audit staff, under the direction of the Head of Service, shall have authority in all partner organisations to:-

- at all reasonable times after taking account of audit requirements, enter on any partners' premises or land;
- have access to, and where internal audit deem necessary take into their possession, any records, documents and correspondence relating to any matter that is the subject of an audit;
- require and receive such explanations as may be considered necessary from any officer of the Partner regardless of their position;
- require any officer of the Partner to produce forthwith cash, stores or any other property under their control.

for the Partner in which the internal audit service is being provided.

3.3 Internal Audit work will normally include, but is not restricted to:

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- review and assess the soundness, adequacy, integrity and reliability of financial and non-financial management and performance systems, and quality of data;
 - reviewing the means of safeguarding assets;
 - examine, evaluate and report on compliance with legislation, plans, policies, procedures, laws and regulations;
 - promote and assist the Partner in the effective use of resources
 - examine, evaluate and report on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control and risk management across the Partner and recommend arrangements to address weaknesses as appropriate;
 - advise upon the control and risk implications of new systems or other organisational changes.
 - provide a 'critical friend' to assist services to achieve value for money
 - undertake independent investigations into allegations of fraud and irregularity in accordance with the Partner's policies and procedures and relevant legislation
 - at the specific request of management¹, internal audit may provide consultancy services provided:
 - the internal auditors independence is not compromised
 - the internal audit service has the necessary skills to carry out the assignment, or can obtain skills without undue cost or delay
 - the scope of the consultancy assignment is clearly defined and management¹ have made proper provision for resources within the annual plan
 - management understands that the work being undertaken is not internal audit work.
- 3.4 IA's remit extends across the entire control environment of the organisation and is not limited to certain aspects or elements.
- 4. Responsibility of Management¹ and of Internal Audit.**
- 4.1 At all times internal audit will operate in accordance with the partner's Constitution and legal requirements and all internal audit staff will adhere to recognised Professional Standards and Codes of Conduct and Ethics e.g. the Institute of Internal Auditors' and/or CIPFA as well as the Partner's Codes of Conduct and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policies.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of Management to put in place adequate controls to ensure systems meet their objectives and that they are notified without delay of any instances where systems are failing to operate properly. However, where there has been, or there are grounds to suspect that there is risk of a

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- serious breakdown in a significant system, the Head of Service should be informed of the problem and any counter measures already in hand or proposed, as quickly as possible, in order that the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service can decide whether audit involvement is needed.
- 4.3 Similarly, it is the responsibility of Management to put in place adequate controls to prevent and detect fraud, irregularities, waste of resource, etc. Internal Audit will assist Management to effectively manage these risks. However, no level of controls can guarantee that fraud and the like will not occur even when the controls are performed diligently with due professional care. As a consequence all cases of actual or suspected fraud should be reported to the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service forthwith. The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service will then decide the course of action to be taken with due regard to the Partner's Constitution, e.g. Whistleblower's Charter, Stopping Fraud and Corruption Strategy, etc.
- 4.4 Any officer of a partner organisation who has genuine concerns at raising a suspected instance of fraud or malpractice through their normal reporting channels can raise the matter under the Partner's Whistleblower's Charter directly with any of the persons named in the policy document, including the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service. Head of Internal Audit Shared Service will then pursue the matter in accordance with the provisions of the policy document.
- 4.5 Internal audit is not responsible for any of the activities which it audits. WIASS will not assume responsibility for the design, installation, operation or control of procedures. However should any partner/client contract for specialist services within an area then the WIASS staff member assigned will not be asked to review any aspect of the work undertaken until two years have passed from the completion of the assignment.
- 4.6 The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service will ensure that the relevant Head of Service and/or Section 151 Officer is briefed on any matter coming to the attention of internal audit, either through a review or otherwise, that could have a material impact on the finances, create an unacceptable risk or be fraudulent for the Partner as quickly as possible, and will ensure the appropriate Officer of the Authority e.g. Director, Monitoring Officer is regularly briefed on the progress of audits having a corporate aspect. Matters involving fraud or malpractice are to be reported in line with the anti-fraud and corruption policy. The most appropriate action/engagement of the relevant Head of Service will be determined by the HoWIASS depending on the circumstances.

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- 4.7 In order to (1) maintain a broad skills base within Internal Audit and (2) maximise the ability of the team to offset the cost of providing the internal audit function to the Partner, the strategic plan will include a commitment that internal audit obtains income to the Partner from external work either from partnership working and/or selling its expertise. Such activities will be governed by targets set out in the Collaborative Administrative Agreement and will be approved and reported on to the Client Officer Group.

5. Planning and Reporting

- 5.1 To meet the objectives above, the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service shall:-
- a) prior to the beginning of each financial year, following consultation with Management¹ and after taking into account comments from Members arising from the reporting process set out below, provide the Committee with:
- a risk based audit plan forecasting which of the Partner's activities are due to receive audit attention in the next 12 months. The risk based plan will take into consideration a number of risk factors including corporate risk register, service risk register, local knowledge, corporate promises or objectives, key strategic documents e.g. five year plan and any external audit guidance. Where there is a potential difference between strategy/plan and resource this is reported to the Board²;
 - a detailed operational plan using a risk based assessment methodology showing how/what resources will be required/allocated in the coming financial year in order to meet the requirements of the Partners strategic plans. The Plans will be flexible and include a small contingency contained as part of the consultancy budget to allow for changes in priorities, emerging risks, ad hoc projects, fraud and irregularity, etc. The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service will bring to the attention of the s151 Officer if this budget is depleted so an additional contingency can be agreed. 'Consultancy', for the purposes of WIASS activity, is defined as work that is of a specialist nature and commissioned/requested in regard to an area of work activity within a service area that is in addition to the agreed partners audit plan. The work can be financial or governance based and the output will provide management¹ with challenges to consider

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depending on its nature. The approach to the assignment can be flexible but follow a similar path in regard to the methodology.

- b) during the course and at the close of each financial year provide the Board² with:
- quarterly progress reports on actual progress compared to the plan and performance indicators. Such reports to highlight serious problems, either affecting the implementation of the plan, or, in the take up of audit recommendations;
 - an annual report summarising the overall results for the year compared to the plan and pointing out any matters that will impact on internal audit's ability to meet the requirements in the strategic plan;
- c) during the course and close of each full systems/risk audit provide the client manager¹ with:
- a copy of an audit brief and audit information request setting out the objectives and scope of the audit prior to commencement of the audit and a confirmation of resource requirements for the audit.
 - draft recommendations, which will be discussed with the responsible manager¹ prior to sending the draft audit report. The manager¹ is responsible for confirming the accuracy of the audit findings and is invited to discuss the report during the 'clearance' meeting prior to the issue of the draft report.
 - an audit report containing an overview of the quality of the control system, an opinion as to the level of system assurance and detailed findings and recommendations including priority. 'Assurance', for WIASS purposes, is defined as the determination of an overall outcome against a predetermined criteria leading to an applied level giving an overall summary for the work audited.
- d) shortly after the close of each financial year provide for the purposes of the Annual Governance Statement:
- an annual audit opinion of the Partner's system of controls based on the audit work performed during the year in accordance with the plans at 5.1(a) above and reported in accordance with 5.1(b) and (c) above and on the assurance methodology adopted, and, a statement of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the results of quality assurance and improvement programme.

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5.2 Expectations of Clients:

Managers and staff should co-operate with the Auditors, and responses should be made to draft reports as outlined at 3 above. Responses should include an action plan, dates for action and responsibility where actions are delegated. The final 'High' and 'Medium' recommendations will be reported to the Board².

5.3 Audit reports will be drawn up following the internal audit report framework. A matrix type report displaying audit findings, risks and recommendations along with a column for management comments, as per 5.1(c), will be provided to management¹. The report will also contain an introduction and priority categories for each of the recommendations. A covering report will be attached to the matrix providing details of the partner organisation, circulation, audit scope and objectives, an audit opinion, an executive summary and an audit assurance rating as well as a clear indication of what action is required by management.

5.4 Upon completion of audits, the audit exceptions will be discussed with the relevant line manager and will form the basis of the draft audit reports. The draft audit reports are issued to the relevant line managers for them to confirm the accuracy of the audit findings and content. Managers are invited to contact the Auditor if they wish to discuss the report and asked to show their response in the form of an action plan to each recommendation on the draft report. For accepted recommendations, dates for action or implementation are recorded. The managers' responses are recorded in the final reports that are issued to the appropriate Management¹ officers as deemed relevant for the audit.

5.5 In accordance with professional standards, after three/six months from the date of issue of the final report, follow-up audits are undertaken to ensure that the agreed recommendations and action plans have been implemented, or, are in the process of being implemented. A formal follow up procedure / methodology is used to follow up audit reports and reported on an exceptions basis.

5.6 Internal Audit works to the reporting quality standards of:

- draft audit reports to be issued within 5 working days of the clearance meeting;
- management responses received within 10 working days;
- final audit reports to be issued within 5 working days of the final discussions of the draft audit report and receipt of management responses;

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- final reports to be followed-up initially within 3 to 6 months of the date issue of the final audit report depending on the recommendation priority and residual risk, to ensure that the accepted recommendations due for implementation have been established.

5.7 Escalation for late or non return of audit reports will be instigated when after two requests the reports have not been provided by management. The escalation will commence with the s151 Officer being informed of the late return. If the report remains outstanding then the Board² will be informed of the inaction with a view to them calling in the Officer to justify the late return.

6. 7 Principles of Public Life and how WIASS interprets and applies them.

1. Selflessness - protecting the public purse and ensuring all actions taken are solely in the public interest.

2. Integrity - completely independent and above undue bias or influence in the work that we do.

3. Objectivity – demonstrate impartiality and fairness in all aspects of our work and when reporting uses only the best evidence without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability – provide transparency and assurance holding people to account in regard to decisions and actions and provide assurance to those in governance roles.

5. Openness – to promote and ensure through good governance that decisions are taken in an open and transparent manner and no information is withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing

6. Honesty – to provide independent assurance to those in governance of confirmation of truthfulness

7. Leadership – through the audit work actively promotes and robustly supports the principles and shows a willingness to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

For further information on the principles of public life:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

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7. Core Principles for Professional Practice and how WIASS interprets and applies them.

1. Demonstrates integrity:

WIASS works independently, without influence or undue bias. The audit plan is created so that there are no conflicts of interest between the officer and the audit. Potential conflicts of interest are formally checked annually with all members of the WIASS team. Areas of risk for WIASS are identified and mitigated. Potential areas of risk include, but are not limited to, auditors re-auditing Risk Management, NFI, and Regulatory Services in consecutive years and Services that they have transferred from. Officers that have conflicts of interest, or if they are / have been working in the area of audit, will not undertake any audits in the conflicting area for a minimum of three years, safeguarding the officers and WIASS' integrity. Further protection is in place by using randomly selected testing samples and a series of independent review stages. All audit working papers, reports and findings are reviewed and if necessary challenged before being issued to the client by either the Head of Service or Team Leader.

2. Demonstrates competence and due professional care:

All reports are reviewed and signed off by either the WIASS Head of Service or Team Leader both of which are highly qualified and governed by professional institution standards. Regular 1-2-1 meetings are held with each officer to ensure progress and personal development. An "open door" culture is adopted throughout WIASS allowing all team members to ask for assistance advice and support at any time. Training (both in-house and external) is available and is provided should it be deemed relevant and appropriate by Head of Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service (HoWIASS) / Team Leader.

3. Is objective and free from undue influence:

Independence and safeguarding is a key element of internal audit provision. All WIASS staff are vetted via the Basic Disclosure Check, as well as making a Declaration of Interest on an annual basis declaring any potential conflicts of interest with upcoming audit programme and the partners that WIASS work with. No auditor, who has transferred from a Service, will audit that Service for a minimum of three years. The Service is organisationally independent for all Partners. Although the HoWIASS reports directly to the s151 Officers of the Partner organisations the role has direct and unrestricted access to the senior management team and Committee Chair. The Client Officer Group, who governs the Service, meets on a quarterly basis and is made up of the Partner s151 Officers. They each have an equal vote and consider the strategic

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direction of the Service as well as progress and performance. Further independence and safeguard checks are reported throughout this Charter in the form of checks, actions and process.

4. Aligns with the strategies, objectives, and risks of the organisation:
The audit plan and it's content is discussed with Management¹and s151 Officers to ensure that risks are identified; appropriate processes, systems and strategies are tested and that areas of risk are monitored and mitigated. Corporate and service risk registers are used along with corporate knowledge and the promises and objectives. Five year plans are also considered as part of the risk profiling and plan definition.
5. Is appropriately positioned and adequately resourced:
As a shared service, WIASS is hosted by Worcester City Council, but audit allocations ensure a presence in all authorities that it serves across the year. Resources are monitored and tracked throughout the annual audit plan, with forecasting used as often as possible to prevent resources becoming too stretched resulting in reduced coverage. WIASS is governed by a Client Officer Group made up from the Partner s151 Officers but also has direct access to Management¹ and the Board² Chairs. Delegated powers are used should there be any resourcing issues.
6. Demonstrates quality and continuous improvement:
Continuous monitoring of the teams performance via trackers is conducted. Quarterly and annual reports are issued to committee and board members demonstrating trends in productivity and value. Individual reviews via 1-2-1 meetings are held monthly with the Team Leader, and include personal development plans for all team members. Improvements and changes will also be made using external assessment as well as internally generated client feedback forms. A self assessment will be completed each municipal year to further provide assurance of quality and improvement. The Service is working with partners to ensure that it continues to provide a 'fit for purpose' Service by developing techniques that will complement requirements, continue to add value and work in a changing environment e.g. critical friend reviews. There is a continuous desire to ensure that the Service changes and adopts best practice methods as identified by the professional institutions e.g. IIA, CIPFA.
7. Communicates effectively
Various forms of communication are adopted (verbal, written, diagram / graph) throughout the review process by all members of the WIASS team. Continued monitoring and improvements to the methodology are conducted,

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- making the report and testing documents clearer for all users. Findings are discussed verbally with management¹ prior to the issue of a formal report. Reports are issued to Officers and Committee¹ on a regular basis.
8. Provides risk-based assurance
The audit plans are risk based with reviews being classified from high to low risk. The review scope is risk based which drives the review without creating restrictions on the areas covered. All findings are rated high, medium or low risk. Risks associated with the findings are linked directly to the recommendation and the management action to mitigate it. The review risk is combined to create the overall assurance level of the audit, which will be presented to the client with explanation and reasoning in the form of a report.
9. Is insightful, proactive and future-focused
Insightful – where possible WIASS officers with relevant background experience will be assigned to conduct audits in similar fields. Continued monitoring of current “audit and fraud affairs” is distributed to all WIASS team members. A sharing of knowledge is encouraged in the Service and pre engagement research. Identification of best practice is shared amongst the authorities. Reports identify areas that are working well as well as those that require improvement. Reviews look for efficiencies and better ways of working.
Proactive – scoping meetings are held for all audits allowing for changes to the audit scope in line with changes in service delivery and legislation between annual planning and audits starting. There is also an ability to vary the plan should an emerging risk present itself using delegated powers so the audit service can be proactive in providing assurance to those in governance. Consultancy days are built into the plans to allow for pre implementation of new system/process advice.
Future-focused – The Service will scan the horizon for risks and issues that are emerging. Networking using, for example, the Midlands Audit Group is used to help inform the audit plans and consultancy assignments to provide information to the partners before it becomes a potential issue for them. Monitoring of the next generation initiatives from Central Government and having a team of auditors aware of the potential risks and impact along with environmental control issues will assist in adding value for our partners.
10. Promotes organisational improvement
Ethics and culture are key aspects to organisation improvement. WIASS reviews consider ethical and cultural aspects and the potential impact and associated risk. Liaison with s151 Officers, Senior Management Teams and governance boards where applicable to promote continuous organisational

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development. Audit Reports are issued to management¹ to ensure oversight of the organisation and areas of concern including common themes are looked at and improved on. High and Medium priority findings are followed up after a 3 or 6 month period respectively using an established methodology to ensure that potential risks are being mitigated and there is continuous improvement. Findings will be followed up until such time that they are satisfied. Follow up on findings will be documented and reported to Management, Heads of Service and or the appropriate s151 to give assurance of action and risk mitigation.

For further information please reference:

<https://na.theiia.org/standards-guidance/mandatory-guidance/Pages/Core-Principles-for-the-Professional-Practice-of-Internal-Auditing.aspx>

8. External Relationships

8.1 The main contacts are with:

- Institute of Internal Auditors
- External Auditors
- Local Authorities in the Worcestershire area
- Local Authorities in the Midlands area
- Organisations within the Exeter Benchmarking Group
- CIPFA (publishers of the systems based auditing control matrices written by Exeter IA section)
- National Fraud Initiative via DCLG and Cabinet Office

But may include other external parties as necessary.

8.2 Assurance will be accepted and reported from 3rd parties as long as WIASS can rely on their work and they are suitably qualified to carry out the assessment. The relevance of the work will also be a consideration in using a 3rd party certification e.g. IT integrity testing.

8.3 Where work is undertaken on a contractual basis assurance will be provided to 3rd parties outside of the partnership as appropriately agreed. The methodology applied to audit 3rd party organisations will be the same as the methodology used for the members of the partnership. All of the safeguards used to protect the integrity of the audits carried out for the partnership will

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be extended to 3rd parties as well and appropriate reporting protocols established as part of any contractual agreement. These will be established as part of the engagement with a clearly identified engagement officer and requirements. No contract will be entered into if it is considered that the independence or integrity of the Service will be compromised. If, during the delivery of a contract, it becomes apparent that there is undue influence being brought to bare and/or that the actions of the client is undermining the ethos of internal audit the HoWIASS will inform the Client Officer Group without delay so a strategic decision can be made to avoid any potential reputational damage or compromised independence. Any assurances provided to 3rd Parties will be based on the established internal methodology and the defined definitions of the different levels and priorities.

Notes

- a) In the absence of the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service all provisions relating to him/her above will apply to the relevant Team Leader in accordance with the duties allocated by the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 30th July 2019

Version Control:	Date of Change	Action	Updated by
1.0	2 nd March 2012	Charter for WIASS	AB
2.0	9 th August 2012	Update to Charter	AB
3.0	23 rd April 2013	Update to Charter re. International Standards	AB
4.0	21 st Janaury2016	Update to Charter re. legislative requirements & title changes	AB
5.0	1 st July 2016	Update re. titles and definition of 'consultancy' and 'assurance'.	AB
6.0	April 2017	Full review in line with Standards	HT
7.0	May 2017	COG suggestion: Update of H&WFRS name to reflect legal entity & 'Council's' to 'Partners'.	HT
8.0	June/July 2018	External Assessment recommendations: Update to Mission & Definition Inclusion of 3.4, IA remit Update to 4.6 regarding HIASS responsibility on briefing Inclusion of 5.7, escalation for late and non return audit reports Inclusion of 6 – Principle of Public Life Inclusion of 7 – Core Principles of Public Practice Inclusion of 8.2, assurance from 3 rd Parties Inclusion of 8.3, assurance to 3 rd Parties	HG, AB, HT

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 30th July 2019

Appendix 5

Quality Assurance Improvement Plan for 2019/20.

Action No.	Area to be actioned	Outcome required	Action	To be undertaken by:	Date to be completed	Completed	Further Action Required
1	1112 - Safeguarding Independence	Formal reporting to Client Officer Group (COG) confirming if there are, or are not, any conflicts of interest with the plan. This is to be done on an annual basis following the annual 'Declaration of Interest' (DOI) from WIASS Staff	Inform COG of DOI on the 2019/20 Plan	Head of Internal Audit	4 th July 2019 due to postponed COG meeting in June 2019.		
2	1320 - Inclusion of QAIP in Annual Reports	Following the development of the QAIP, this needs to be added to the annual reports for all partners	Update annual reports to include QAIP	Head of Internal Audit	Approx. August 2019 (dependent on Partner Committee date)		
3	2240 - Approving Work prior to starting	Develop a process where by we can QA the testing programme prior to testing being undertaken, and to ensure that a formal sign off has	Engage with staff via Team Meetings to agree a process and to adjust the methodology to reflect the initial sign off prior to the testing commencing.	Audit Team Leader	Dec-19		

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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		taken place by either Head of Internal Audit or Team Leader					
4	2420 - Timely Completion of Stages	To make improvements in line with completing all stages of audits in a timely manner.	Stage monitoring will be picked up via 1-2-1's and the report monitoring will be picked up with the Audit Tracker "Response" tab (and discussed in 1-2-1's).	Audit Team Leader	Immediate implementation with ongoing monitoring throughout the year		
5	2430 / 2450 – Use of 'Conducted in Conformance with International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (ISPPIA).	Include the QAIP in the annual report for all patterns, which will then allow us to quote the conformance to ISPPIA.	Include the QAIP in the partner annual reports.	Head of Internal Audit	Approx. August 2019 (dependent on Partner committee dates)		

APRIL – MARCH FINANCIAL SAVINGS MONITORING REPORT 2018/19

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	-
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering – Exec Director Finance and Resources
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non–Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To report to the Committee the monitoring of the savings for April – March 2018/19. This report presents the savings delivered for the full year against those identified in the medium term financial plan (MTFP)

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee note the final financial position for savings as presented in the report and at Appendix 1.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 This report provides a statement to show the savings for 2018/19 as detailed in the MTFP and approved by Council in February 2018.

3.2 The statement shows that savings of £578k for 2018/19 were delivered during the financial year, with around £2k of savings from additional cross boundary partnership working being the only saving not achieved.

3.3 The External Auditors, Grant Thornton, have recommended that the delivery of savings be monitored more closely to ensure that the Council is meeting savings in the way that was expected when the budget was set. This monitoring was recommended to be undertaken by this Committee and Grant Thornton further advised that the savings monitoring should be against the Medium Term Financial Plan rather than the efficiency plan as the MTFP is the more recently approved budget projection for the Council. The savings statement attached reflects this approach.

3.4 As members may be aware during the budget process, heads of service propose savings that are to be delivered during future financial years. The budget allocation is

then reduced to reflect the proposed saving and officers meet on a monthly basis to ensure that all estimated reductions to budget are being delivered.

3.5 Legal Implications

None as a direct result of this report.

3.6 Service/Operational Implications

Timely and accurate financial monitoring ensures that services can be delivered as agreed within the financial budgets of the Council

4. Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

None, as a direct result of this report.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

Effective financial management is included in the Corporate Risk Register.

6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Saving monitoring April – March 2018/19

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Available from Financial Services

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Chris Forrester – Financial Services Manager (Deputy S151)
Email: chris.forrester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881673

BROMSGROVE - SAVINGS & ADDITIONAL INCOME FROM 18-19 BUDGET ROUND

Department	Description of saving	2018-19 £'000	Comments	Year end			
				On target Y/N	Additional (add to to in yr savings) £'000	below target Y/N	Pressure £'000
Business Transformation	Annual Revenue Budget Saving	-123	Saving from efficiencies and contract reviews	Y			
Community Services	telephone charges	-6	Savings from new contract	Y			
Community Services	staff savings from reduced mileage and reduced hours	-3	Savings from staff member reducing working hours	Y			
Community Services	removal of budget historical DFG monies	-7	Review of budget efficiencies	Y			
Community Services	acommodation charges	-12	Already included in support recharges	Y			
Community Services	various	-28	Review of budget efficiencies	Y			
Corporate Resources	Reduction in External Audit Costs	-16	Reduced as per new contract arrangements	Y			
Corporate Resources	Appeals in Asset of Community	-20	Savings to be offered, subject to any future appeals to be drawn down from balances	Y			
Customer Access & Financial Support	Reduction in Hrs	-5	Savings from staff member reducing working hours	Y			
Environmental Services	Utlilities	-36	More efficient lighting and boiler	Y			
Environmental Services	Maintenance	-9	Saving on Depot Maintenance	Y			
Environmental Services	Additional Garden Waste income	-54	Price increase to £45 in 18/19	Y			
Environmental Services	Fuel and Vehicle R&M	-117	Fuel and R&M due to more efficient working and lower fuel costs.	Y			
Environmental Services	Domestic Bin Replacements	-53	Revenue saving achieved by moving replacement of bins to capital.	Y			
Environmental Services	Trade Bin Replacements	-10	Revenue saving achieved by moving replacement of bins to capital.	Y			
Environmental Services	Garden Waste Bin Replacements	-3	Revenue saving achieved by moving replacement of bins to capital.	Y			
Leisure & Cultural Services	Efficiency Saving	-5	Review of budget efficiencies	Y			

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Agenda Item 14

Department	Description of saving	2018-19 £'000	Comments	On target Y/N	Additional (add to to in yr savings) £'000	below target Y/N	Pressure £'000
Leisure & Cultural Services	Savings on accomodation costs	-8	Review of budget efficiencies	Y			
Leisure & Cultural Services	Year 3 and 4 income based upon operators offer at bslc	0	Additional income generated from new service provider at the Bromsgrove Leisure Centre	n/a			
Leisure & Cultural Services	NNDR on George House	-18	Savings following demolition of building	Y			
Leisure & Cultural Services	R & M for Parkside Building	-25	This saving relates to the repairs and maintenance of the building that are less than initially. This will be used to offset the income pressure against Parkside Hall which has been difficult to achieve but additional marketing will aim to mitigate the shortfall	Y			
Planning & Regeneration	Additional cross boundary partnership working	-2	Additional income generated following marketing of service.	N		Y	2
Planning & Regeneration	Reduction in car mileage costs	-8	Review of budget efficiencies	Y			
		-580			0		2

AUDIT, STANDARDS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

30 July 2019

- Election of Chairman
- Election of Vice Chairman
- Standard Regime - Monitoring Officer's Report
- Dispensations Report
- Grant Thornton External Audit Opinion 2018/19
- Grant Thornton (external audit) Audit Fee Letter 2019/20
- Statement of Accounts 2018/19
- Internal Audit – Annual Report
- External Assessment Progress Report
- Financial Savings Monitoring Report for January to March 2019
- RIPA Report
- Annual Appointment of Risk Management Champion for the Committee
- ASG Work Programme

17 October 2019

- Monitoring Officer's Report
- External Audit – Update Report (including oral update on Value for Money Conclusion)
- Accounting Standards (Statement of Accounting Policies)
- Audited Statement of Accounts (including final Annual Governance Statement)
- Financial Savings Monitoring Report for April to June 2019
- Internal Audit – Progress Report
- Benefits and Compliance Annual Update Report for 2018/19
- Corporate Risk Register
- Risk Champion's Update Report
- Work Programme

23 January 2020

- Monitoring Officer's Report
- External Audit – Progress Report/Action Plan Update
- External Audit – Annual Audit Letter
- Internal Audit – Progress Report
- S11 Action Plan Update Report
- Financial Savings Monitoring Report June to September 2019
- Risk Management Strategy
- Risk Champion's Update Report
- Work Programme

AUDIT, STANDARDS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

12 March 2020

- Monitoring Officer's Report
- Annual Report
- External Audit – Progress / Action Plan Update Report
- External Audit – Certification Work Report 2018/19
- External Audit – Audit Plan March
- External Audit – Auditing Standards
- Internal Audit – Progress Report
- Internal Audit – Draft Audit Plan
- Housing Benefits Subsidy Account Report
- Financial Savings and Section 11 Monitoring Report for September to December 2019
- Risk Champion's Update Report
- Work Programme