

**Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Services Manager's Opinion on the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control at Bromsgrove District Council (the Council) for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015**

**1. Audit Opinion**

- 1.1 The internal audit of Bromsgrove District Council's systems and operations during 2014/15 was conducted in accordance with the Internal Audit Annual plan which was presented to the Audit Board on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014 and a small subsequent revision.
- 1.2 The Internal Audit function was set up as a shared service in 2010/11 and hosted by Worcester City, for 5 district councils. The shared service operates in accordance with CIPFA guidance and the Institute of Internal Auditors Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2013.
- 1.3 The Internal Audit Plan for 2014/2015 was risk based (assessing audit and assurance factors, materiality risk, impact of failure, system risk, resource risk fraud risk, and external risk) using a predefined scoring system. It included:
  - a number of core systems which were designed to suitably assist the external auditor to reach their 'opinion' other corporate systems for example governance and
  - a number of operational systems, for example environmental enforcement, depot and stores and Land Charges were looked at to maintain and improve its control systems and risk management processes or reinforce its oversight of such systems.
- 1.4 The 2014/15 revised internal audit plan was delivered in full providing sufficient coverage for the s151 and Internal Audit Service Manager to form an overall opinion.
- 1.5 In relation to the twenty reviews that have been undertaken, thirteen audits have been finalised and seven are nearing completion at clearance meeting or draft report stage. Risk management was re-launched during 2012/13 with a Corporate Risk Register being formulated and training being provided. However, further work is required to embed this throughout the organisation with the outcomes being monitored by the Risk Management Group. An area which returned an assurance level of

'limited' was Worcestershire Regulatory Services. All areas where assurance was 'limited' or below will be addressed by management and have a defined action plan in place in order to address the weaknesses and issues identified. Where audits are to be finalised a comprehensive management action plan will be required and agreed by the s151 Officer.

- 1.6 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. For all services no areas of significant risk have been identified. Any concerns raised by managers will be assessed and addressed by the Authorities Corporate Management Team.
- 1.7 One key area of risk during the year was the transferral of the main ledger to a new system. This presented its own challenges but has been closely monitored by both internal and external audit. The work that internal audit completed was able to give assurance on the integrity of the key underlying figures and controls associated with the new ledger. The historical breakdown of cost centre figures will remain on the previous system which is acceptable for now but there is an increasing risk associated with this as time passes because the system will be no longer supported and with the natural churn of staff and reduced use the expertise to interpret and extract data effectively will diminish.
- 1.8 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 during a time of continuing significant transformation and change. Where a 'limited' assurance has been reported this has been in connection with a shared service in which Bromsgrove is a partner.
- 1.9 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. Based on the audits performed in accordance with the approved and revised plan, the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service Manager has concluded that the internal control arrangements during 2014/15 managed the principal risks

## **AUDIT BOARD**

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Date 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015

identified in the audit plan and can be reasonably relied upon to ensure that the Council's corporate purposes have been met.

**Andy Bromage**  
**Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Services Manager**  
June 2015