

Audit & Governance Committee

Date of Meeting: 28 May 2020

Report Title: Committee Work Plan

Senior Officer: Jan Bakewell, Director of Governance and Compliance

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report presents the Committee's Work Plan for the remainder of 2020/21 as set out in Appendix A.
- 1.2. This includes a number of changes to the 2020/21 work plan proposed at the March 2020 meeting which have been necessary to accommodate changes prompted by legislative changes in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Committee:
 - 2.1.1. Agree the change of date proposed for the 10th December 2020 meeting to a date to be agreed in November 2020.
 - 2.1.2. Consider the Work Plan and determine any required amendments;
 - 2.1.3. 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.
- 3.2. The change in planned meeting dates is necessary to ensure compliance with the changes to timescales introduced by the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020¹. The regulations have been

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/404/contents/made>

passed to extend the deadline for the approval of the draft accounts to 31 August and for the publication of the final audited accounts to 30 November.

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 set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015). The planned schedule of meetings for 2020/21 will need changes, as summarised in Table 1 to accommodate the changes brought about by the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.
- 5.2. The detailed Work Plan provided in Appendix A has been adjusted to ensure that items are brought to the Committee to inform its responsibilities in relation to the consideration of the draft and final Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement.
- 5.3. Table 1

Original Meeting Date	Change required	New Meeting Date
30 th July 2020	No change required to date; changes to agenda items covered in Appendix A	n/a
24 th September 2020	No change required to date; changes to agenda items covered in Appendix A and will be subject to further review at July 2020 meeting.	n/a
10 th December 2020	Requested that this meeting is brought forward to facilitate consideration and approval of the final Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement in line with amended regulations.	Date TBC - November 2020
11 th March 2021	Not change required to the meeting date at this point; Committee may wish to consider timing and content at the September and November meetings.	n/a

- 5.4. 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. 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.
 - 5.7.2. that the Audit and Governance Committee should operate at a strategic level with matters of operational detail resolved by service managers.
 - 5.7.3. 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.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. The Work Plan for 2020/21 has been updated to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

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. Policy Implications

- 6.3.1. There are no policy implications in this report.

6.4. Equality Implications

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

6.5. Human Resources Implications

6.5.1. 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.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

6.6.1. 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:

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

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

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

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

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

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

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

6.10.1. There are no climate change implications in this report.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. All wards affected.

8. Consultation & Engagement

- 8.1. The proposed Work Plan was prepared following discussion with key officers who regularly provide updates to the Audit and Governance Committee. The proposed Work Plan has also been discussed with the Committee Chair and Vice Chair and was considered by the Corporate Leadership Team.

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:

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