



AUDIT COMMITTEE

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| DATE: | Thursday, 5 October 2023 |
| TIME: | 10.30 am |
| VENUE: | Committee Room - Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 1SE |

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillor Sudra (Chairman)
Councillor Lennard (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Fairley

Councillor Platt
Councillor Steady

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DATE OF PUBLICATION: Wednesday, 27 September 2023

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

The Committee is asked to note any apologies for absence and substitutions received from Members.

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting (Pages 1 - 16)

To confirm and sign as a correct record, the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on Thursday 13 July 2023.

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillors are invited to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests of Non-Registerable Interests, and the nature of it, in relation to any item on the agenda.

4 Questions on Notice pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 38

Subject to providing two working days' notice, a Member of the Committee may ask the Chairman of the Committee a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties which affect the Tendring District **and** which falls within the terms of reference of the Committee.

5 Report of the Internal Audit Manager - A.1 - Report on Internal Audit (Pages 17 - 40)

To provide the Committee with a periodic report on the Internal Audit function for the period June 2023 – August 2023, as required by the professional standards.

6 Report of the Corporate Director (Place & Economy) - A.2 - Progress On Climate Action (Pages 41 - 56)

To present to Members a two-year progress report on the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

7 Report of the Assistant Director (Finance & IT) - A.3 - Table of Outstanding Issues (Pages 57 - 70)

To present to the Committee the progress on outstanding actions identified by the Committee along with general updates on other issues that fall within the responsibilities of the Committee.

Date of the Next Scheduled Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Audit Committee is to be held in the Committee Room - Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 1SE at 10.30 am on Thursday, 25 January 2024.

Information for Visitors

FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE,
HELD ON THURSDAY, 13TH JULY, 2023 AT 10.30 AM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, AT THE TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-
ON-SEA, CO15 1SE**

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| Present: | Councillors Sudra (Chairman), Lennard (Vice-Chairman), Fairley, Platt and Steady |
| In Attendance: | Richard Barrett (Assistant Director (Finance and IT) & Section 151 Officer), Craig Clawson (Internal Audit Manager), Clare Lewis (Assurance and Resilience Manager), Karen Townshend (Executive Projects Manager (Governance)), Keith Durran (Committee Services Officer) and Bethany Jones (Committee Services Officer) |
| Also in attendance: | Steve Bladen and Tshiamo Hlatshwayo of BDO LLP (the Council's External Auditors) |

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

No apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors on this occasion.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on Thursday 30 March 2023 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

No Questions on Notice pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 38 had been submitted on this occasion.

5. REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGER - A.1 - REPORT ON INTERNAL AUDIT

The Committee was provided with a periodic report on the Internal Audit function for the period March 2023 – May 2023 and the Internal Audit Manager's Annual Report for 2022/23 as required by the professional standards.

This report was split into three sections:

- 1) Internal Audit Plan Progress 2022/23
- 2) Annual Report of Internal Audit Manager
- 3) Internal Audit Plan Progress 2023/24

Members heard how the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) required the Chief Internal Auditor (Internal Audit Manager) to make arrangements for reporting to

senior management (Management Team) and to the board (Audit Committee) during the course of the year, and for producing an annual Internal Audit opinion and report that could be used to inform the Annual Governance Statement.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 required that: *“a relevant authority must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance”*.

In respect of the Internal Audit Plan the PSIAS required the Internal Audit Manager to: -

- *Establish a risk based Internal Audit Plan, at least annually, to determine the priorities of the Internal Audit function, consistent with the Council’s goals.*
- *Had in place a mechanism to review and adjust the plan, as necessary, in response to changes to the Council’s business, risks, operations, programmes, systems and controls.*
- *Produces a plan that takes into account the need to produce an annual Internal Audit opinion.*
- *Considers the input of senior management and the Audit Committee in producing the plan.*
- *Assesses the Internal Audit resource requirements.*

It was reported to the Committee that all expected audits for the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan had been completed. A total number of eight audits had been completed during April 2023 to May 2023. Two audits in that period had received an overall opinion of ‘Improvement Required’ (Housing Repairs and Maintenance and Housing Allocations) with the other six receiving satisfactory assurance opinions with no significant issues being identified. The audits receiving an overall opinion of ‘Adequate’ or ‘Substantial’ in that period were Risk Management, Health and Safety, Recycling and Waste, IT Governance, Freedom of Information / Subject Access Requests and Procurement. Internal Audit continued to provide advice on internal control, risk management and governance arrangements on a consultative basis.

All audits completed in the year had been assessed against the following risk:-

“The department has not managed or adapted to post Covid-19 working arrangements therefore current processes do not align with service demand potentially leading to process inefficiencies and gaps in internal control”. All procedural changes had been recorded and recommendations would be made throughout the year if procedural changes were needed; however, all departments reviewed to date had adapted well to the challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic and no significant issues specifically relating to the above risk had been identified.

The Committee also heard that the Internal Audit section remained focussed on delivering the message that it was here to support services and by letting the Council know about policy and procedural changes, difficult circumstances or just the unknown due to working on new projects / initiatives, it could advise and support at an early

stage rather than create additional work at a later date if governance or internal control issues were identified during an audit at a later date.

Quality Assurance – The Internal Audit function issued satisfaction surveys for each audit completed. In the period under review 100% of the responses received had indicated that the auditee was satisfied with the audit work undertaken.

Resourcing

Internal Audit had an establishment of 4 fte posts with access to a third-party provider of Internal Audit Services for specialist audit days as and when required. The Council had an Audit Technician post vacant at the time of the meeting. The Audit department had recently advertised and interviewed for an Internal Audit Apprentice with the successful applicant due to start in early July 2023. Unfortunately, the candidate would now no longer be joining the Council as they had since found alternative employment. Therefore, there was a need to advertise and recruit again; however, this would be the third attempt to recruit with not many people previously applying for the vacancy.

Outcomes of Internal Audit Work

The Standards required the Internal Audit manager to report to the Audit Committee on significant risk exposures and control issues. Since the last report four audits had been completed and the final report issued. The PSIAS required the reporting of significant risk exposures and control issues.

| Assurance | Colour | Number this Period | Total for 2022/23 Plan | |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Substantial | | 3 | 9 | |
| Adequate | | 3 | 12 | |
| Improvement Required | | 2 | 2 | |
| Significant Improvement Required | | 0 | 0 | |
| No Opinion Required | | 0 | 3 | Two consultative engagements in 2022/23 to date |

For the purpose of the colour coding approach, both the substantial and adequate opinions were shown in green as both were within acceptable tolerances. Issues arising from audits completed in the period under review receiving an 'Improvement Required' opinion and requiring reporting to Committee were: -

Housing Allocations

Semi-automation of the Housing Register

Finding

"Shortlists to determine allocation of tenancies should be automated, recorded and reflect preferences and bandings of applicants."

Previously, this was a manual process, and flaws in this were highlighted in previous audit reports.

A new system was implemented and while the system is a large improvement on the previous method, the shortlisting still requires some manual input to bypass unsuitable candidates and officer time to sift through these.

Reasons for manual bypass could include an unrequested area, only accepting sheltered housing or a property unable to be adapted for a disabled applicant”.

Risk

“Without fully evidencing why certain applicants were bypassed, it is problematic to evidence why one applicant was awarded the property over another with an apparently higher claim. There is also the risk of an applicant being unfairly awarded accommodation if a higher placed applicant can be bypassed without authorisation or in error manually by an officer”.

Agreed Action

It was reported to Members that, at the conclusion of the Post Live Update software upgrade, it was expected that the shortlisting process should be fully automated due to including more factors (such as location) in the filtering to determine eligibility and offer. There should not be any manual input, which should make the process both less prone to manual error and manipulation as well as faster to process.

The process should still have a manual check to ensure the system was correct and all documentation was present and correct before any offer was made.

Housing Repairs and Maintenance

“The issues identified within the Housing Repairs and Maintenance review remain the same as the previous years audit. The reason for the overall ‘Improvement Required’ opinion is because the new management system has not yet been fully implemented which is expected because it is a long term solution to the issues previously identified. However, because temporary processes are still being used until the system is fully implemented we were unable to provide an improved audit opinion from the previous year”.

Recycling and Waste

“Although the overall opinion for recycling and waste was ‘Adequate Assurance’ there is one finding that needs to be raised with the Audit Committee because it is significant to green waste. In terms of recycling and waste generally, green waste collection is a small part of the service and its financial impact in comparison to the overall contract is low. However, the issue identified has a significant impact on the management of the green waste collection service”.

Finding

The Committee heard that the Garden Waste service had significantly grown since the introduction of the function. In order to effectively manage and monitor the service, several operational controls should be in place. Currently, there was no master list to confirm the total number of garden waste customers. This had led to a lack of reconciliations, which essentially, prevented the team from checking income against customer figures. In line with the above, invoices were unclear which made it challenging to establish charges for individual bin collections. Therefore, the team were uncertain whether the Council was being correctly charged, per bin.

The use of two systems had also made it difficult to provide an accurate database.

Risk

“Failure to implement suggested changes, could result in the following;

- Customers receiving a service which they have not paid for
- The Council being over charged for garden waste bin collections
- Associated debt through lack of house keeping
- Financial loss and Reputational Damage”

Agreed Action

It was reported to Members that Garden waste data was to be transferred to Firmsteps, in order to verify total number of customers. Transparency of garden waste invoices was also to be sought, to enable confirmation of charges.

Once complete, full monthly reconciliations would be carried out and checks by management would be evidenced.

Management Response to Internal Audit Findings – There were processes in place to track the action taken regarding findings raised in Internal Audit reports and sought assurance that appropriate corrective action had been taken. Where appropriate follow up audits had been arranged to revisit significant issues identified after an appropriate time.

The number of high severity issues outstanding was as follows: -

| Status | Number | Comments |
|----------------------------|--------|----------|
| Overdue more than 3 months | 0 | |
| Overdue less than 3 months | 1 | |
| Not yet due | 0 | |

Update on previous significant issues reported

Depot Operations

It was outlined to the Committee that issues had previously been reported to the Audit Committee relating to Housing Repairs and Maintenance and Depot Operations that remained ongoing, however a further update could be provided relating specifically to stock taking.

The service had a designated Officer to manage stores who recorded and issued stock

upon management approval to keep a better record of all assets and stock. A weekly stock take was undertaken based on categories due to the variety of stock e.g. timber, tools, etc.

As this information was held and updated on a spreadsheet it could be prone to error or manipulation and had a big impact on staff time to update the records. However, it was a huge improvement on the fact that there was no process previously. The current process was a temporary fix until a full stock control and barcoding system could be implemented. The IT Department had agreed to create this system, a first version had already been created but some changes needed to be made in order to implement it fully.

The Committee requested that the Portfolio Holder responsible for the Council's waste function, as well as the appropriate Officer attend the next meeting of the Committee to discuss these green waste issues.

Richard Barrett (Assistant Director, Finance & IT) said that he would update the Committee on the progress of a solution to the Green Waste issue between now and the next meeting of the Committee.

Annual Audit Report of the Internal Audit Manager

Members were reminded that all local authorities must make proper provision for internal audit in line with the Local Government Act 1972. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 required that the Council undertook an effective Internal Audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, internal control and governance processes, taking into account the Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards (PSIAS).

The PSIAS stated that a professional, independent and objective internal audit service was one of the key elements of good governance, as recognised throughout the UK public sector. The role of the Head of Internal Audit (Internal Audit Manager), in accordance with the PSIAS, was to provide an opinion based upon, and limited to, the work performed on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management, and control processes.

As set out in PSIAS there was a requirement under PSIAS 2450 that the Chief Audit Executive must provide an annual report to the Audit Committee, timed to support the Annual Governance Statement. This must include:

- *An annual internal audit opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk and control framework (i.e. the control environment);*
- *A summary of the audit work from which the opinion was derived (including reliance placed on work by other assurance bodies); and*
- *A statement on conformance with the PSIAS and the results of the internal audit Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.*

It was reported that the Council was accountable collectively for maintaining a sound system of internal control and was responsible for putting in place arrangements for gaining assurance about the effectiveness of that overall system. As a result of this, the Council continued to adopt a 'Three Lines of Defence' assurance model, which was taken from the following sources:-

1. Senior Management and Departmental Leadership

Under the first line of defence, operational management had ownership, responsibility and accountability for directly assessing, controlling and mitigating risks.

2. Internal Governance

The second line of defence consisted of activities covered by several components of internal governance (Statutory Officers, Corporate Oversight Functions, Quality Control, IT Security, Data Protection and other control departments). This line of defence monitored and facilitated the implementation of effective risk management practices by operational management and assisted the risk owners in reporting adequate risk related information up and down the organisation.

3. Internal Audit

The requirement for an internal audit function in local government was detailed within the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which stated that a relevant body must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.

Internal Audit Approach

The Committee was aware that the Internal Audit function undertook a programme of audits each year in order to provide the Council and its Audit Committee with assurance on the adequacy of its system of internal control, governance and risk management arrangements. The audit programme was developed using a risk based approach that incorporated a number of independent reviews of the Council's activities to be able to give an overall opinion on the areas mentioned above.

Over the past few years there had been a rapid shift in the risk landscape leading to changing expectations from stakeholders for more value driven outcomes from Internal Audit work. This could be broken down into the following four categories that the Internal Audit function had tried to adopt in its approach to auditing within Tendring District Council;

- *Flexibility – Utilising different options to build engagement that allow varied deliverables;*
- *Value creation – Enhancing or improving deliverables whilst considering culture, organisation maturity and stakeholder needs;*
- *Innovation – Considering new and different ways of delivering audit efficiency, risk coverage and overall value; and*
- *Systematic approach – Considering options and making decisions in an orderly way.*

The Committee was reminded that the COVID-19 pandemic had been a major contributor to the ever changing risk landscape which had led to the impact of COVID-19 becoming a section of every audit undertaken and it would continue to be going forwards. The Internal Audit Team recorded changes to procedures and effectiveness and efficiency issues due to COVID-19 and reported any significant issues to the Council's Management Team and Audit Committee as required. Departments had adapted well by making permanent and temporary changes to procedures.

Recommendations had been made to a number of service areas throughout the year to reassess what were meant to be temporary process changes. However, none had been significant enough to warrant reporting to the Audit Committee as they were minor operational issues managed by departments without significant resource impacts.

Communication between Internal Audit, Leadership and the Audit Committee had been effective and remained consistent which provided reasonable assurance around the effectiveness and transparency of reporting arrangements.

Internal Audit had continued to work with services on a consultancy basis to support the implementation of new processes, identify and analyse root cause if necessary and to ensure that all relevant employees had the appropriate training to competently carry out their role. This included advising service areas' transformation projects, procurement, ad-hoc investigations and any further advice on procedures due to the impact of COVID-19.

Independent investigatory work had also been undertaken throughout the year as and when required to support Senior Management when internal control issues had arisen within service areas.

In 2022/23, only two audits from a total of 26 reviews undertaken had received an overall audit opinion of "Improvement Required" where high severity issues had been identified. Those audits had been Housing Allocations and Housing Repairs and Maintenance. The issues raised in both areas had related specifically around system implementation and the need to ensure that the IT systems used to manage the records and monitor progress were further developed.

Improvement actions were in place for the mentioned audit areas, which had been followed up by the Internal Audit function to assess the progress of implementation. All significant issues were reported to the Audit Committee with required improvement actions throughout the year in order to provide a continuous update on the Council's control environment, governance arrangements and material issues identified.

ANNUAL OPINION 2022/23

The Committee was advised that the Head of Internal Audit's annual assurance opinion was based on the following:

- *Internal Audit work completed during the course of the year;*
- *observations from consultancy/ advisory support;*
- *results of any follow up exercises undertaken in respect of previous years' internal audit work;*
- *a review of assurance from other providers including those from first and second lines of defence, independent regulators and peer reviews;*
- *the extent of resources available to deliver the internal audit work; and*
- *the quality and performance of the Internal Audit service and the extent of compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards*

Limitations to the Annual Opinion

It was reported that there were no limitations to report on the ability to deliver the Internal Audit Plan and to provide an annual opinion on the effectiveness of governance,

risk management and internal control. There had been changes to the audit plan throughout the year due to emerging risks and changes to service provision. The changes to the audit plan had been made in consultation with the Audit Committee and Management Team to fit with the resources available at the time.

The Head of Internal Audit's Annual Opinion

The Committee was informed that the overall direction of travel regarding the internal control environment since 2022/23 had improved. In 2021/22 it had been noted that an unqualified opinion could be difficult due to the wider governance issues raised in that year. However, it was noted that, based on the work completed in 2022/23, there had been evidence of improvements to processes and procedures throughout the Council meaning that a qualified opinion was not necessary for the 2022/23 financial year. A total of 39 moderate issues and 1 major issue had been identified with actions agreed with operational management throughout the year. All major actions had been reported to the Audit Committee and all moderate actions had been managed through the audit follow-up process with the service area.

Governance arrangements and internal controls had been evaluated in all audits within the plan, albeit with varying levels of scope. Senior Management continued to review strategic risks on a regular basis within Management Team and the Corporate Risk Register was reviewed bi-annually with any feedback reported to Management Team for its consideration.

The Internal Audit Manager had considered assurances obtained through:

- *All of the information reported above;*
- *Internal Audit outcomes;*
- *Annual Risk Management Review;*
- *The Council's assurance framework;*
- *Management assurance through the Annual Governance Statement process;*
- *External inspections;*
- *Ongoing engagement with the business; and*
- *Monitoring and reporting the implementation of agreed management actions.*

The Internal Audit Manager was satisfied that sufficient work had been completed in 2022/23 to draw a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's activities. The internal control environment continued to remain stable with some significant changes in specific service areas, which had been reported to the Audit Committee throughout the year as part of the periodic reporting arrangements. An open dialogue with Senior Management on risk remained in place and a generally sound system of internal control had been assessed across the majority of the Council's operational areas. Therefore, an overall unqualified opinion of 'Adequate Assurance' could be provided.

In noting this opinion, it was acknowledged that Internal Audit had not reviewed all risks and assurances and could not provide absolute assurance on the internal control environment.

The above report would be included within the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) as part of its statutory responsibilities.

Internal Audit Progress 2023/24

It was reported that the Internal Audit Team had yet to finalise an audit within the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan. A total of six audits were in the 'fieldwork' phase.

Work had begun in areas such as Corporate Governance, Planning Development, Leisure Estate – Efficiencies and Cost Pressures, Building Control, Treasury Management and Contact Centre - Digitalisation.

Appendix B (2023/24 Internal Audit Plan progress) to the report provided an update on the status of each audit to date. There were no significant issues or particular areas of concern to report at this time.

After an in-depth discussion, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and, in particular, in relation to the following:

- **The annual opinion statement within this report**
- **The completion of audit work against the 2022/23 and 2023/24 Internal Audit Plans**
- **Any audit findings provided; and**
- **The overall performance and customer satisfaction on audit delivery**

6. REPORT OF THE ASSURANCE AND RESILIENCE MANAGER - A.2 - CORPORATE RISK UPDATE

The Committee was presented with the updated Corporate Risk Register, which had been last presented to the Committee in September 2022. The Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee included a responsibility to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment. The Corporate Risk Register was, where possible, brought to the Committee at six monthly intervals to enable the Committee to fulfil its role.

Corporate Risk Register

Members heard that the register had been subject to the review process with some highlights as follows.

A Covid 19 element continued to form part of all ongoing audits. Any significant findings identified would be provided at a later meeting by the Internal Audit Manager.

The Assurance and Resilience Manager continued to review the Council's Business Impact Assessments (BIA) to ensure the Council was able to identify the operational and financial impacts resulting from any potential disruption of business functions and processes. The purpose of the review was to consider how the Council could recover and continue to provide a service to our residents should a significant disruption occur. A more in-depth update would be provided to the Audit Committee once the review had something to report.

Members also heard that the Council continued to deal with issues relating to Corporate IT and was committed to ensuring users were not put at risk of cyber-attack. Online training was provided, which was tailored towards identifying the weaknesses

throughout the authority that could make the Council vulnerable to cyber-attacks and reduced the risk of the council being held to ransom by any attacker.

The Committee was informed that recruitment continued to be a challenge, but the Council had recently worked with the East of England Local Government Association to carry out an independent review of some areas of its pay structure and employment offer. This had led to some options to support the best use of the National Joint Council pay spine in alignment with the employment market. Those had included salary and benefits benchmarking, improved marketing of vacancies and employment offers, and expanding the well-established "grow your own" ethos. Those options were currently being considered as part of the Assistant Director change program.

The national and global "landscape" continued to impact the Council, and a full review of the Corporate Risk Register would be carried out during 2023/24. This would be done in consultation with Senior Officers and Members/Audit Committee. The changes to the Corporate Risk Register set out in this report reflected small changes undertaken since the Committee had last considered the register in September 2022 and provided updates on changing deadlines.

The Committee was also informed that a review of the Council's Risk Management concept would be carried out and brought back to the Audit Committee in the next six months. This work would include a review of the current risks included, along with the consideration of any changes or additions to reflect the most up-to-date position/changes faced by the council. This review would also consider the condition of the Council's assets and the risk of ineffective maintenance of all Council-owned properties that could have an adverse impact on the organizational focus delivery.

The table below set out all amendments to the Risk Register since it had last been considered by the Committee in September 2022.

| Risk Register Item | Amendments / Comments |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| New Risks Identified | None |
| Risks Removed | None |
| Risk Scores Amended | <p>Item 2a - Coastal Defence – residual risk increased from 5 – 15.</p> <p>Item 2d - Ineffective delivery of Transformation project – inherent risk reduced from 15 – 2. Residual risk reduced from to 3 – 2. (consider removal of this item)</p> <p>Item 4a - Loss of Key staff – inherent risk reduced from to 16 – 12.</p> <p>Item 4b - Lack of capacity to deliver core services – residual risk reduced from 16- 12.</p> <p>Item 7a - Local Plan - residual risk reduced from 12 – 5.</p> |

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| Risk number changed | None |
| Risks Amended | <p>Item 1a - Failure to effectively manage assets – comment regarding a review of the asset management plan provided. Consideration to review Action Plan.</p> <p>Item 1c - Ineffective communication / management of information – update on main wording relating to cybersecurity and members IT.</p> <p>Item 1d - Ineffective Cyber Security Physical and Application (software) Based Protection Management – updates to main wording relating to cyber security being strengthened.</p> <p>Item 2a - Coastal Defence – Officer responsibility updated from Corporate Director Operations and Delivery to Assistant Director Building and Public Realm. Description updated relating to risk and the stability of the cliffs. Current action updated. Update provided for cabinet member.</p> <p>Item 2b - Community Leadership Projects – current action updated to include a comment relating to reputational and financial risk in engaging in partnership relationships, ensuring robust agreements are in place.</p> <p>Item 2d - Ineffective delivery of Transforming Tending project – current action wording updated to reflect that this project is now finalised. Inherent risk score and residual risk score amended to reflect this update. Cabinet member updated.</p> <p>Item 2f – Garden Communities - current action updated to reflect Housing Infrastructure Funding in place. Planning Performance Agreement in discussion with lead developers and Planning Manager. Updated portfolio holder details.</p> <p>Item 3c – Health and Safety – Main wording updated regarding succession planning. Responsible officer updated.</p> <p>Item 3d – Fraud and Corruption – wording updated to reflect changes in fraud awareness training and induction process. Officer responsibility updated.</p> <p>Item 4a – Loss of Key staff - update provided relating to changes to recruitment buy utilizing ECC recruitment. Inherent risk and residual risk rating reduced to reflect this change.</p> |

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| | <p>Item 4b - Lack of capacity to deliver core services - comprehensive update provided relating to considerations of recruitment and the use of East of England Local Government Association. Officer responsibility updated.</p> <p>Item 5a – Financial Strategy – update provided relating to developing a framework to capture key financial information/savings. A review of financial planning cycle to be reviewed during 2023.</p> <p>Item 6a - Loss of sensitive and/or personal data through malicious actions loss theft and/or hacking. Current action updated relating to precures being in place to manage agreements with partner organizations.</p> <p>Item 6b - Disconnection from PSN Network – updated current action wording relating to the national cyber security and cyber security framework. Comment provided relating to PSN health check.</p> <p>Item 7a – Local Plan - current action update provided relating to local plan being adopted in Jann 22 and review due in 2025. Residual risk reduced to reflect this.</p> <p>Item 9a - Ineffective Emergency Planning – update provided on emergency planning actions.</p> <p>Item 9b – Ineffective Business Continuity Planning – update to main text relating to planned business continuity actions. Additional responsible officer added.</p> |
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The Fraud and Risk Team continued to oversee the Council’s Risk Management supported by the Council’s Internal Audit Team. The table below set out the work currently being undertaken:-

| Agreed Action | Current Position |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Management Team to promote the importance of operational risk management within the organisation and ensure that Senior Managers implement a process for identifying and mitigating risks in coordination with the Assurance and Resilience Manager (formally Corporate Fraud and Risk Manager) | The Assurance and Resilience Manager continued to work with Management Team to effectively promote the importance of operational risk management within the Council and continued to attend management team meetings on a quarterly basis and provided monthly updates for any urgent matters identified. |

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| Actions to be undertaken to identify and record key operational risks within service areas relating to risk management and business continuity. Support to be provided by Internal Audit manager if required | Due to changes in responsibilities a review was now being undertaken with all services relating to their business continuity plans. |
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Follow up item

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| Arrange Risk Management training for all departments across the Council | Suitable Risk Management training had been identified; this would be rolled out as part of the Members' training programme. Dates would be arranged via the Committee Services Team in liaison with the Assurance and Resilience Manager. |
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The Risk Management Framework had been distributed to the Committee prior to the meeting as a late appendix.

After a detailed debate the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

7. EXTERNAL AUDITORS UPDATE

The Committee was joined, via a remote Microsoft teams call, by Steve Bladen, who was a Director with BDO (the Council's External Auditors) who gave an update on the Council's outstanding Audit from 2021/22.

Members heard that, in relation to transactions and balances, this section of the Audit was now complete.

However, BDO still needed to resolve the following:

- The calculation of property plants and equipment, in particular those assets that were valued on a depreciated replaceable costs basis.
- The valuing of property, this was based on floor plans which still needed to be provided. This should be concluded within the week.
- Material Infrastructure Assets, notably coastal defences. The Council had supplied BDO with a letter from a Civil Engineer as evidence to this. As of yet BDO still needed to perform due diligence on this letter.

Members asked BDO a number of robust questions challenging three key points, being summarised as:

- General on-going External Audit Delays, especially in respect of the 2020/21 accounts;
- What work was outstanding and how long any outstanding work would take to complete; and
- On-going impacts and the thresholds required in terms of external advice to support the finalisation of the 2020/21 Accounts.

During the course of this item Steve Bladen 'dropped out' of the remote call and was unable to return. Tshiamo Hlatshwayo (also from BDO) who was also present on the teams call, undertook to revert the following question to BDO:-

"What experience/qualifications would BDO expect from the person drafting the letter of evidence, in relation to the coastal defences item, to facilitate the audit?"

8. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (FINANCE & IT) - A.3 - TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Committee was presented with a report on the progress of outstanding actions previously identified by the Committee along with general updates on other issues that fell within the responsibilities of the Committee. The Table of Outstanding Issues had been reviewed and updated since it had last been considered by the Committee in March 2023.

There were currently two main elements to this report as follows:

- 1) Updates against general items raised by the Committee
- 2) Updates against the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan

Members heard that in terms of item 1) above, there were no significant issues to raise, with actions remaining in progress or further details set out in the report. In terms of item 2), at the time of finalising this report, the Annual Governance Statement for 2023 remained subject to being finalised alongside the Statement of Accounts, where there had been a delay in its publication due to the ongoing impact of the External Auditor's delay in completing their necessary work for earlier years (the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22 remained subject to this ongoing delay).

In terms of the review of the Annual Governance Statement for 2023 mentioned above, the associated action plan set out within that Statement would include the on-going / outstanding items set out within Appendix B along with the consideration of a number of actions that aimed to reflect the issues and challenges now faced by the Council such as:-

- *Review of the Local Code of Corporate Governance and Key Policies and Procedures*
- *A review of the Council's Corporate Risk Register and business continuity arrangements*
- *Delivering financially sustainability*
- *Developing the management of performance and delivery*
- *Review of the Effectiveness of the Audit Committee*
- *Review of Departmental Plans in the context of corporate priorities and vision*

As highlighted above the Statement of Accounts 2020/21 remained subject to the conclusion of the work of the External Auditor. The External Auditor had indicated a commitment to finalise their work by September 2023 and therefore, subject to the availability of their associated audit completion report, it might be possible to present this to the September meeting of this Committee. If this was not possible then it was proposed to arrange a special meeting of the Committee in consultation with the Chairman as soon as possible after that date.

RIPA – Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act 2000

Members were informed that this Authority had not conducted any RIPA activity in the last quarter and that it was rare that it would be required to do so.

Whistleblowing Policy

The Committee was informed that, at the meeting of Human Resources and Council Tax Committee, held on 6 July 2023, that Committee had considered a comprehensive review of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and procedure, in line with identified best practice and employment legislation. The review had focused on the Authority's reporting and investigation mechanisms for dealing with, and responding to, whistleblowing concerns, and the responsibility of those involved in managing disclosures. The Whistleblowing Policy had been approved for adoption by the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee and had come into effect immediately.

As part of the monitoring arrangements associated with the effectiveness of this policy, relevant updates would be provided to this Committee during the year.

Redmond Review

A summary of the key Redmond Review recommendations was as follows:

- Formation of a new independent oversight body/system leader
- Extension to external audit timeframes and increase in fees
- Review of associated governance and reporting arrangements (Independent Person to be appointed to the Audit Committee and auditor's annual report to be submitted to a meeting of Full Council)
- Introduction of a standardised statement of service costs

The necessary actions to implement the above remained ongoing via the relevant responsible body and timely updates would continue to be included in future reports.

In addition, as further progress was announced by the Government, updates would be provided to future meetings of this Committee, which would hopefully set out the necessary practical steps to implement the recommendations made as part of this review.

After a short discussion, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

The meeting was declared closed at 1.01 pm

Chairman

AUDIT COMMITTEE

05 OCTOBER 2023

REPORT OF INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGER

A.1 PERIODIC REPORT ON INTERNAL AUDIT – JUNE 2023 - AUGUST 2023

(Report prepared by Craig Clawson)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide a periodic report on the Internal Audit function for the period June 2023 – August 2023 and to provide an update on the Internal Audit Charter for approval by the Audit Committee as required by the professional standards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Five audits have been completed since the last Audit Committee in July 2023. Four of the audits received a satisfactory level of overall assurance. One audit was undertaken as a consultative piece of work as a lessons learned review (Jaywick Sands – Sunspot)
- A further 16 audits from the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan have been allocated, four of which are currently at the fieldwork phase.
- The Internal Audit Charter is provided to be reviewed and approved for the 2023/24 financial year. There has been no changes since the last update.
- The Internal Audit Manager is currently overseeing the Fraud, Compliance, Risk and Health and Safety services while the Assurance and Resilience Manager is on secondment with the Careline and Enforcement Services.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are requested to note the reports and consider whether they have been informed on the following;

- That the reports be considered and noted, and;
- The Internal Audit Charter be reviewed and approved.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

The above recommendations are required to ensure that the Audit Committee agree and accept the contents of the report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The reports are for information and consideration of the Audit Committee.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

Provision of adequate and effective internal audit helps demonstrate the Council's commitment to corporate governance matters. It also links in with the Council's key priorities of 'Delivering high quality services' and having 'Strong finances and governance'.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

The Council has a statutory responsibility to maintain adequate and effective internal audit.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 make it a statutory requirement that the Council must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal audit standards and guidance.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Finance and other resources

The Internal Audit function is operating within the budget set. Recruitment and retention remains to be the biggest risk of not being able to deliver the Internal Audit Plan. This is continuously monitored and the Audit Committee are updated with any issues accordingly.

USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

External Audit expect the following matters to be demonstrated in the Council's decision making:

- A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;*
- B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and*
- C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.*

As such, set out in this section the relevant facts for the proposal set out in this report.

The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services; | Budgets are reported to the Audit Committee annually to review. The Internal Audit Manager regularly monitors those budgets |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | throughout the year to ensure that they remain adequate and do not overspend. |
| B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and | The Internal Audit Charter sets out the roles and responsibilities of both the Audit Committee and the Internal Audit function. The powers of the Audit Committee and the role of Internal Audit is also set out within the Councils Constitution. |
| C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services. | Internal Audit continues to monitor new working practices in order to streamline processes and improve performance and potentially reduce costs. Internal Audits undertaken may support services in doing the same and potential reduce overall costs to the Council. |

MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

Review of recommendations and decision to be made on 13th July 2023 by the Audit Committee

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Review of the functions of the Council by Internal Audit assists in identifying exposure to risk, and its mitigation.

As this report is a periodic update report, there is no exposure to strategic risks within the Councils Risk Management Framework. There is however an operational risk of being unable to complete and deliver the internal audit plan and be unable to provide the Head of Internal Audit Annual Opinion.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Internal Audit activity assists the Council in maintaining a control environment that mitigates the opportunity for crime.

During the course of internal audit work issues regarding equality and diversity, and health inequalities may be identified and included in internal audit reports.

There is no specific effect on any particular ward.

EQUALITIES

There are no equality impacts directly associated with this progress report. However they will need to be considered as part of any improvement / remedial actions undertaken by the relevant Service where necessary.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

The following report is for information only and does not have a social value impact as set out within the template guidance.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2030

The following report is for information only and does not have an environmental impact as set out within the template guidance.

OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS

Set out what consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are then set out below.

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

| | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Crime and Disorder | N/A |
| Health Inequalities | N/A |
| Area or Ward affected | N/A |

ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

N/A

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION**BACKGROUND**

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require the Internal Audit Manager to make arrangements for reporting to senior management (Management Board) and to the board (Audit Committee) during the course of the year, and for producing an annual Internal Audit opinion and report that can be used to inform the Annual Governance Statement.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS TAKEN BY COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE ETC.

N/A

INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS 2023/24

Four of the audits received a satisfactory level of overall assurance. One audit was undertaken as a consultative piece of work as a lessons learned review (Jaywick Sands – Sunspot)

A further 16 audits from the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan have been allocated, four of which are currently at the fieldwork phase.

A consultative review on the Jaywick Sands Sunspot development has now been provided to the service to contribute to future similar projects and support any reporting arrangements required from the economic growth team.

We are currently in the 'Key Systems' phase of the audit plan where all financial and core service systems and processes are reviewed. Each area is tried and tested and very important to the Councils day to day activities. We do not anticipate any significant issues in this area as historically they have been well managed; however, it is very important to ensure that these systems and processes continue to work as expected and remain well controlled.

Quality Assurance – The Internal Audit function issues satisfaction surveys for each audit completed. In the period under review 100% of the responses received indicated that the auditee was satisfied with the audit work undertaken.

Resourcing

Internal Audit currently has an establishment of 4 fte posts with access to a third party provider of Internal Audit Services for specialist audit days as and when required. We currently have an Audit Technician post vacant.

The team have recently transferred an Apprentice from the Council's housing department. The individual was keen to gain experience in Internal Audit and is now part of our team, training and providing much needed additional support.

The Internal Audit Manager has also recently taken on additional responsibilities in managing the Fraud, Risk, Compliance and Health and Safety teams while the Assurance and Resilience Manager is on secondment. The current arrangements are expected to last until December 2023 unless the secondment is extended.

There are many similarities between Health and Safety, Compliance and Internal Audit. Work has been undertaken to synchronise the follow up processes between all three services and identify synergies in order to effectively oversee the service. The Internal Audit Apprentice will be supporting all teams with their admin requirements in order to free up time for officers to spend more time on inspections and audit work. This will enable all teams to deliver against their objectives while still delivering against the audit plan.

If the secondment is to be extended then the Audit Committee will be provided with periodic reports on the above areas as they currently receive for internal audit work to provide overall assurance on all areas covered under the responsibilities of the Internal Audit Manager.

Outcomes of Internal Audit Work

The standards require the Internal Audit manager to report to the Audit Committee on significant risk exposures and control issues. Since the last report four audits have been completed and the final report issued. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require the reporting of significant risk exposures and control issues.

| Assurance | Colour | Number this Period | Total for 2022/23 Plan | |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Substantial | | 3 | 3 | |
| Adequate | | 1 | 1 | |
| Improvement Required | | 0 | 0 | |
| Significant Improvement Required | | 0 | 0 | |
| No Opinion Required | | 1 | 1 | One consultative engagements in 2023/24 to date |

For the purpose of the colour coding approach, both the substantial and adequate opinions are shown in green as both are within acceptable tolerances.

Issues arising from audits completed in the period under review receiving an 'Improvement Required' opinion and requiring reporting to Committee are: -

- No significant issues were identified in the period.

Management Response to Internal Audit Findings – There are processes in place to track the action taken regarding findings raised in Internal Audit reports and to seek assurance that appropriate corrective action has been taken. Where appropriate follow up audits have been arranged to revisit significant issues identified after an appropriate time.

The number of high severity issues outstanding was as follows: -

| Status | Number | Comments |
|----------------------------|--------|----------|
| Overdue more than 3 months | 2 | |
| Overdue less than 3 months | 0 | |
| Not yet due | 0 | |

The Audit Committee requested more detail on the outstanding actions within the above table and on previous significant findings as a matter of context. Appendix B is a summary of those findings and agreed actions as well as including the service response and an internal audit status. This will become a regular appendix of the periodic progress reports going forwards.

Update on previous significant issues reported

All previous significant issues are now provided within Appendix B of this report.

INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER

A requirement of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) is for the Audit Committee to review and approve the Internal Audit Charter on an annual basis. The Charter was last updated and approved in September 2022. There has been no changes to standards or processes since the last review, therefore no amendments were required.

Global Internal Audit Standards have recently changed with some guidance expected therefore there may be a requirement to update the charter throughout the year or when the charter will be reviewed in 2024

The charter is included as Appendix C of this report.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Internal Audit Progress Report 2023/24
Appendix B – Action Tracking Summary – Major Findings
Appendix C – Internal Audit Charter

REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Include here the Name, Job Title and Email/Telephone details of the person(s) who wrote the report and who can answer questions on the content.

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name | Craig Clawson |
| Job Title | Internal Audit Manager |
| Email/Telephone | cclawson@tendingdc.gov.uk 01255 686531 |

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| Tendring District Council Internal Audit | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan Progress Report | | | |
| Audit Title | Status July 2023 | Audit Scope Summary | Audit Opinion |
| Key Systems / Key Financial Risk Areas | | | |
| Procurement | Unallocated | To review the Councils compliance with procurement rules for works or services of value which require a tender exercise | To be confirmed |
| Housing Benefits | Allocated | To ensure that the control framework in place when processing housing benefit claims is strong and all legislative and regulatory requirements are met by the service | To be confirmed |
| National Non Domestic Rates | Allocated | To ensure that the control framework in place when processing business rate applications is strong and all legislative and regulatory requirements are met by the service | To be confirmed |
| Main Accounting System Budgetary Control | Allocated | To review processes and procedures relating to the management of the Councils financial accounting system and ensure that all legislative and regulatory requirements are met. This includes budgetary control across all departments within the Council | To be confirmed |
| Corporate Governance | Complete | To ensure that the Council have a strong Corporate Governance framework in place. The CIPFA Code of Corporate Governance is used as a guide and comparison | Substantial Assurance |
| Council Tax | Allocated | To ensure that the control framework in place when processing Council Tax applications is strong and all legislative and regulatory requirements are met by the service | To be confirmed |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Payroll | Allocated | To review all procedures and internal controls relating to payroll and the processing of employees and members pay. | To be confirmed |
| Treasury Management | Complete | A full review of the internal controls and procedures relating to investing Council monies as well as short and long term borrowing | Substantial Assurance |
| Project Management | Allocated | To review the agreed strategic process for project management and ensure that it is followed within a sample of key projects | To be confirmed |
| Contract Management | Allocated | To ensure that contract management processes are followed within each department of the Council in order to determine the efficiency and quality in service delivery. This will be undertaken at the same time as Project Management as there synergies between the two audits | To be confirmed |
| Financial Resilience – Use of Resources | Allocated | To assess the resilience of the Councils agreed budget and ensure resources are being used as efficiently as possible in order to mitigate and plan for the agreed budget pressures | To be confirmed |
| Partnerships – Health External Funding | Complete | To review the governance processes around the receipt of funding from partners specifically relating to health. | Substantial Assurance |

| Other Services / Systems | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Housing Peer Review | Unallocated | To identify the outcomes from the Housing Peer Review and support the service in implementing any recommendations / agreed actions from it. | To be confirmed |
| Social Housing Regulation Bill – Implementation Plan | Unallocated | To support the service in implementing any new requirements from the bill and to help reinforce any processes that should already be in place. | To be confirmed |
| Housing Repairs and Maintenance | Unallocated | To assess the internal control environment for the reactive maintenance for the in house team and the external contractors undertaking works | To be confirmed |
| Leisure Estate – Efficiencies and Cost Pressures | Fieldwork | To identify and assess inefficiencies and costs within the leisure service and determine what options are available to improve, resolve or do things differently | Consultative |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Levelling Up Fund | Allocated | To provide support and advice during all projects / initiatives related to the Levelling Up Fund. | Consultative |
| Building Control | Fieldwork | To review the effectiveness of the Building Control service and the management of operational services, strategic priorities and income management | To be confirmed |
| Careline Service – Follow Up | Allocated | Follow Up on recommendations made from the previous audit and reassess key areas of the business. | To be confirmed |
| Contact Centre - Digitalisation | Complete | To support the service in implementing digital solutions within the business area | Adequate Assurance |
| Planning Development – Decision Making | Fieldwork | To evaluate specific processes relating to decision making within the service area and determine whether any procedural improvements can be made | To be confirmed |
| Housing Allocations – Follow Up | Unallocated | Follow Up on recommendations made from the previous audit and reassess key areas of the business. | To be confirmed |
| Asset Management | Unallocated | To review the internal controls and procedures related to asset management within the organisation | To be confirmed |
| Freeport East | Allocated | Days allocated to support the Council in meeting the objectives related to Freeport East. The Heads of Internal Audit for all areas across the country where a Freeport has been agreed are due to meet later in the year | Consultative |
| Emerging Risks from Legislative Changes | Fieldwork | To assess the potential risks the Council may face in the event of legislation changes made by central government | To be confirmed |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Jaywick Sands - Sunspot | Complete | To review the development of Sunspot and determine if there are any lessons learnt from the project which could support any future projects of a similar nature | Consultative |
| Risk Management | Unallocated | Required annually under PSIAS and Cipfa guidance. To review the Councils risk management framework. | To be confirmed |
| External Funding | Allocated | To assess procedures relating to receiving external funding and the distribution of funds aligned to constitutional requirements | To be confirmed |
| IT Audit | | | |
| Cyber Security | Unallocated | IT continues to be one of the biggest risk areas to all organisations. Governance arrangements and project delivery to be within scope Consultative review as the programme progresses. | To be confirmed |
| IT Governance | Unallocated | PSIAS expectation that this will be covered each year | To be confirmed |

Status Key

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unallocated | Audit in Audit Plan, but no work undertaken yet |
| Allocated | Audit is being scoped / has been scoped and awaiting commencement |
| Fieldwork | Audit in progress |
| Draft Report | Audit fieldwork complete, but Final Report not yet issued |
| Complete | Final Report issued and audit results reported to Audit Committee |
| Deferred | Audit was in Audit Plan, but will now be undertaken in a later year. Deferred audits agreed by Audit Committee |
| Delayed | Valid request from function being audited for audit to be undertaken later than proposed |

| Audit Title | Finding | Finding Issue / Risk Identified | Agreed Action Description | Finding | Due Date | Service Response | Internal Audit Status |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Depot Operations | 01 - Lack of a Waste Management Plan | <p>The council, unavoidably, creates waste in the course of it's operations. Certain departments based at Northbourne depot - e.g. Housing Repairs & Engineering - produce a higher level of waste due to the nature of their work.</p> <p>To manage and control waste, a waste management plan can be created which provides oversight and expectations for waste removal.</p> <p>A typical waste plan includes elements such as licensed operators used, storage protocols, process for recording and retaining waste records, where waste is transferred to and what process is to be followed for each type (and location) of waste. In line with carbon neutral corporate aspirations, this could also be used to help identify which waste could be reduced, reused or recycled (including the sale of scrap metal).</p> <p>The council does not have a waste management plan, either for the depot or a corporate one.</p> | <p>Initially a waste plan for Northbourne will be created then expanded out to other departments, liaising with other stakeholder departments as required.</p> <p>The final Plan will cover all aspects of the Authority and be a comprehensive outline for waste management activity carried out by the council.</p> | Major | 01/02/2023 | COMPLETED - as it relates to Building and Public Realm. Facilities Manager determine whether this needs to be extended out corporately. | <p>The waste management plan for the department has now been provided to support the service response. Await update from FM as to whether a corporate waste plan could be adopted.</p> <p>No further action.</p> |
| Housing Repairs and Maintenance | 03 - Lack of tracking for variations | <p>All jobs are set up within the council's housing repairs software prior to a job being assigned to a contractor.</p> <p>Understandably, not all jobs are straight forward as first believed. To progress these jobs, a variation order is made, which adapts the original order. This can be a combination of adding to an order, substitution of works or materials or, on occasion, deletion of works no longer required. The contractor has a contracted self authorisation limit of £50 (but must send in photo beforehand) and anything above this must be authorised by the council. This limit has recently been raised by the council.</p> <p>While these variations are recorded under Job History step, and looked at during invoice payment stage, there is no independent method of identifying the amount or total value of these works, or how many comply with contractual requirements.</p> | <p>Explore options within Housing repairs software review to include a reportable process for separately adding, identifying and tracking order variations.</p> <p>This additional step should be linked to authorisation levels for each user, to ensure the value is appropriate for their role and experience.</p> | Major | 31/10/2022 | COMPLETED - In the new workflow, there is an authorisation process which allows managers to approve/reject jobs based on value raised. If a job exceeds £2000, this will require approval by staff who are assigned to the "Manager" user profile. This information will be monitored within the job history of a job to see who raised/approved and how much was approved. The contractor portal has been set up for Rapid Response where they now have restricted view and restricted access. This means they only see jobs that have been raised to them by TDC staff and also they are not able to send their own jobs over to invoice as this needs to be completed by TDC staff to ensure the job has been completed to TDC standards. | <p>Confirmed the workflow processes with our IT department. Evidence that the process is now in place has been provided.</p> <p>No further action.</p> |
| Housing Repairs and Maintenance | 05 - Tenancy Information | <p>Every housing unit should have an identified tenant, or clearly marked as void if between tenants.</p> <p>Updated records are necessary to ensure the customer service team know they are dealing with the tenant at the address and enable any security checks needed as well as complying with any data requirements.</p> <p>There is currently no regular updating of tenant details if they move in or out. Similarly, it is understood that initially that tenant details needed to be completed manually during initial rollout of software. As a consequence, there is limited confidence that all addresses have a tenant listed and there may be a few rogue overlooked blank entries in the database, where no visits have been needed.</p> | <p>Liaise with IT to identify a data linkage method where existing records held on tenancy system can be exported to Housing Repairs software to ensure the records are current.</p> | Major | 31/10/2022 | Data integration work is still ongoing with Oneserve. All requirements for data has been set up and provided from TDC and delays continue with Oneserve to impement the integrations. This is being chased frequently and should be resolved with full implementation in a few weeks. | Still ongoing. Continue to monitor. |

| Audit Title | Finding | Finding Issue / Risk Identified | Agreed Action Description | Finding | Due Date | Service Response | Internal Audit Status |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Housing Repairs and Maintenance | 08 - Lack of Clear Record Keeping | <p>All works should show a clear audit trail from initial contact to final payment, and all stages between.</p> <p>In a case brought to the Housing Ombudsman against the council, one major criticism was absence of clear and comprehensive record keeping. This is also crucial in any legal defence against growing Housing Disrepair Claims.</p> <p>Although some measures have been brought in, it is considered there is still room for some improvement.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of notes for any calls received - Quotes and relevant correspondence not attached to OneServe record - Evidence of chasing overdue works - Communications to third parties not always available to other officers - Plethora of locations where documentation is stored - e-mails, drives, iAuditor, photos on drive and OneServe, calendar appointments, invoices, etc. - No central access to invoices if key officer absent <p>Some elements on software not completed</p> | <p>New procedure and process to be implemented so that information is captured centrally.</p> <p>This will be examined as part of Housing Repairs software review to identify what options are available and any subsequent officer training carried out.</p> | Major | 31/10/2022 | <p>A working group which is being led by Corporate and Assistant Corporate Director has been set up in response to a definitive list of our requirements being compiled ensuring the information gathered is fit for purpose and in reaction to developing needs following the introduction of a new regulatory regime and charter placing a much greater emphasis on accurate data availability through robust record keeping.</p> <p>Additionally, IT have confirmed that the new responsive work flow has various stages which captures all relevant information from a job's creation to invoicing. It also records failed access and can be tracked on times and dates when access was gained and failed. This data will be able to feed into the central asset management system (Lifespan) being set up through a separate project.</p> | <p>Continue to monitor whether the working group remains in place until the oneserve system is fully operational. To become a regular review as part of the annual audit process.</p> <p>No further action at this stage</p> |
| Housing Repairs and Maintenance | 10 - Discrepancies between OneServe and Invoices | <p>Work is raised on OneServe with job description and cost. Once the job is complete, an invoice is raised and submitted to the council for payment. This invoice is matched against work raised and paid accordingly.</p> <p>In all cases, OneServe (council housing repair software) figures should match invoice to ensure only the work raised is paid for.</p> <p>There are examples identified through testing which showed payment was apparently in excess of raised work.</p> | <p>Initially, a reminder will be issued to officers reminding them of the need to ensure the job value matches the received invoice.</p> <p>There will also be investigation into software capability to see if a check function can be incorporated</p> | Major | 31/10/2022 | <p>COMPLETED - The new workflow is now in place and meets the tighter record keeping. Finance reconciliation report is now created and in place.</p> | <p>Spoken with the IT lead and advised the cross referencing of the two areas are now easier to use and be able to reconcile the records.</p> <p>No further action</p> |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Depot Operations | 04 - Lack of Stores Stock Takes | <p>In order to manage and control stock and check the integrity of the stock system against system error or potential theft, stock takes are necessary to ensure what is recorded on the system matches with the physical stock.</p> <p>An ad-hoc stock take of a few random lines was undertaken during the audit, which identified a few discrepancies.</p> <p>It was advised there are no regular stock takes - either checking a number of lines or a complete one. A lack of resource was provided as the main reason due to manual methodology of other tasks taking time.</p> | <p>To actively manage stock, regular stock takes are to be introduced, at a minimum frequency of a month.</p> <p>Current software to be used to monitor stock, but stocktakes will be continued using any replacement software, following current review of options.</p> | Major | 30/09/2022 | <p>COMPLETED - This is now completed regularly and will now be easier to undertake as the recruitment of the Depot and Procurement Officer and Depot Admin Assistant are now in post as a resource issue previously had prevented them being undertaken as regularly as we would have liked. IT will be liaising with Depot and Procurement Officer after substantive rebuild has been completed as this is on the list of items to be addressed via Oneserve.</p> | <p>One element of the process is now complete within oneserve and stock/warehouse control is restricted to only two members of staff. Regular stock takes are undertaken.</p> <p>Awaiting the barcoding app to be complete to be integrated with the standalone stock system. Est date November 2023</p> <p>Continue to monitor.</p> |
| Audit Title | Finding | Finding Issue / Risk Identified | Agreed Action Description | Finding | Due Date | Service Response | Internal Audit Status |
| Housing Allocations | 02 - Semi-Automation of Shortlist | <p>Shortlists to determine allocation of tenancies should be automated, recorded and reflect preferences and bandings of applicants.</p> <p>Previously, this was a manual process, and flaws in this were highlighted in previous audit reports. Recently, the service has adopted an electronic solution (Jigsaw software) which can manage housing applications.</p> <p>While the system is a large improvement on the previous method, the shortlisting still requires some manual input to bypass unsuitable candidates, and officer time to sift through these.</p> <p>Reasons for manual bypass could include unrequested area, only wants sheltered housing or property unable to be adapted for a disabled applicant.</p> <p>It is noted that historic shortlists can now be recalled and applicants can identify their position on previous shortlists.</p> <p>The manual check of applicants on the shortlist also adds a resource pressure on officers, when most of this could be completed automatically.</p> | <p>At the conclusion of the Post Live Update software upgrade, it is expected that the shortlisting process should be fully automated due to including more factors (such as location) in the filtering to determine eligibility and offer. There should be any manual input which should make the process both less prone to manual error and manipulation as well as faster to process.</p> <p>The process should still have a manual check to ensure the system is correct and all documentation is present and correct before any offer is made.</p> <p>At time of writing, the funding has been agreed and efforts are being made with the software provider to arrange to begin work on this stage.</p> | Major | 30/09/2023 | <p>Complete. Software now upgraded</p> | <p>Assurances provided by Housing Allocations Manager that software is now upgraded and allocations shortlisting now resolved. Difficult to evidence therefore walkthrough with an Auditor to take place during follow up review.</p> <p>No further action.</p> |
| Recycling and Waste | Garden Waste Income | <p>The Garden Waste service has significantly grown since the introduction of the function.</p> <p>In order to effectively manage and monitor the service, several operational controls should be place.</p> <p>Currently, there is no master list to confirm total number of garden waste customers. This has lead to a lack of reconciliations, which essentially, prevents the team from checking income against customer figures.</p> <p>In line with the above, invoices are unclear which has made it challenging to establish charges for individual bin collections. Therefore, the team are uncertain whether the Council are being correctly charged, per bin.</p> | <p>Garden waste data to be transferred to Firmsteps, in order to verify total number of customers.</p> <p>Transparency of garden waste invoices also to be sought, to enable confirmation of charges.</p> <p>Once complete, full monthly reconciliations to be carried out and checks by management to be evidenced.</p> | Major | 30/09/2023 | <p>Analysis has been undertaken to determine the level of income that needs to be recovered due to garden waste being collected from properties that have not renewed or paid their subscriptions.</p> <p>The Assistant Director for the service will be attending the Audit Committee to provide a more detailed update.</p> | <p>Update to be provided at Audit Committee</p> |

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INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER

1. INTRODUCTION

The CIPFA Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) require the Chief Audit Executive to produce an Internal Audit Charter that is consistent with the Standards, and the Definition of Internal Auditing and the Code of Ethics contained within the Standards.

The Internal Audit Charter defines the purpose, authority and responsibility of the Internal Audit function within the Council.

The Standards require that the Charter be subject to periodic review, and be formally approved by the Audit Committee. These reviews are to be undertaken by the Chief Audit Executive and reported to the Committee at least annually.

2. DEFINITION OF ROLES

The Standards use the terms Board, Senior Management and Chief Audit Executive.

In this Charter, and with regard to compliance with the PSIAS, the following definitions apply;

| PSIAS | TDC |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Board | Audit Committee |
| Senior Management | Management Team |
| Chief Audit Executive | Internal Audit Manager |

Throughout this document the titles used by this Council have been used for clarity purposes.

3. REQUIREMENT FOR INTERNAL AUDIT

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires that **“a relevant body must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance”**.

Tendring District Council is a relevant body, as defined by the Regulations.

Compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards fulfils the requirements set in the Regulations.

The role of the Internal Audit function includes the discharge of statutory requirements relating to internal audit.

5. COMPLIANCE WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR INTERNAL AUDIT STANDARDS (PSIAS)

The PSIAS, the definition of Internal Auditing and the Code of Ethics within the standards, are mandatory. Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Internal Audit function operates in accordance with the PSIAS, and that the core principles for the professional practice of Internal Auditing as detailed in the standards are present and operating effectively. In the event that circumstances prevent full compliance, appropriate equivalent safeguards or measures will be adopted as permitted by the standards, and the Audit Committee made aware.

The Internal Audit Manager is responsible for maintaining an up to date Internal Audit Manual which details the framework adopted to meet the requirements set by the standards.

Internal Auditors will ensure that in undertaking their duties they demonstrate integrity, competence and due professional care and operate in line with the requirements of the standards, and its embedded code of ethics.

The Internal Audit Manager will make arrangements for compliance / quality reviews to be undertaken, in accordance with the PSIAS requirements, both at individual audit level and for the service as a whole and for the results of service reviews to be reported to the Audit Committee, together with any actions necessary to achieve full compliance.

The regular reports provided by the Internal Audit Manager will highlight areas of non-compliance and associated actions.

6. MISSION, PURPOSE, RESPONSIBILITY, OBJECTIVITY AND SCOPE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

The mission of the Internal Audit function is to enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight.

The purpose of the Internal Audit function is to: -

- provide independent, objective assurance to the Council on its operations and control environment
- deliver an effective, cost effective, proactive and innovative function that meets the needs of the Council, and is aligned with its strategies, objectives and risks.
- add value by assisting management to improve the delivery of Council objectives and operations through the evaluating and challenging the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes
- add value by assisting management to improve the delivery of Council objectives and operations by the provision of consultancy and best practice advice.

The key responsibilities and objectives for the Internal Audit function are to: -

- provide an Internal Audit services that discharges the Council's statutory responsibilities with regard to internal audit
- provide a service that is compliant with the requirements of the PSIAS
- contribute to the Council's governance, risk and assurance arrangements
- enable the Internal Audit Manager to provide an annual opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's control environment

- communicate effectively on risk and control issues, identified or that the Council might be exposed to, providing insightful, proactive and future-focused solutions where appropriate, that promote improvement to the Council's risk and control frameworks.
- deliver a quality service that strives to continually improve

The scope of Internal Audit includes: -

- undertaking independent risk based reviews to provide assurance on the effectiveness, efficiency and legality of management and service delivery arrangements
- undertake reviews using a range of audit techniques that are innovative and efficient and provide detailed insight on processes and procedures within a service area.
- undertaking independent ad hoc reviews as requested by management
- undertaking / participating in investigations including those in relation to potential fraud, corruption, bribery or irregularity
- undertaking proactive anti-fraud work examining emerging fraud risks and potential exposures identified
- providing consultancy and advice on major projects, and ad hoc advice upon demand
- dissemination to the organisation of best practice

The scope of the Internal Audit function's remit includes the Council's entire control environment, not just financial controls – this includes assurance and monitoring mechanisms, including risk management arrangements. It also extends to any services provided through partnership arrangements, or by external providers.

Where the Council works in partnership with other organisations, the Internal Audit function will provide a service as agreed between the partner organisations. The nature of assurances to be provided will be consistent with the requirements of the Standards, the governance arrangements applicable to the partnership, and the terms of engagement for the assignments undertaken.

The Internal Audit function does not currently provide a service to any third party organisation, but may do so in the future if appropriate to do so. The nature of assurances to be provided in such circumstances will be consistent with the requirements of the Standards, the rules and regulations governing the organisation in question, and the terms of engagement contractually entered into.

The Internal Audit Manager will ensure that the planned Internal Audit work in any financial year provides sufficient coverage of the key financial, and other, systems to enable an opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's control environment to be formed. In lieu of work undertaken directly by the Internal Audit function, the Internal Audit Manager may place reliance on assurances provided by other assurance providers where he deems it appropriate to do so.

Consideration will be taken, in determining where Internal Audit activity should be focussed, of the Council's assurance and monitoring mechanism's including risk management arrangements.

The Internal Audit function can provide consultancy and advice to the functions of the Council and its management, usually of a one off and ad hoc nature. It may also be involved in assignments to aid development of new and improvement of existing processes. Mechanisms are in place to maintain independence and divisions of duty.

7. ORGANISATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

The Internal Audit function will be independent of the activities that it audits to enable auditors to perform their duties in a manner that facilitates impartial, objective and effective professional judgements and recommendations.

A mechanism will be maintained that enables conflicts of interest, including previous employment responsibilities and any one off non audit duties undertaken, to be identified and recorded. Internal Auditors will not be allowed to undertake assignments / elements of assignments where a conflict of interest has been identified or to audit records where impartiality cannot be demonstrated.

The Internal Audit Manager has some other operational responsibilities of a governance nature. Arrangements will be maintained to ensure that the post holder is not involved in audits on such areas in either an operational or supervisory role to maintain independence.

The Internal Audit Manager will report at least annually to the Audit Committee on the organisational independence of the Internal Audit function.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY, REPORTING LINES AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Internal Audit function is located within the Corporate Services Department. The Internal Audit Manager's line manager is the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits Services (S151 Officer). The Internal Audit Manager has a right of direct access to the Deputy Chief Executive as corporate directorate head. In addition the Internal Audit Manager has a right of direct access to the Management Team, the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors / Head of Department individually, and Members.

The Internal Audit Manager has the right to meet privately with the Audit Committee, when necessary.

The arrangements for working relationships with elected members shall follow the requirements of the Protocol on Member / Officer relations within the Council's Constitution, and codes of conduct.

Following each audit the Internal Audit Manager will report directly to the relevant Corporate Director / Head of Department providing an assurance ranking based upon the results of the assignment undertaken, with any material issues being drawn to the attention of the Council's s151 officer, other statutory officers or Management Team as appropriate to the circumstance. The results of each audit will be reported to the Audit Committee.

Corporate Directors / Head of Departments are responsible for ensuring that appropriate action is taken to resolve issues reported by Internal Audit. The Internal Audit function will have in place mechanisms to obtain assurance that actions have been appropriately implemented, and to report any significant issues arising from this to the Audit Committee.

The Council's Audit Committee has responsibility for receiving and reviewing reports on Internal Audit from the Internal Audit Manager. Reports will be produced in formats that meet any criteria laid down by the PSIAS.

Internal Audit may be required to provide assurance to external parties, such as grant funding bodies, where so requested. All engagements will be conducted reflecting any requirements set by such bodies, and professional standards.

A dialogue will be maintained with Corporate Directors / Head of Department to ensure that emerging risks, and operational changes, are reflected in the work programme for Internal Audit at the earliest opportunity.

A clear line of communication will be maintained with the Council's external auditors and other review bodies, taking account of the differing roles and responsibilities of each organisation.

9. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE AND ROLE OF STATUTORY OFFICERS WITH REGARDS TO INTERNAL AUDIT

The role of the Audit Committee with regards to Internal Audit is laid out in the Council's Constitution. The role regarding Internal Audit includes:

- Considering the Internal Audit Manager's Annual Report and opinion.
- Considering reports on the operation of Internal Audit and summaries of specific internal audit reports.
- Considering reports from Internal Audit on significant agreed actions not implemented within a reasonable timescale.

To fulfil this role, and to meet the requirements of the PSIAS, the Committee in considering reports on the operation of Internal Audit will also receive and approve: -

- The Annual Internal Audit Plan
- Internal Audit Plan updates during the year
- The Internal Audit Charter
- Quality assessments on compliance with the PSIAS

The Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) has responsibility for the discharge of the functions of the Council, and would therefore be advised regarding any issues of a significantly material nature arising during audits. The post holder also has a responsibility regarding the effective discharge of the Internal Audit function.

The s151 Officer (Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits Services) has responsibility for ensuring that the Internal Audit Manager provides the Internal Audit service required by the Council, and is advised of any issues of a material nature identified during audits / provided with assurance as appropriate to aid in meeting his statutory obligations.

The Monitoring Officer (Head of Governance and Legal Services) has responsibility for the lawfulness and fairness of decision making, and any issues of this nature identified during audits will be drawn to the post holders attention / assurance provided as appropriate to aid the post holder to meet their statutory obligations.

10. FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

Managing the risk of fraud and corruption lies with management. The Internal Audit function does not have responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. Internal Auditors will be alert in the work undertaken to risks and exposures that could allow fraud or corruption to occur, and where appropriate will agree and report on control improvements to mitigate such risks and exposures.

The Council's Constitution (Financial Procedure Rules) requires that Corporate Directors / Head of Department report any financial irregularity or suspected irregularity to the designated Head of Internal Audit immediately. The Council's Fraud and Corruption Strategy confirms these arrangements.

Provisions will be made in the Audit plan to enable reactive work to be undertaken as a result of any irregularity reported where he considers it appropriate for the Internal Audit function to undertake, or be involved in, any investigation required.

11. INTERNAL AUDIT RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require that Internal Audit resources are appropriate, sufficient and effectively deployed to achieve the approved plan. However the Account and Audit Regulations / PSIAS are not prescriptive regarding the level of resources required.

The level and nature of resources required for each year's plan will be considered as part of the annual audit planning process to ensure that the resources available are deemed sufficient taking account of changes to the audit universe, changes to exposure of the organisation to risk, and developing professional standards.

The resources available will be maintained, both in terms of staffing levels and proficiency, at a level sufficient to deliver the approved plan to an acceptable standard, and to meet the requirements of the PSIAS.

Provision may be made to enable the use of resources from elsewhere within the Council or externally as appropriate to cover any skills gaps related to the audit engagements planned.

Any changes to the functions of the Council, the risks the Council is exposed to, the requirement for ad hoc work, and the development of audit techniques may change the baseline position. The Internal Audit Plan is intended to be flexible and mechanisms exist to update it during each year as required.

If at any time an imbalance between resources available and those required to deliver an effective Internal Audit function arises, then this will be drawn to the attention of the Audit Committee, together with proposed solutions.

The right of access for Internal Audit to records, assets, personnel and premises shall be consistent with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. The right of access is also contained in the Council's Constitution.

The right of access shall extend to any resources bought in to supplement the in house team, in undertaking audits.

12. RIGHT OF ACCESS

The Internal Audit Team shall have, for the purposes of internal audit, the right of access to all establishments operated by the Council, all records held by the Council, all assets and personnel. Where the Council enters into partnership arrangements, or outsources functions, the contractual arrangements shall include provision for the right of access by the Council's Internal Auditors to all records and assets that relate to the Council. The Council's Internal Auditors shall have authority to obtain such information and explanations as are considered necessary to fulfil their internal audit responsibilities.

Internal Auditors will treat information they receive / see in the course of their duties as confidential, only disclosing such information where there is a legal or professional requirement to do so.

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AUDIT COMMITTEE

5 October 2023

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND ECONOMY

A.2 AUDIT COMMITTEE – PROGRESS ON CLIMATE ACTION

(Report prepared by Lee Heley)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present to the Committee:

- To present to Members a two-year progress report on the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The role of the Audit committee is to

- Consider the arrangements for corporate governance and agreeing necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice; and
- Consider the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls (other than those covered by the Standards Committee).

The Audit Programme requires the Corporate Director, Place and Economy to attend a future scheduled meeting of the Committee in 2023 to present to Members a two-year progress report on the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

The Council declared a climate emergency on 6 August 2019. A resolution submitted by former Cllr Neil Stock was backed by Councillors from all parties during a full Council meeting. The resolution committed the Council to preparing an action plan for consideration by councillors with the aim of making its activities net zero carbon by 2030.

In November 2020, the Council set out its plan to achieve this goal, initially covering the period to 2023. [Action plan](#).

The Council has committed to become net zero by 2030 in its direct emissions (so called 'scope one' emissions) and the production of its electricity ('scope two' emissions). The Council is also committed to working towards reducing emissions in its supply chain ('scope three'), which includes the services we deliver via business contracts rather than directly employed staff, such as waste collection. This aspect of the plan does not have a defined target for emissions reduction.

A final element of the action plan encourages businesses and residents in the district to play their part in reducing carbon emissions.

The current Action Plan ends in December 2023. A new plan is under development, building on the work of the first plan.

Current position

The Council emitted 2,797 tonnes of carbon for scope one (internal) and scope two (electricity) emissions in the baseline year, 2018/19.

In 2021/22 this had fallen to 2,245 tonnes of carbon emitted. As a result the Council has saved 552 tonnes of carbon since the baseline year in direct emissions made up from 144 tonnes of scope one (internal) emissions, and 376 tonnes from scope two, electricity.

We are currently converting the energy records into Carbon emission equivalent to provide data for 2022/23.

In addition, we recorded 2,317 tonnes of carbon emissions in the baseline year of 2018/19 through our supply chain, called scope three emissions. This had fallen to 2,052 by 2021/22. The majority of these emissions come from the Veolia fleet of waste vehicles, although that element slightly increased their contribution to emissions in the period (1.404 to 1.435 tonnes).

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that:

1. **The Committee notes and considers the progress against the Climate Action Plan set out in Appendix A.**
2. **The Portfolio Holder for Environment requires the development of a Climate Action plan from 2024 with ambitions and actions set in the context of current national policy.**

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

To provide an update to the Committee on progress with the Climate Action Plan, noting with opportunities and challenges associated with its implementation.

The current Climate Action Plan ends in 2023 and so requires updating for future years. The Council has a number of years' experience implementing changes and monitoring emissions to inform future plans.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not completing updating the action plan. However, this would make oversight difficult of the actions required to make progress towards the current 2030 carbon neutral ambition.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**DELIVERING PRIORITIES**

The Council's corporate plan 2020-2024 includes the ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030, which is set in Council policy. The Action Plan to 2023 sets out how the Council will make progress towards that goal. The councils draft corporate priorities from 2024 are out to

consultation:

- Pride in our area and services to residents
- Raising aspirations and creating opportunities
- Championing our local environment
- Working with partners to improve quality of life
- Financial sustainability and openness

The Climate Action Plan helps the Council to champion the local environment, and to deliver financial sustainability and openness, as reducing carbon emissions is based on reducing energy use, which will save on going revenue costs for the Council.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

The Council has adopted the ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030 within its corporate policy framework.

The Government has passed a number of Acts which set out the national framework regulating different aspects of Council business that impact on the levels of carbon emissions. The overarching legislation is the Climate Change Act 2008 which commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100 percent of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. The 100 percent target was based on advice from the Climate Change Committee's 2019 report.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Finance and other resources

There is an existing reserve of £1.019m to support general asset refurbishment / replacement with an earlier decision acknowledging that this reserve is also available to support climate change activities. This is over and above an initial draw down from this reserve of £0.250m in 2022/23 to support the associated climate change action plan that includes activities such as the installation of LEDs and pool covers, and helping to plan for replacement heating systems in the council's estate.

The Action Plan from 2024 will need to propose actions which are affordable within budget limits or which receive external funding that can be delivered to cover the full costs of project delivery, including internal resources.

The approach is to mainstream climate action so that it is part of the planning for the whole organisation, for example within the forward plans of Assets, Fleet management and the re-contracting of waste.

USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services; | Reducing carbon emissions will reduce energy use, which will reduce long term revenue costs, although they require short term capital investment. |
| B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and | A Cabinet Member is responsible to oversee the development and delivery of the action plan against the 2030 ambition. A project board oversees delivery at the officer level which |

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| | meets regularly, to track progress across the organisation. |
| C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services. | The actions are designed to reduce carbon, for example the building surveys informed investment decisions on which action would give the quickest payback by reducing energy consumption (pool covers). |
| MILESTONES AND DELIVERY | |
| Progress against actions to date is included in Annex A. | |
| The next key milestone is the development of the next Action Plan, which is expected to come to Cabinet for decision in 2024. | |
| ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION | |
| There is a significant risk the Council does not reach its 2030 ambition to become carbon neutral. This is due to the costs associated with implementation, and the Council's ambition coming two decades ahead of the national target. | |
| Cost of implementation at a time of extreme financial pressure. The original plan was estimated at a cost of £7.3m. Currently the Council is facing significant budget pressures over the next three years. Some carbon reduction measures will save money over time as they reduce energy costs from the estate, for example, they have an upfront capital cost. Some actions, such as Electric Vehicles in the waste fleet, would have a significant cost. | |
| We take an invest to save approach, focusing on investment where we will see a return on reduced energy costs, and seek external funding. | |
| The Council is committed to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions for our own estate, vehicles and electricity by 2030, twenty years ahead of the national target. National policies are not yet in place to help achieve the Council's goal. | |
| OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT | |
| There is no requirement to seek consultation on this report. | |
| EQUALITIES | |
| The actions in the report seek to put in place | |
| SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS | |
| Carbon emission reductions are part of the environmental action associated with social value. Our work to reduce carbon emissions within our own services and working with our supply chain delivers social value. | |
| IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2030 | |
| The update on the Action Plan shows the progress the Council has made against the aim to be net zero by 2030, as set out in Annex A, and as such is fundamental to the delivery of this ambition. The presence of this section in the report template is itself a result of the action plan. | |

| OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below. | |
| Crime and Disorder | Not applicable |
| Health Inequalities | Not applicable |
| Area or Ward affected | All Wards could be affected |
| ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION | |
| None | |

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

| BACKGROUND |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>The Council declared a climate emergency on 6 August 2019. A resolution submitted by former Cllr Neil Stock was backed by Councillors from all parties during a full Council meeting. The motion committed the Council to preparing an action plan for consideration by councillors with the aim of making its activities net zero carbon by 2030.</p> <p>In November 2020, the Council set out its plan to achieve this goal, initially covering the period to 2023.</p> <p>To explain in detail:</p> <p>Scope 1 (direct) emissions are from activities owned or controlled by the Council. Examples of Scope 1 emissions include emissions from combustion in council owned or controlled boilers, furnaces and vehicles.</p> <p>Scope 2 (indirect) emissions are associated with purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling. These indirect emissions are a consequence of the Council's energy use, but occur at sources that the Council do not own or control. Examples include grid supplied electricity and heat provided through a heat network.</p> <p>Scope 3 (other indirect) emissions are a consequence of the Council's actions that occur at sources the Council do not own or control and are not classed as Scope 2 emissions. Examples of Scope 3 emissions include business travel by means not owned or controlled by the Council, such as Waste Collection vehicles and purchased goods in the supply chain.</p> <p>The Council is a member of the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) who use the data we collate to work out our annual carbon emissions. The Council has complete emissions data up to March 2022 set out below in Annex B. The Council has collated the data for 2022/23 and engaged with APSE, and will receive the updated Carbon Emissions in the new year. We do not measure emissions for the entire district.</p> <p>The Council is in the process of developing the next Climate Action Plan, which is expected to go to Cabinet in 2024.</p> |
| PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS TAKEN BY COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE ETC. |
| November 2020 Cabinet Paper on the Climate Action Plan |

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|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL |
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| None |
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| APPENDICES |
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| Appendix A – Progress report |
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| Appendix B – Emissions Reporting |
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| REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S) |
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| Name | Lee Heley |
|-------------|------------------|

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| Job Title | Corporate Director, Place and Economy |
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| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Email/Telephone | lheley@tendringdc.gov.uk |
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Annex A: Progress against the action plan 2020-2023

Actions: Council Buildings

| Action | Progress | Planned, subject to funding |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Energy audits of all council owned buildings with a carbon reduction plan for each one.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy audits complete Dec 2021 • Recommendations for action based on Audits including pool covers, LED lights and replacement boilers at the Town Hall, Northbourne and Clacton Leisure Centre • Implementation of pool covers agreed, subject to final decision making. • Technical work to plan boiler replacement is tendered. • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of pool covers, which is funded. • Implementation of LEDs in leisure estate, which is funded • Funding agreed for one year post of building surveyor to help progress projects but recruitment to date has not been successful. • Replacement heating system at Clacton Leisure Centre, subject to funding • Replacement heating system at the town hall, subject to funding • Replacement heating system as Northbourne, subject to funding |
| <p>Continue work to improve the performance of our buildings towards achieving net zero emissions by 2030</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refurbishment of the (listed) Town Hall includes air source heating in the meeting room. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating systems and pool covers, as set out above • Implementation of building management systems, subject to funding |
| <p>Maximise funding opportunities eg SALIX.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy reports commissioned and received in the Salix format to support potential future bids | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 3c of Salix is expected to open in October 2023, with the potential for funding to support heating replacement systems • The Sport England Swimming Pool Fund is open in October with the opportunity to bid for funding for Clacton Leisure Centre heating replacement, and the |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | replacement of air handling units. |
| Move to the purchase of 100% renewable electricity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero carbon electricity purchased to March 2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As we reach associated procurement milestones during the year, the Council will continue to take the opportunity to ensure the electricity used across our various sites is delivered from carbon neutral sources, which includes renewables and nuclear energy. • The Council will keep under review the option of purchasing electricity from purely renewable sources. |
| Ensure all newly constructed council-controlled buildings, extensions and refurbishments are designed to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 where possible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension at Barnes House is heated exclusively by air-source pumps and is insulated fully to modern standards. • The recently completed Sunspot Centre in Jaywick Sands has an EPC Rating of A, including underfloor heating from an air source heat pump. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Spendells Development is designed to high a environmental specification • The Levelling Up Fund housing development specifications will include environment standards referencing this policy • Future council building projects will consider this policy. |
| Focus on the switch away from oil and natural gas use by 2030. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weeley with its oil fired boiler closed • Refurbishment of the (listed) Town Hall includes air source heating in the proposed meeting room. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option to remove oil fired heating at Clacton Leisure Centre to be pursued under Swimming Pool Fund and Salix Fund. Requires successful funding bid. |
| Ongoing delivery of “invest to save” energy efficiency projects to reduce overall emissions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Princes Theatre and TDC offices updated lights to LED • Installation of energy efficient air circulation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool covers for three TDC swimming pools • Swimming Pool Fund may provide capital for more efficient Air |

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| and reduce running costs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> system at Clacton Leisure Centre. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handling Unit as well as heating system Potential for Building Management systems to reduce running costs as an invest to save project. |
| Maximise onsite renewable energy generation opportunities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant report received setting out options for solar on the Council's estate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options for solar PV on council estate and Council Housing Stock Implementation depends on staff resource to implement and external funding |
| Explore carbon offsetting options and develop an implementation plan. | As above. | As above. |

Transport

| Action | Progress | Planned, subject to funding |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Implement a replacement programme for all Council owned vehicles to be fully electric by 2030 | Two electric vehicles purchased as part of the Council Fleet, one for IT and one for Public Realm. 4X4 taken out as demonstrator. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement action later in the plan period, once the cost of new electric vehicles reduces, depending on wider government EV vehicle plans. To be considered through waste re-contracting process for Waste Disposal Vehicles. Dependent on cost. |
| Develop and implement a plan for increasing the electric vehicle charging infrastructure at Council owned car parks and buildings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charging point at Town Hall installed EV charging included in the successful Clacton Town Centre LUF bid to Govt. Eight EV charging points installed in the Orwell | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of options to install EV in six further priority car parks underway Review of all TDC car parks and Leisure Centre car parks under way for |

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| | <p>Place carpark on the former Starlings site in Dovercourt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric Vehicle Charging Points in the carpark of the new Sunspot business centre. | <p>provision by commercial charge-point operators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the review of EV options for TDC Car Parks and Leisure Centres • Develop TDC's EV charging policy • ECC to publish draft strategy for on-street EV points |
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Waste

| Action | Progress | Planned, subject to funding |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Explore and implement opportunities to further reduce waste related emissions and support a circular economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tetrapak facilities at a wider range of locations • Textile recyclables plans to go live | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council will respond to any published changes in government policy requiring increased collection of separated plastics from 2023 |
| Reduce plastic pollution | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the collection of recyclates including plastic as part of the waste re-contracting process. |

Procurement

| Action | Progress | Planned, subject to funding |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Update procurement guidance and standard contractual terms to include climate change impacts and mandatory carbon reporting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has included carbon reduction in its social value / quality scoring in tender evaluation, now operated via the procurement function SLA with Essex County Council | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social value within procurement, including carbon reduction, is one element of the Essex-wide public sector partnership called the 'anchor institution' programme | |
| Develop and deliver training for staff and suppliers on climate change, carbon footprinting, carbon reduction and the important role of procurement in supporting change. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory training on climate and environment was rolled out to all staff in 2022. • No plan to engage with suppliers. | |
| Develop a recording and monitoring process to identify embedded emissions within the procurement of goods and services. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportionate plan to be developed in relation to scale of emissions. Likely to focus on large contracts, such as the waste contract. |

Corporate policy

| Action | Progress | Planned, subject to funding |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Annual data collection calculation and publication of greenhouse gas emissions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon emissions data completed up to April 2022 • Energy data collated for 2022/2023 and with consultancy APSE to turn into emissions data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will need to collate data annually to monitor next version of the plan from 2024. |
| Annual reporting of progress towards a net | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main climate reduction actions included in | |

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| zero target and associated costs alongside the financial budget. | quarterly Cabinet key priorities progress report. | |
| Minimum three-yearly updates to this Action Plan | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated plan under development and to be published in 2024. |
| The development of all new Council strategies and policies will identify contributions to both the organisational and wider Tending emissions targets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Senior Managers advised to ensure these requirements are contained within reports for decision making. | |
| All future committee, portfolio holder and officer decisions to consider and evaluate the impact on the net zero emissions target to help inform decision making. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New report template requires authors to consider net zero. | |
| A specific section for each report to be developed to consider the impact in a consistent manner – 2021 onwards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new Report Template includes a section on ‘implications for the Council’s aim to be net Zero by 2030 | |
| Council led, large scale tourism and sporting events to include a plan around achieving net zero carbon. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TDC tree planting supports the off-setting of major events. The Motor Rally offsets the carbon emitted through the event and are working with the Essex Forest Initiative | |

Tending wide emissions

| Action | Progress | Planned, subject to funding |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Engage with parish and town councils, businesses, residents, Essex County Council and other partners across Tendring to raise awareness and develop shared objectives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet member wrote to all parish councils. Limited response. • Presentation to St Osyth's and Great Bromley Parish Councils | |
| Develop and publish a collaborative action plan and/or form an alliance with all partners that seeks to use our combined powers, duties, influence and leadership to work with others towards the net zero ambition for emissions from all of Tendring. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with PACE, climate action volunteers in NE Tendring and Clacton climate group. • Funding support for Climate Action Festival in 2022 and funding and joint stall with ECC in 2023. • Linked PACE to school 'green day' in July 2022 to provide speakers • Tendring 4 Growth Event in October 2022 and 2023 on Zero Carbon businesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited district wide appetite for an alliance. |
| Lobby partners and government to champion a net zero approach in their plans and policies that impact on Tendring's emissions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the drive from government and other partners to promote climate action, we have not prioritised lobbying | |
| Promote, support and facilitate energy efficiency improvements to homes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful Green Homes Local Authority Delivery grant apps. • Phases 1a (complete), 1b (complete) • Phase 2 (South East Energy Hub, complete) • Phase 3 Sust Warmth and Home Upgrade (South East Energy Hub, in train). | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Company Obligation (Eco 4) can provide grants to home owners on benefits with certain energy | |

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| | <p>improvement requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note past issues with poor quality implementation. | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Funded Fuel Poverty Officer offering benefit, debt and energy efficiency advice. | |

Tree planting

| Action | Progress | Planned, subject to funding |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <p>Increasing our understanding of the number and type of trees in the district and maximise opportunities for tree planting on both Council owned and other land and estate.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant planting underway, moving from 'whips' to larger trees e.g., mature tree planting as part Clacton 150. Successful application via ECC for over 600 mature trees to be planted at Burrs Road, Clacton, Jaywick and Parkeston via the Urban Trees Challenge Fund. The Council working with partners to plant 1 million whips (v small saplings) in Tendring and on Mersea Island. | |

2.2.2 Comparison of Emissions between 2018/19 and 2021/22

Table 3: Difference in carbon emissions by year

| Emissions | Reporting Year | | | Baseline Year |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Apr 2021 – Mar 2022 | Apr 2020 – Mar 2021 | Apr 2019 – Mar 2020 | Apr 2018 – Mar 2019 |
| Scope 1 - Direct Emissions | 1,577 | 1,455 | 1,716 | 1,721 |
| Natural Gas | 1,093 | 1,024 | 1,161 | 1,199 |
| Fuel Oil | 269 | 230 | 331 | 314 |
| Council Owned Vehicle | 215 | 201 | 225 | 209 |
| Scope 2 – Electricity Emissions | 669 | 654 | 892 | 1,045 |
| Total Scope 1 & 2 Emissions | 2,245 | 2,109 | 2,608 | 2,767 |
| Scope 3 – Indirect Emissions | 2,052 | 1,771 | 1,938 | 2,317 |
| Gas – Well to tank emissions | 187 | 133 | 151 | 167 |
| Fuel Oil – Well to tank emissions | 59 | 44 | 5 | 5 |
| Council Owned Vehicle – Well to tank emissions | 52 | 48 | 54 | 50 |
| Electricity – Distribution and transmission emissions | 59 | 56 | 76 | 89 |
| Electricity – Well to tank emissions | 174 | 90 | 135 | 168 |
| Water Supply | 9 | 14 | 12 | 14 |
| Water Treatment | 16 | 28 | 25 | 27 |
| Leased Assets emissions | N/A | N/A | N/A | 310 |
| Employee Vehicle emissions | 60 | 40 | 91 | 83 |
| Third Party Vehicle emissions | 1,435 | 1,317 | 1,390 | 1,404 |
| Total Gross Emissions | 4,297 | 3,881 | 4,546 | 5,083 |
| Carbon offset | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Solar PV Exported | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Net Emissions | 4,297 | 3,881 | 4,546 | 5,083 |
| Further Information | | | | |
| Solar PV Generated | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Degree Days at 15.5 °C <i>(an indicator of heat demand)</i> | 1,891 | 1,875 | 1,856 | 1,757 |
| Total electricity kWh | 3,149,552 | 2,805,971 | 3,487,918 | 3,692,656 |
| Total gas kWh | 5,969,015 | 5,566,860 | 6,312,744 | 6,516,069 |

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AUDIT COMMITTEE

05 October 2023

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FINANCE & IT

A.3 AUDIT COMMITTEE – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES

(Report prepared by Richard Barrett and Karen Hayes)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present to the Committee:

- The progress on outstanding actions identified by the Committee along with general updates on other issues that fall within the responsibilities of the Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A Table of Outstanding Issues is maintained and reported to each meeting of the Committee. This approach enables the Committee to effectively monitor progress on issues and items that form part of its governance responsibilities.
- Updates are set out against general items and the Annual Governance Statement within **Appendix A and B respectively**.
- To date there are no significant issues arising from the above, with work remaining in progress or updates provided elsewhere on the agenda where appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee notes and considers the progress against the actions set out in Appendix A and B.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

To provide a timely update to the Committee along with assurances that actions previously identified are being addressed accordingly.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There are no alternative options associated with this report.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The existence of sound governance, internal control and financial management practices and procedures are essential to the delivery of Corporate priorities supported by effective management and forward planning within this overall framework.

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| LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers) | |
| There are no direct legal implications associated with this report. | |
| FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS | |
| Finance and other resources | |
| There are no significant financial implications associated with monitoring of the agreed actions or responses. If additional resources are required then appropriate steps will be taken including any necessary reporting requirements. | |
| USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY | |
| The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators: | |
| A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services; | Not directly applicable |
| B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and | Not directly applicable |
| C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services. | Not directly applicable |
| MILESTONES AND DELIVERY | |
| The Table of Outstanding Issues is presented to the Audit Committee at each of its standard meetings. | |
| ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION | |
| The Table of Outstanding Issues is in itself a response to potential risk exposure with further activity highlighted to address matters raised by the Audit Committee. | |
| The report does not have a direct impact although such issues could feature in future recommendations and actions. Any actions that may have an impact will be considered and appropriate steps taken to address any issues that may arise. | |
| OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT | |
| There is no requirement to seek consultation on this report. This is a public document to be presented to the Audit Committee. | |
| EQUALITIES | |
| The Table of Outstanding Issues aims to deliver fairness, transparency and consistency to all customers and stakeholders. | |
| SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS | |
| The Table of Outstanding Issues is in itself a response to potential risk exposure, including considerations towards social value, with further activity highlighted to address matters raised by the Audit Committee. | |
| IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2030 | |
| The governance arrangements associated with the Council's aim to be net zero by 2030 fall | |

within the Audit Committee's terms of reference and an update on the arrangements in place to meet this aim are set out in a separate report elsewhere in the agenda.

OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Health Inequalities

Not applicable

Area or Ward affected

All Wards could be affected

ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

None

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Table of Outstanding Issues has been reviewed and updated since it was last considered by the Committee in July 2023.

There are currently two main elements to this report as follows:

- 1) Updates against general items raised by the Committee – **APPENDIX A**
- 2) Updates against the 2023 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan – **APPENDIX B**

In terms of Item 1 above, there are no significant issues to raise, with actions remaining in progress or further details set out below. In terms of Item 2, this sets out the latest Annual Governance Statement published as part of the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 on 01 August 2023. Activity will remain in progress against the various items, which will be reported to Members as part of this report going forward.

Outstanding actions – further details along with other issues identified

Continuing External Audit delays and an update on the External Auditor's work on the Council's Statement of Accounts 2020/21

Following discussions at the last Audit Committee relating to the completion of the External Auditor's work on the Council's 2020/21 Accounts, a further update is planned to be provided by the External Auditor directly at the meeting.

In respect of the ongoing audit delays the Government's response was set out in the Monitoring Officer's Section 5 report, that was considered by Full Council at its meeting of 26 September 2023, an associated question and response from the Chairman of the Audit Committee was also considered at the same meeting of Full Council. These set out more details around the Government's response which revolve around introducing statutory deadlines, by which time the accounts relating to outstanding years must be finalised. The

Chairman of the Audit Committee also went on to stress the importance of our current external auditors having a focus on the 2022/23 accounts which was a point also acknowledged by the Government and the Financial Reporting Council. It is now important to obtain from our external auditors their own response to the Government's recent announcements and their assurances around meeting the proposed statutory deadlines, which hopefully sees them focus on the 2022/23 statement of accounts as soon as possible.

The Council's External Auditors have been asked to provide their response to the Government's proposals, which they plan on providing directly at the meeting.

RIPA – Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act 2000

This Authority has not conducted any RIPA activity in the last quarter and it is rare that it will be required to do so.

Whistleblowing

This Authority has not received any Whistleblowing information since the adoption of the Whistleblowing Policy in July 2023. As part of the monitoring arrangements associated with the effectiveness of this policy, relevant updates will be provided to this Committee during the year.

Redmond Review

As further progress is announced by the government, updates will be provided to future meetings of this Committee, which will hopefully set out the necessary practical steps to implement the recommendations made as part of this review. At the time of writing, no updates were available.

Changes to Regulatory Arrangements

There have been two recent changes that will have an impact on the Council with a summary as follows:

1) The Government have established the Office for Local Government (OFLOG), a performance body for Local Government. They have proposed a number of activities with the aim of fostering accountability through increased transparency, which in turn aims to support the improvement of Local Government performance.

The Government has also stated that as OFLOG develops, it will seek to enable improvement across the sector by helping facilitate greater use of interpretation of data, and in its mature state it aspires to be an authoritative source of information on Local Government performance, that can support others to interpret performance data and take action on it – particularly where the data shows early warning signs of failure.

OFLOG state that their strategic objectives are as follows:

- empower citizens with information about their local authority, enabling them to hold local leaders to account
- increase local leaders' and councils' understanding of their relative performance, supporting them to improve and better innovate

- increase central government’s understanding of local government performance, highlighting excellence and identifying risk of failure to facilitate timely and targeted support

2) Enhanced Powers for the Regulator of Social Housing – the Social Housing Regulation Act received Royal Assent earlier in the year, which will see a new era of regulation for the social housing sector; with some key elements as follows:

- Enhanced powers for the Regulator of Social Housing - The Act will facilitate the introduction of proactive consumer regulation by strengthening the Regulator of Social Housing, allowing intervention in cases where landlords are performing poorly on consumer issues. This will enable the Regulator to take action to address any shortcomings and protect tenants.
- Stronger enforcement powers - The Act establishes stronger enforcement powers for the Regulator to take action including provisions for regular inspections of social housing properties to ensure landlords are providing high-quality services and accommodation. These inspections will help maintain and improve the standard of housing for tenants across the country.
- Tenant empowerment - The Act will establish strict time limits for social landlords to address hazards and empowers social housing tenants to request information from their landlords, promoting transparency and accountability. This will ensure tenants have the right to access crucial information about their homes and can access swift redress where things go wrong.
- Standards for Registered Providers - The Act introduces a set of standards for registered housing providers, requiring social housing managers to possess specific qualifications or be actively working towards gaining them. These standards will help ensure residents receive the best possible service from their housing associations.

The Council will need to explore the new requirements, the impact on the Council and actions required to be established in response to the above. In respect of the Housing Regulator Powers work is already underway along with further planned work that will include external consultation and review along with the development of associated action plans. Further updates will be provided to Members as part of this ongoing work.

Other matters to highlight

Following the Committee’s consideration of the Corporate Risk Register at its meeting in July 2023, the next six monthly update will be in January 2024. This is a change to the six monthly cycle that was set out in the Committee’s earlier work programme, which can be reviewed going forward.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS TAKEN BY COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE ETC.

The Table of Outstanding Issues is presented to the Committee at each of its meetings.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Table of Outstanding Issues (October 2023) – General

Appendix B – Table of Outstanding Issues – (October 2023) – Update against 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement Actions

| REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S) | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name | Richard Barrett |
| Job Title | Assistant Director Finance & IT |
| Email/Telephone | rbarrett@tendringdc.gov.uk |
| Name | Karen Hayes |
| Job Title | Executive Projects Manager – Governance |
| Email/Telephone | ktownshend@tendringdc.gov.uk |

AUDIT COMMITTEE - Table of Outstanding Issues (October 2023) - GENERAL

| Governance Principle and Issue | Recommendation / Issue | Lead / Service | Progress / Comments | Status – Target Date |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capacity of its leadership and the individuals within it.</p> | <p>Following the consideration of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy last year, it was resolved that:</p> <p>The Head of Democratic Services & Elections be requested to consider including training for Members on anti-fraud and corruption measures as part of the Councillor Development Scheme.</p> | <p>Assistant Director Governance</p> | <p>The development of a Formal Training Programme remains ongoing which will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joint general training with other Essex Authorities. 2. Statement of Accounts training, timing of which remains subject to the reporting of the accounts to the Committee. <p>Dedicated sessions for Audit Committee Members are currently being arranged to cover the following topics:</p> <p>The role of Internal Audit Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy</p> <p>Corporate Governance and Assurance in a Local Authority setting</p> <p>Role and appointment of External Audit</p> <p>Risk Management</p> | <p>Given the Local Elections in May 2023, the first training session, ‘Your Role on The Audit Committee’, was delivered in June 23.</p> <p>A further module, ‘Reviewing Audit Committee Reports Effectively’, will be delivered at a later date. Further training opportunities will be explored in response to the items listed.</p> |

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| | | | <p>The above are subject to external training providers' availability</p> | |
| <p>Planning Enforcement</p> | <p>At its meeting on 26 January 2023, the Committee resolved:</p> <p>That it will re-examine, in due course, the Planning Enforcement function as regards to its effectiveness and efficiency, once the new Policy is fully implemented and all enforcement staff are in place.</p> | <p>Director of Planning</p> | <p>The Planning Enforcement Policy and associated Harm Risk Assessment has been updated to reflect the recommendations of the Resource & Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee following a dedicated Task & Finish review. The updated policy is being reported to the Planning Committee on 28th September 2023 for its formal adoption.</p> <p>The Planning Enforcement Team is now fully staffed with permanent Officers and all temporary agency support has ceased. The number of recorded live/outstanding enforcement complaints has halved in size between June 2022 and September 2023 following a fundamental review of cases.</p> <p>Planning Enforcement Training was provided for Members in September 2023 and further training is proposed for Town and Parish Councils.</p> <p>A new Task & Finish Group is looking into Enforcement, including</p> | <p>Further updates will be provided to the Audit Committee following any recommendations from the current Task & Finish Group.</p> |

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| | | | <p>certain aspects of Planning Enforcement had its inaugural meeting on 14th September 2023 where the Planning Portfolio Holder and Director of Planning were in attendance to update Members on improvements that have been made in recent months. An action plan setting out further proposed improvements to the service is being developed, drawing on the Overview & Scrutiny recommendations.</p> | |
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AUDIT COMMITTEE - Table of Outstanding Issues (October 2023) – ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ACTIONS 2022/23

| Governance Principle & Issue | Required Action(s) | Update / Additional Comments |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.</p> <p>Ensuring compliance of the Council's governance arrangements through project board reviews.</p> <p>Utilising the Council's systems to complement best practice for drafting, reporting and decision making.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of project outcome being undertaken by the Project Board to support future decision making and delivery. Continuation of the roll out of the functionality of Modern.gov over a phased approach in 2022/23 – completed areas – training record for Councillors, TDC representatives on outside bodies, E petitions function, automated e mails, submission of final reports for Planning Committee, Cabinet, Council, Committee and Management Team dates published, Environmental Health licensing decisions published, report writing functionality. | <p>On-going – The outcome from key projects will be reported to Members following completion of the associated project. Upcoming reports will include Jaywick Flexible Workspaces, Starlings and the Office Transformation Project.</p> <p>On-going – Modern.gov remains an on-going and live project with additional functionality planned to be rolled out during 2023/24. The delivery team have been working with the new system owner's Civica, together with the Council's IT Team.</p> <p>The new, automated process to Town and Parish Councils for Planning notifications has been rolled- out.</p> |
| <p>Developing the Council's entity, including the capacity of its leadership and the individuals within it.</p> <p>Effectively manage the transition to a new Administration following the local elections in May 2023.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of delivery of the Member Development Programme. Cabinet focus on new Corporate Plan, project prioritisation, financial sustainability and robust decision-making. | <p>On-going – The emerging Corporate Plan and vision was approved by Cabinet in July, subject to public consultation, which closed on 25th September 2023. The outcome of the consultation will be reported to All Member Briefing and Informal Cabinet in October, with reports to Cabinet and Council in November. Following adoption of the Corporate Plan, Cabinet's draft priorities will be proposed at December's Cabinet meeting. The delivery of business as usual continues supported with</p> |

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| | | <p>regular briefings with individual Portfolio Holders and Cabinet.</p> <p>Draft Departmental Plans within services have been produced and discussed with Portfolio Holders, with capacity and the identification of resources required for delivery and prioritisation being considered as part of the process. The plans will require review alongside emerging the Corporate Plan and Priority setting process.</p> |
| <p>Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.</p> <p>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 67</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of existing Risk Management / Business Continuity arrangements. • Conduct an audit review in relation to the effectiveness of the Council's response to COVID-19, including a <i>review of the lessons learnt from the Council's response</i> and longer-term consequences. • Review of the effectiveness of the Audit Committee. • Develop and implement a Corporate policy and strategy 'register' to ensure that these are reviewed and updated in a timely manner and to support decision making. | <p>On-going – It is planned to undertake a review during the second half of 2023/24 and present recommendations / options to a future meeting of the Audit Committee.</p> <p>This continues to form part of the ongoing work of Internal Audit, which will also reflect any learning points that may emerge from the national public inquiry currently underway.</p> <p>It is planned to undertake a review in consultation with the Audit Committee and other key partners during the second half of 2023/24 and develop an associated action plan as necessary.</p> <p>The recommendations emerging from the Redmond review will be kept under review along with the identification of an action plan as necessary.</p> <p>This will be undertaken alongside the new Corporate Vision once adopted.</p> |

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| | | <p>The above remains subject to securing the additional capacity required to deliver a number of corporate activities and actions.</p> |
| <p>Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.</p> <p>Maintaining an up to date Local Code of Corporate Governance along with key policies and procedures.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the Local Code of Corporate Governance and key policies and procedure. | <p>On-going - The commitment remains in place to undertake this review during 2023/24.</p> |
| <p>Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.</p> <p>Delegated decision making.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness and further strengthening of good decision making incorporating the Council's policies and framework. | <p>On-going – Work remains in progress to increase the understanding of key principles including consultation, business planning, budget, and procurement, legal. Concept papers and PIDS to completed comprehensively to ensure successful delivery within the governance framework.</p> <p>The LUF and CRP projects are planned to be reported to Cabinet in Oct 2023, which includes the identification of a proposed delivery structure.</p> <p>It is planned to undertake/continue a number of activities to increase the understanding of key principles including consultation, business planning, budget, and procurement, legal requirements. Concept paper and PIDs to completed comprehensively to ensure successful delivery within the governance framework.</p> |

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| | | <p>This will also focus on robust project management, to provide oversight on financial and non-financial issues especially in key areas such as: Levelling Up Fund / Regeneration Project, waste contract renewal, and housing review recommendations.</p> <p>External funding guidance to be produced, incorporating existing requirements, due to the level of external funding being applied for and managed by the Council.</p> <p>There have been recent concerns with proposed decision making and project management in a particular service area. The Monitoring Officer and Officers within the Governance Directorate have been providing advice and guidance with a dedicated training session scheduled for Oct 2023.</p> |
| <p>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</p> <p>In terms of business continuity this is especially important given the current global/economic climate</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental Plans to be subject to review to reflect any updated Council objectives and priorities including the associated management of risk. • Develop the financial planning process with the aim of strengthening the Council’s long term financial sustainability. | <p>On-going – During 2023/24 reviews of the Departmental Plans will be undertaken to align with the new Corporate Vision and Risk Management approach, along with any Peer Reviews as relevant.</p> <p>Review to incorporate resources / capacity to deliver priorities, projects and service provision.</p> <p>An updated financial forecast will be presented to Cabinet on 06 Oct 2023, which will include the development of the framework in which to identify</p> |

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| | | <p>the necessary savings to support the Council's long-term financial sustainability.</p> <p>The dedicated / regular Officer Management Team meetings will continue to be developed during the year with a focus on financial / non-financial issues along with performance and delivery.</p> |
| <p>Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.</p> <p>Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.</p> <p>To set out the Council's vision following the Council's Climate Emergency declaration of the Council's activities being 'carbon neutral' by 2030.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation / reporting updates against the Climate Change for approval by both the Cabinet and Council to form part of the Council's Policy Framework. | <p>On-going – The Corporate Director, Place and Economy, will attend this meeting of the Committee to present to Members the governance arrangements relating to the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.</p> |