

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Audit and Governance Committee

Date of meeting: 19 March 2015
Report of: Corporate Manager Governance and Audit
Title: Work Plan 2014/15 and 2015/16
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Peter Raynes

1.0 Report Summary

1.0 To present an updated Work Plan to the Committee for consideration.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee:

- i. note the changes to the 2014/15 Work Plan since it was last discussed in January
- ii. consider the draft agenda for June 2015 and determine any required amendments
- iii. note that the 2015/16 plan will be brought back to the Committee in June for development and approval.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The Audit and Governance Committee has a key role in overseeing and assessing the risk management, control and corporate governance arrangements and advising the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements. A forward looking programme of meetings and agenda items is necessary to ensure that the Committee fulfils its responsibilities.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 All wards.

5.0 Local Ward Affected

5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Chief Operating Officer)

7.1 When reviewing the Work Plan, Members will need to consider the resource implications of any reviews they wish to carry out both in terms of direct costs and in terms of the required officer support.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Head of Legal Services)

8.1 The Work Plan must take account of the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

9.0 Risk Assessment

9.1 Effective internal control and the establishment of an audit committee can never eliminate the risks of serious fraud, misconduct or misrepresentation of the financial position. However, an effective audit committee can:

- § raise awareness of the need for robust risk management, control and corporate governance arrangements and the implementation of audit recommendations
- § increase public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting
- § reinforce the importance and independence of internal and external audit and any other similar review process
- § provide additional assurance through a process of independent and objective review

9.2 A comprehensive Work Plan is necessary to ensure that the Committee fulfils its responsibilities.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 A forward looking programme of meetings and agenda items to ensure comprehensive coverage of the Committee's responsibilities has been attached at Appendix A of this report. The Committee is asked to consider the contents of the Work Plan and establish any changes that will enable it to meet its responsibilities. In doing so it should be noted that:

- following revisions to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (adopted on 1 January 2015) responsibility for receiving reports regarding non adherence with the Rules has transferred from the Audit and Governance Committee to the Procurement Board. The half yearly update report has, therefore, been removed from the March Agenda; and
- further discussion in the specialist Member/Officer groups is necessary in order to draft a Work Plan that extends beyond June

2015. It is proposed, therefore, that the draft Plan for the remainder of 2015/16 will be brought back to Committee in June for approval.

10.2 In order to help with their deliberations regarding the Work Plan, Members are asked to consider whether:

- the inclusion of each item on its agenda results in added value
 - the assurance process has a cost to the organisation and it should therefore be proportional to the risk
 - care should be taken to avoid duplication and maintain the focus of an audit committee on its core functions as defined by its terms of reference rather than wider issues that are subject to the work of other committees or assurance functions
- there are any time consuming aspects of Committee business that could be more effectively addressed elsewhere
 - an audit committee should operate at a resolutely strategic level. Care should be taken to avoid straying into matters of operational detail that should be resolved by service managers
 - the number and frequency of reports should be proportional to the risk in order to give the core business of an audit committee sufficient focus and attention and to avoid lengthy and thus unproductive meetings

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Jon Robinson

Designation: Audit Manager

Tel No: 01270 685864

Email: jon.robinson@cheshireeast.gov.uk