

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Audit and Governance Committee

Date of meeting: 10 December 2015
Report of: Corporate Manager Governance and Audit
Title: Work Plan 2015/16
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Peter Groves

1.0 Report Summary

1.0 The report presents an updated Work Plan (Appendix A) to the Committee for consideration.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee:

- consider the Work Plan and determine any required amendments that will enable it to fulfil its responsibilities; and
- note that the plan will be periodically brought back to the Committee 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 Council's risk management, control and corporate governance arrangements. It advises the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements. A forward looking programme of meetings and agenda items is necessary to enable the Committee to fulfil 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 Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 revoke the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 (S.I. 2011/817), although those regulations continue to have effect in relation to financial years ending on or before 31st March 2015.

8.2 The Work Plan for 2015/16 needs therefore to take account of the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 and The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

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

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 Aspects of the Audit and Governance Committee agenda are determined by statutory requirements such as the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement. Outside these agenda items, the Committee should aim to manage its agenda according to its assurance needs to fulfil its terms of reference. The Committee is asked to consider the contents of the Work Plan (Appendix A) and establish any amendments that will enable it to meet its responsibilities. In doing so it should be noted that the following changes have been made to the programme that was discussed in September 2015:

- The anti- fraud and corruption report which includes details in respect of the annual review of the Anti- Fraud and Corruption Policy and arrangements against best practice has been deferred until March 2016.
- The presentation regarding the assurance framework for Health and Wellbeing has been removed from the Work Plan. This follows a similar presentation to the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5th November at which Members of the Audit and Governance Committee attended.
- It has been noted that reports relating to work programmes for Member/Officer Working Groups and feedback from Member/Officer Working Groups may, following discussions between Members and the Corporate Manager Governance and Audit, require allocating to specific agendas.

10.2 In order to help with their deliberations, Members are asked to consider whether:

- the inclusion of each item on its agenda results in added value; as
 - 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; as
 - an audit committee should operate at a 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.

10.3 The Work Plan will be re-submitted to the Committee for further development and approval.

11.0 Access to Information

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

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