

Audit & Governance Committee

Date of Meeting: 31 May 2018

Report Title: Committee Work Plan 2018/19

Senior Officer: Jan Willis, Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report presents the Committee's Work Plan for the remaining meetings in 2018/19 (Appendix A) to the Committee for consideration.

2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1. That the Committee:
 - 2.1.1. Consider the Work Plan and determine any required amendments;
 - 2.1.2. Note that the plan will be brought back to the Committee throughout the year for further development and approval.

3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 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. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Not applicable

5. Background

- 5.1. Aspects of the Audit and Governance Committee's 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.

- 5.2. By identifying the key topics to be considered at the Audit and Governance Committee meetings, and receiving appropriate reports, Committee Members are able to undertake their duties effectively and deliver them to a high standard. In turn, this adds to the robustness of the risk management framework, the adequacy of the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and corporate governance of the Council.
- 5.3. To assist Members in considering the balance and coverage provided by the current Work Plan, an analysis of the Work Plan against the Committee's current Terms of Reference is included in Appendix B.
- 5.4. Members will recognise that some items are brought to Committee on a more regular basis than others and ensure that statutory requirements are complied with. There are also individual requirements of the Committee's Terms of Reference which are only used on an ad-hoc basis.
- 5.5. In order to help with their deliberations, Members are asked to consider the following:
 - 5.5.1. 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.
 - 5.5.2. 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
 - 5.5.3. 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.
- 5.6. The Work Plan will be re-submitted to the Committee for further development and approval at each subsequent meeting.
- 5.7. In agreement with the Committee Chair, the following reports which had initially been scheduled for the 31st May 2018 meeting have been re-scheduled for future meetings of the Committee.
 - 5.7.1. "Audit and Governance Committee Terms of Reference" and "Approach to the Disclosure of Internal Audit Reports"; these have been delayed as the publication of the CIPFA guidance needed to inform the reports has been delayed.

5.7.2. Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee”; the report needs to reference a number of other reports being considered at the May 2018 meeting, and will therefore be presented at the July 2018 Committee.

5.7.3. “Outcome of the External Assessment of Internal Audit”; The report from the external assessment is still being agreed between the assessors and the Council, and will then be subject to independent moderation via the North West Chief Audit Executive Group. Once finalised, the report will be presented to the earliest available Audit and Governance Committee.

5.7.4. A standing item on General Data Protection Regulations was requested the Committee’s meeting in March 2018. This has been covered under the Information Governance update at this meeting but will be considered separately at future meetings.

5.8. CIPFA have now published their 2018 Edition of “Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police”. This guidance will be reviewed and a report brought to the Committee in due course to advise on the updated guidance and the implications for the Committee, including any impact on the Committee’s Terms of Reference.

5.9. Legal Implications

5.9.1. The Work Plan for 2017/18 complies with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

5.10. Finance Implications

5.10.1. 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.

5.11. Equality Implications

5.11.1. There are no direct implications for equality in this report. The Audit and Governance Committee receives assurances from across the organisation

5.12. Human Resources Implications

5.12.1. Members should be satisfied that the inclusion of each item on its agenda results in added value, as the assurance process has a resource implication to the organisation and should therefore be proportional to the risk.

5.13. Risk Management Implications

5.13.1. 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:

5.13.1.1. raise awareness of the need for robust risk management, control and corporate governance arrangements and the implementation of audit recommendations,

5.13.1.2. increase public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting

5.13.1.3. reinforce the importance and independence of internal and external audit and any other similar review process

5.13.1.4. provide additional assurance through a process of independent and objective review

5.14. Rural Communities Implications

5.14.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

5.15. Implications for Children & Young People

5.15.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people.

5.16. Public Health Implications

5.16.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

6. Ward Members Affected

6.1. All wards affected.

7. Consultation & Engagement

7.1. The proposed Work Plan for 2018/19 was prepared following discussion with key officers who regularly provide updates to the Audit and Governance Committee. The proposed Work Plan was also discussed with the Committee Chair and Vice Chair and was considered by the Corporate Leadership Team prior to presentation to the Committee in March 2018.

8. Access to Information

8.1. Not applicable.

9. Contact Information

9.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officers:

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