

## **Audit & Governance Committee**

---

**Date of Meeting:** 30 May 2019

**Report Title:** Committee Work Plan

**Senior Officer:** Mark Taylor, Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services

---

### **1. Report Summary**

- 1.1. This report presents the Committee's Work Plan for 2019/20 (Appendix A) to the Committee for consideration.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 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 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. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. Not applicable

### **5. Background**

- 5.1. The Draft Statement of Accounts 2018/19 and Draft Annual Governance Statement had initially been scheduled for the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019 meeting. Final versions of these will be considered at the July Committee to ensure compliance with statutory deadlines. Draft versions of the respective

statements will be used in the training session scheduled ahead of the July meeting in order to ensure that Audit and Governance Committee members have sufficient opportunity to understand the content and purpose of the statements, and the Committee's role in approving them.

- 5.2. The Annual Monitoring Officer Report, Annual Information Governance Report, Annual Internal Audit Report and the Annual Risk Management update have been moved to the July Committee meeting as key sources of assurance for the Annual Governance Statement.
- 5.3. The review of the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure and the Counter Fraud Report have been moved from the July Committee meeting to the October meeting. This will ensure the Committee can be updated on the development of the Counter Fraud team and the Counter Fraud strategy to be adopted following the appointment to the Head of Audit and Risk.
- 5.4. 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.
- 5.5. 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.
- 5.6. 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. The Work Plan will be re-submitted to the Committee for further development and approval at each subsequent meeting.
- 5.7. In order to help with their deliberations, Members are asked to consider the following:
  - 5.7.1. That care is 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.

- 5.7.2. that the audit committee should operate at a strategic level and any time consuming aspects of the Committee's business should be addressed elsewhere. Matters of operational detail should be resolved by service managers
- 5.7.3. that the number and frequency of reports should be proportional to the risk ensuring the core business of the committee gives sufficient focus and attention, avoiding lengthy or unproductive meetings.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1. Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1. The Work Plan for 2019/20 complies with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

### **6.2. Finance Implications**

- 6.2.1. 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.

### **6.3. Equality Implications**

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

### **6.4. Human Resources Implications**

- 6.4.1. 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.

### **6.5. Risk Management Implications**

- 6.5.1. 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:

- 6.5.1.1. raise awareness of the need for robust risk management, control and corporate governance arrangements and the implementation of audit recommendations,
- 6.5.1.2. increase public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting

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

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

#### **6.6. Rural Communities Implications**

6.6.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

#### **6.7. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children**

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

#### **6.8. Public Health Implications**

6.8.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

### **7. Ward Members Affected**

7.1. All wards affected.

### **8. Consultation & Engagement**

8.1. The Work Plan for 2019/20 was prepared following discussion with key officers who regularly provide updates to the Audit and Governance Committee and approved by the Audit and Governance Committee in March 2019.

### **9. Access to Information**

9.1. Not applicable.

### **10. Contact Information**

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

Name: Michael Todd/Josie Griffiths

Job Title: Principal Auditors

Email: [michael.todd@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:michael.todd@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

[josie.griffiths@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:josie.griffiths@cheshireeast.gov.uk)