

AUDIT COMMITTEE 19 JANUARY 2006			AGENDA ITEM																																								
INTERNAL AUDIT: INTERNAL AUDIT: PERFORMANCE FOR THE NINE MONTHS ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2005																																											
<p>Summary of report: The report presents internal audit's performance against targets for the nine months ending 31 December 2005, summarised below.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Quality Targets/PI's (e.g. Response Time)</th><th>% Target</th><th>% Achieved 2005/06</th><th>% Achieved 2004/05</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Audits completed within planned time</td><td>95</td><td>100</td><td>95</td></tr> <tr> <td>Spending within budget</td><td>100</td><td>100</td><td>100</td></tr> <tr> <td>Productivity rate (estimated)</td><td>65</td><td>65</td><td>70.1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Audit plan achievement (estimated)</td><td>90</td><td>90</td><td>95.1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Report issued within 10 working days of exit meeting</td><td>80</td><td>84</td><td>94</td></tr> <tr> <td>Recommendations accepted/ implemented or agreed</td><td>95</td><td>97</td><td>98</td></tr> <tr> <td>Returned customer questionnaires to show satisfaction</td><td>95</td><td>100</td><td>100</td></tr> <tr> <td>Overall perception of quality of service from Council wide Internal Audit survey</td><td>95</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr> <td>Recommendations confirmed as actually implemented at next audit visit (see below)</td><td>95</td><td>71</td><td>73</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>On completion of an audit, a recommendation action plan is agreed with the relevant directorate manager who is then responsible for ensuring its implementation. A level of 73% has been achieved in both of the last 2 years against a target of 95%. A figure of 71% is now recorded which is still disappointing. Implementation of agreed recommendations is a directorate managers responsibility but as members have previously been informed a follow up process is in place to attempt to improve performance in this area.</p>				Quality Targets/PI's (e.g. Response Time)	% Target	% Achieved 2005/06	% Achieved 2004/05	Audits completed within planned time	95	100	95	Spending within budget	100	100	100	Productivity rate (estimated)	65	65	70.1	Audit plan achievement (estimated)	90	90	95.1	Report issued within 10 working days of exit meeting	80	84	94	Recommendations accepted/ implemented or agreed	95	97	98	Returned customer questionnaires to show satisfaction	95	100	100	Overall perception of quality of service from Council wide Internal Audit survey	95	-	-	Recommendations confirmed as actually implemented at next audit visit (see below)	95	71	73
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<p>Background papers: Internal audit report: monitoring summary</p>																																											

Reason for scrutiny:

The quarterly review of internal audit work enables the committee to form a view on the current effectiveness of the internal control environment.

Recommendation:

1. To note that as at 31.12.05, internal audit has delivered on all of its performance targets; maintaining a high level of overall performance for the year.

Signed:

Executive Director: Carole Evans

Date: 9 January 2006

Resource and legal considerations:

Paragraph 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 requires councils to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of accounting records and system of internal control in accordance with proper internal audit practices. Under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, the council has designated the executive director (corporate services) as the chief finance officer; who is responsible for making arrangements for the proper administration of the council's financial affairs. The cost of providing internal audit is fully charged to services based on audit activity.

Citizen impact:

Internal audit work is intended to ensure that effective systems of internal control are in place. This protects the council and its officers and provides an assurance to stakeholders regarding the security of our operations.

Environment impact:

None arising directly from this report

Performance management and risk management issues:

Many of the audit committee's activities are an important and integral part of the council's performance management and corporate governance framework, and can challenge, review and advise on service delivery, council activity and policy with a view to improving results. The internal audit strategic plan is risk assessed to ensure areas most at risk are examined as a priority. A copy of each quarterly performance report is scrutinised by the section 151 officer to assist in satisfying her responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1972.

It is important that agreed internal audit recommendations are implemented promptly by accountable managers, as this helps to secure and strengthen the internal control environment. The process is briefly as follows:

- Internal audit advise all managers being audited that failure to implement agreed audit recommendations may result in their being called to the audit committee to provide explanation;
- Within a short period of completing the audit, formal confirmation is sought from the manager that agreed recommendations contained within the audit report action plan have been implemented;
- If the manager does not respond to the initial confirmation request, a follow up reminder is issued advising that failure to implement may result in their being asked to provide explanation to the audit committee;
- Failure by the manager to then respond results in a memorandum/letter advising that should their response not be received by a certain date (ie:: after a further 7 days) it will be assumed that the recommendations are agreed and will be fully implemented.

Confirmation of implemented recommendations is sought at the next audit visit. Although this approach has proved successful in most cases, a small number of managers have been found to have inaccurately confirmed that recommendations had been implemented when in fact they had not been. This has resulted in a performance level against this indicator of 71% in quarter three; a slight reduction over previous years. This level is expected to improve by the year end.

Equality implications:

None arising from this report

Consultation:

The proposed annual work plan was discussed with relevant senior managers during April and May 2005. Following completion of each piece of audit work, and before issuing the final version, the manager's agreement to implement recommendation(s) listed in the audit report action plan is sought.

Vision impact:

Internal audit work contributes towards the council's vision in ensuring services operate in a sound control environment and provide excellent customer services.

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