

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF INTERNAL AUDIT FOR 2024/25

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor S. Colella (at time report prepared)
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Bob Watson, S151 Officer
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Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Good Governance & Risk Management underpins all the Strategic Purposes.
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 **The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee notes the Annual Report of Internal Audit.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations and the Internal Audit Standards (the Standards) require the Head of Internal Audit to provide an annual Internal Audit Opinion and report that can be used by the organisation to inform its Annual Governance Statement. The Standards also specify that the report must contain:
- An internal audit opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk and control framework (i.e. the control environment);
 - A summary of the audit work from which the opinion is derived and any work by other assurance providers upon which reliance is placed; and
 - A statement on the extent of conformance with the Standards including progress against the improvement plan resulting from any external assessments.

- 2.2 **Appendix 1** to this report provides the Internal Audit Annual Report; this includes the Head of Internal Audit's opinion on the control environment for 2024/25 and the basis for this opinion. The Head of Internal Audit's overall opinion is that **Reasonable Assurance** can be given that there is an adequate and effective governance, risk and control framework in place, designed to meet the organisation's objectives.

3. **Financial Implications**

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

4. **Legal Implications**

- 4.1 The Council is required under Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2018 to "maintain in accordance with proper practices an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of 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".

5. **STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 Good governance along with risk management underpin all the Corporate strategic purposes. This report provides an independent assurance over certain aspects of the Council's operations.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1 There are no implications arising out of this report.

Operational Implications

6.2 There are no new operational implications arising from this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

This report provides a reasonable level of independent assurance that the Council has an effective framework in place for the management of risk.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 ~ Annual Report of Internal Audit for 2024/25