



## **Governance Scrutiny Group**

**Thursday, 23 February 2023**

### **Internal Audit Strategy 2023-2026**

## **Report of the Director - Finance and Corporate Services**

### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. On 6 February 2020, the Council's internal audit team from BDO presented a three-year Internal Audit Strategy. This was subsequently approved by the Governance Scrutiny Group.
- 1.2. On 3 February 2022, the plan for 2022/23, as well as provisional internal audit plans for a new cycle of audits in 2023/24 and 2024/25 were approved by the Governance Scrutiny Group.
- 1.3. This report focuses on the planned audits due to take place in Year One of the new cycle of audits, starting 2023/24. This is included at Appendix A for consideration. A small number of changes have been made to the 2023/24 plan to respond to evolving situations and amended risks.
- 1.4. A member of the BDO internal audit team will attend the meeting to present the report and answer any questions the Group may have.

### **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Governance Scrutiny Group review and approve:

- (a) the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan 2023-2026
- (b) the Internal Audit Charter, Appendix 1 of the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1. To conform with best practice and Public Sector Internal Audit Standards; and give assurance to the Governance Scrutiny Group regarding the Council's internal control environment.

### **4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1. The Council's internal auditors, BDO, compiled an Audit Strategy for the 2020 to 2023 period. The strategy was agreed by the Governance Scrutiny Group in February 2020. A strategy for 2023 to 2026 is now being proposed.

- 4.2. The plan is set within the context of a multi-year approach to internal audit planning, such that areas of key risks would aim to be looked at over a three-year audit cycle.
- 4.3. Appendix A gives an indicative strategic plan for 2023-26 and the programme is kept under continuous review during the year with any areas of significant risk added during that period.
- 4.4. Slight amendments have been made to the 2023/24 plan outlined in the Audit Strategy approved in 2022/23, to take account of amended local risks, continued resource pressures and sector-led advice. The Internal Audit Plan 2023-2026 is included at Appendix A for information.
- 4.5. Ten audits are planned for 2023/24 totalling 150 days and covering a number of the Council's key policies and systems. These include:
- Main Financial Systems
  - Reconciliations
  - Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium (Income)
  - Fleet Management and Air Pollution
  - Fraud Report
  - Governance of Partnership Arrangements
- 4.6. There will also be a follow-up audit of recommendations made in previous years but not yet implemented to ensure that audit recommendations are being complied with by officers.
- 4.7. There are three questions to assist the Group in their consideration of the audit plan. These are:
- Is the Group satisfied that sufficient assurance is being received within their annual plan to monitor the Council's risk profile effectively?
  - Does the strategy for internal audit cover the Council's key risks as they are recognised by the Group?
  - Are the areas selected for coverage this coming year appropriate?
- 4.8. There is also a requirement that Councillors understand and approve the role and scope of Internal Audit covered in the Internal Audit Charter as stated at Appendix 1 of the audit plan.

## **5. Risks and Uncertainties**

- 5.1. There are no risks directly attributable to the report although the nature of the internal audit service and the audit plan helps manage risk. The audit fees are always subject to risk in terms of if an internal control weakness is identified fees can potentially exceed the budget or work may take less time than planned (ie there is both upside and downside risk).

## **6. Implications**

### **6.1. Financial Implications**

The audit fee relating to the costs of the audit work is included within existing budgets.

### **6.2. Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **6.3. Equalities Implications**

None

### **6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications**

None

## **7. Link to Corporate Priorities**

Quality of Life	The nature of audit is that it is cross cutting across a range of services and will impact on all of the Council's Corporate Objectives
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	
The Environment	

## **8. Recommendations**

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(a) the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan 2023-2026

(b) the Internal Audit Charter, Appendix 1 of the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Peter Linfield Director - Finance and Corporate Services Tel: 0115 9148439 plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix A –Internal Audit Strategy 2023-2026