

Joint Audit and Governance Committee

Report of Internal Audit Manager

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To: Joint Audit and Governance Committee

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Internal audit activity report quarter two 2022/23

Recommendations

That members note the content of the report

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to summarise the outcomes of recent internal audit activity at both councils for the committee to consider. The committee is asked to review the report and the main issues arising and seek assurance that action will be/has been taken where necessary.
2. The contact officer for this report is Victoria Dorman-Smith, Internal Audit Manager for South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC), email victoria.dorman-smith@southandvale.gov.uk.

Strategic objectives

3. Delivery of an effective internal audit function will support the councils in meeting their strategic objectives.

4. Internal audit is an independent assurance function that primarily provides an objective opinion on the degree to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievements of the council's objectives. It assists the councils by evaluating the adequacy of governance, risk management, controls and use of resources through its planned audit work, and recommending improvements where necessary. After each audit assignment, internal audit has a duty to report to management its findings on the control environment and risk exposure, and recommend changes for improvements where applicable. Managers are responsible for considering audit reports and taking the appropriate action to address control weaknesses.

5. Assurance ratings given by internal audit indicate the following:

Full assurance: There is a good system of internal control designed to meet the system objectives and the controls are being consistently applied.

Substantial assurance: There is a sound system of internal control designed to meet the system objectives and the controls are being applied.

Satisfactory assurance: There is basically a sound system of internal control although there are some minor weaknesses and/or there is evidence that the level of non-compliance may put some minor system objectives at risk.

Limited assurance: There are some weaknesses in the adequacy of the internal control system which put the system objectives at risk and/or the level of non-compliance puts some of the system objectives at risk.

Nil assurance: Control is weak leaving the system open to significant error or abuse and/or there is significant non-compliance with basic controls.

6. Each recommendation is given one of the following risk ratings:

High Risk: Fundamental control weakness for senior management action

Medium Risk: Other control weakness for local management action

Low Risk: Recommended best practice to improve overall control

Completed audit reports

7. As of 9 September 2022, since the last joint audit and governance committee meeting the following audits and follow up reviews have been completed:

Completed Audits: 9

Full Assurance: 1

Substantial Assurance: 2

Satisfactory Assurance: 6

Limited Assurance: 0

Nil Assurance: 0

Audit Area	Assurance Rating	Total Recs	Agenda Item 8					
			High Risk	No. Agreed	Medium Risk	No. Agreed	Low Risk	No. Agreed
Joint								
Housing Benefits & Council Tax Reduction Scheme 21/22	Satisfactory	7	0	0	3	3	4	4
Learning & Development 21/22	Satisfactory	8	0	0	4	4	4	4
Information Governance 21/22	Full	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Garden Waste 21/22	Satisfactory	4	0	0	2	2	2	2
Covid-19 Grants 21/22	Satisfactory	6	0	0	3	3	3	3
Council Tax 21/22	Satisfactory	7	0	0	4	4	3	3
Grievance Policy 22/23	Substantial	7	0	0	1	1	6	6
Gifts & Hospitality 22/23	Satisfactory	4	0	0	4	4	0	0
Community Safety 22/23	Substantial	2	0	0	1	1	1	1
SODC								
None								
VWHDC								
None								

Follow Up Reviews

Audit Area	Initial Assurance Given	No. of Recs	Implemented	Partly Implemented	Not Implemented	No longer applicable
Joint						
Car Parking & Enforcement 21/22	Satisfactory	13	6	2	5	0
Council Fees & Charges 21/22	Satisfactory	6	0	1	5	0
Planning Appeals 21/22	Satisfactory	7	2	3	2	0
Property Management 21/22	Limited	9	1	2	6	0
SODC						
None						
VWHDC						
None						

8. Members of the committee are asked to seek assurance from the internal audit reports and/or respective managers that the agreed actions have been or will be undertaken where necessary.
9. A copy of each report has been sent to the appropriate service manager, the section 151 officer and the relevant member portfolio holder. In addition, reports are now published

on the councils' intranet and limited assurance reports are reviewed by the strategic management team.

10. Internal audit continues to carry out a six month follow up on all non-key financial audits to establish the implementation status of agreed recommendations. All key financial system recommendations are followed up as part of the annual assurance cycle.

Climate and ecological impact implications

11. There are no direct climate or ecological implications arising from this report.

Financial implications

12. There are no financial implications attached to this report.

Legal implications

13. None.

Risks

14. Identification of risk is an integral part of all audits.

VICTORIA DORMAN-SMITH
INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGER