

Tamworth

Borough Council

INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER



March 2024

Document Location

This document is held by Tamworth Borough Council (TBC) and the document owner is the Audit Manager.

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Revision History

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05/03/14	1.01.02	Review
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05/03/19	1.01.08	Review
12/06/20	1.01.09	Review – changes to follow up process
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Approvals

Name	Date:
Audit & Governance Committee	
Chief Executive	29.02.24
Audit Manager	08.02.24

Document Review Plans

This document is subject to a scheduled annual review. Updates shall be made in accordance with business requirements and changes and will be with agreement with the document owner.

Distribution

The document will be available on the Intranet and the website.

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1 Definition of Internal Auditing

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes (IIA – UK & Ireland).

The internal audit service will comply with the Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards (PSIAS) as adopted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The PSIAS encompass the mandatory elements of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF) as follows:

- Definition of Internal Auditing;
- Code of Ethics; and
- International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (including interpretations and glossary).

The mandatory core principles for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing are:

- Demonstrate integrity
- Demonstrates competence and due professional care
- Is objective and free from undue influence (independent)
- Aligns with the strategies, objectives, and risks of the organisation
- Is appropriately positioned and adequately resourced
- Demonstrates quality and continuous improvement
- Communicates effectively
- Provides risk based assurance
- Is insightful, proactive, and future-focused
- Promotes organisational improvement.

This Charter will be periodically reviewed in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Audit & Governance Committee. Changes to the International Professional Practice Framework will be incorporated as and when they occur. **Note – as from 1 January 2025 new Internal Audit Standards will come into effect, once full industry wide mapping has been completed this will be incorporated into the Audit Charter for 2025/26.**

The Audit Manager will report conformance to the PSIAS in the annual report to the Audit & Governance Committee.

2 Mission Statement of Internal Audit

To enhance and protect the authority's values by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight.

3 Purpose and Statutory Requirements

The internal audit activity will evaluate and contribute to the improvement of governance, risk management and control processes using a systematic and disciplined approach.

The internal audit activity must assess and make appropriate recommendations for improving the governance process in its accomplishment of the following objectives:

- Promoting appropriate ethics and values within the organisation;
- Ensuring effective organisational performance management and accountability;
- Communicating risk and control information to appropriate areas of the organisation; and
- Coordinating the activities of and communicating information amongst the Audit & Governance Committee, external and internal auditors and management.

In addition, the other objectives of the function are to:

- Support the Executive Director Finance to discharge their s151 duties of the Local Government Finance Act 1972 by maintaining an adequate and effective Internal Audit service;
- Contribute to and support the Authority's objectives of ensuring the provision of and promoting the need for, sound financial systems; and
- Investigate allegations of fraud or irregularity to help safeguard public funds.

Internal Audit is a statutory service in the context of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 which state in respect of Internal Audit 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.”

The work of Internal Audit forms part of the assurance framework, however, the existence of Internal Audit does not diminish the responsibility of management to establish systems of internal control to ensure that activities are conducted in a secure, efficient and well-ordered manner.

4 Objectives

The Audit Manager's responsibility is to report to the Audit & Governance Committee on its assessment of the adequacy of the entire control environment.

They do this by:

- Providing assurance, which is risk based and objective and relevant (Internal Audit's primary role) to the Council and its management on the quality of the Council's operations, whether delivered internally or externally, with particular emphasis on systems of risk management, control and governance.

Assurance to third parties will be provided where specific internal audit resources are allocated to the area under review (e.g. pension contributions).

- Providing consultancy services to internal and external delivered services. Consultancy services are advisory and insightful in nature and will be performed at the specific request of the organisation with the aim to improve governance, risk management and control.
- Providing counter fraud and corruption services to include investigating fraud; increasing awareness of the counter-fraud responsibilities at all levels within and outside the Council; further embedding and supporting the effective management of fraud risk within the Council; setting specific goals for improving the resilience against fraud and corruption through the support of counter-fraud activities across the Council; and minimising the likelihood and extent of loss through fraud and corruption.
- Provision of an Annual Report to support the provision of the annual opinion regarding risk management, governance and control.

5 Role and Scope of Work

The scope on internal auditing encompasses, but is not limited to, the examination and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes as well as the quality of performance in carrying out assigned responsibilities to achieve the organisation's stated goals and objectives. This includes:

- Evaluating the reliability and integrity of management and financial information processes and the means used to identify, measure, classify, and report such information;
- Evaluating the systems established to ensure compliance with those policies, plans, procedures, laws, and regulations which could have a significant impact on the organisation;
- Evaluating the means of safeguarding assets and, as appropriate, verifying the existence of such assets;
- Evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency with which resources are employed;
- Evaluating operations or programs to ascertain whether results are consistent with established objectives and goals and whether the operations or programs are being carried out as planned;
- Evaluating the potential occurrence for fraud as part of the audit engagements;
- Monitoring and evaluating governance processes;
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the organisation's risk management processes;
- Monitoring the degree of coordination of internal audit and external audit;
- Performing consulting and advisory services related to governance, risk management and control as appropriate for the organisation;
- Reporting periodically on the internal audit activity's purpose, authority, responsibility, and performance relative to its plan;

- Reporting significant risk exposures and control issues, including fraud risks, governance issues, and other matters to the Audit & Governance Committee;
- Evaluating specific operations at the request of management, as appropriate;
- Support management upon the design of controls at appropriate points in the development of major change programmes.

6 Proficiency and Due Professional Care

The internal audit activity will govern itself by adherence to The Institute of Internal Auditors mandatory guidance including the Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics, and the Core Principles of the Internal Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. This mandatory guidance constitutes principles of the fundamental requirements for the professional practice of internal auditing and for evaluating the effectiveness of the internal audit activity's performance. The mandatory guidance will be updated and come into effect on 1st January 2025, the current transition period between 1 April 2024 and 1 January 2025 will be used to map the changes in requirements outline in the mandatory guidance. Once mapping is complete and the affects outlined in respect of local government the Charter and Protocol will be updated for 2025/26.

The Institute of Internal Auditors' Practice Advisories, Practice Guides, and Position Papers will also be adhered to as applicable to guide operations. In addition, the internal audit activity will adhere to Lichfield District Council's relevant policies and procedures and the internal audit activity's standard operating procedures manual.

Job descriptions and person specifications for each post within Internal Audit Services define the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience and are reviewed periodically.

Personal Development Reviews will be completed in accordance with the Council's policy. Staff will be supported to fulfil training and development needs identified in order to support their continuous professional development programme.

Internal Auditors will exercise due professional care by considering the:

- Extent of work needed to achieve the engagement's objectives with detailed Terms of Reference (including consultancy engagements);
- Relative complexity, materiality or significance of matters to which assurance procedures are applied;
- Adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes;
- Probability of significant errors, fraud, or non-compliance; and
- Cost of assurance in relation to potential benefits.

Where gaps exist in knowledge and skills in the delivery of internal audit plans, the Audit Manager can engage specialist providers of Internal Audit Services.

Internal Audit staff will be suitably supervised and work will be reviewed by a senior member of staff.

7 Authority

The Internal Audit service, with strict accountability for confidentiality and safeguarding records and information, is authorised full, free, and unrestricted access to any and all of Tamworth Borough Council's records, physical properties, and personnel pertinent to carrying out any engagement. All employees are requested to assist the internal audit service in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities.

8 Organisation

The Audit Manager will report functionally to the Audit & Governance Committee and administratively (i.e. day to day operations) to the Chief Executive.

The Audit & Governance Committee will receive performance reports on the internal audit function on a quarterly basis.

9 Independence and Objectivity

The service is managed by the Audit Manager who is professionally qualified as required by the PSIAS. The Audit Manager has a direct reporting line to the Chief Executive and also provides regular reports to the Audit & Governance Committee which has responsibility for overseeing audit arrangements.

The Audit Manager does not manage any other Council function to ensure their independence and objectivity is maintained.

The internal audit service will remain free from interference by any element in the organisation, including matters of audit selection, scope, procedures, frequency, timing, or reporting content to permit maintenance of a necessary independent and objective mental attitude.

Internal auditors must exhibit the highest level of professional objectivity in gathering, evaluating, and communicating information about the activity or process being examined. Internal auditors must make a balanced assessment of all the relevant circumstances and not be unduly influenced by their own interests or by others in forming judgements.

Regular review of the placement/location of Internal Audit team members will be completed to ensure independence, taking into account the consultancy work individual internal auditors have performed when completing assurance engagements. Internal auditors will not provide assurance in areas where they have been involved in advising management.

The internal audit service will also have free and unrestricted access to the Chief Executive and the Audit & Governance Committee.

The Audit Manager will confirm to the Audit & Governance Committee, at least annually, the organisational independence of the internal audit activity.

10 Internal Audit Plan

At least annually, the Audit Manager will submit to Executive Leadership Team and the Audit & Governance Committee an internal audit plan for review and endorsement.

The internal audit plan will be developed based on prioritisation of the audit universe using a risk-based methodology, which takes into account, results from previous audits, stakeholders expectations, feed back from Senior Managers, objectives in strategic plans and business plans, the risk maturity of the organisation (including managements response to risk), and legal & regulatory requirements. The use of other sources of assurance and the work required to place reliance on them will be highlighted in the audit plan.

Contingency time will be built into the annual audit plan to allow for any unplanned work. This will be reported on in accordance with the internal reporting process to the Audit & Governance Committee.

Approval will be sought from the Audit & Governance Committee for any significant additional consulting services not already included in the audit plan, prior to accepting the engagement. The Audit Plan balances the following requirements:

- the need to ensure the Audit Plan is completed to a good practice level (currently at least 90% of planned audits required are deliverable in the year);
- the need to ensure core financial systems are adequately reviewed to provide assurance that management has in place proper arrangements for financial control;
- the need to appropriately review other strategic and operational arrangements, taking account of changes in the authority and its services and the risks requiring audit review;
- the need to have uncommitted time available to deal with unplanned issues which may need to be investigated e.g. allegations of financial or other relevant irregularities, or indeed specific consultancy. (NB there are separate guidelines over circumstances in which Internal Audit may and may not get involved in such investigations or consultancy, and further reference to this is made within the corporate Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy and guidance);
- to enable positive timely input to assist corporate and service developments.

A joint working arrangement with External Audit will be sought such that Internal Audit resources are used as effectively as possible.

11 Reporting and Monitoring

A written report will be prepared and issued by the Audit Manager following the conclusion of each internal audit engagement and will be distributed as appropriate with executive briefing reports issued in accordance with the Internal Audit Protocol.

The final internal audit report will include management's response and corrective actions in regard to the specific findings and recommendations. It will also include a timetable for anticipated completion of action to be taken.

The Internal Audit service will be responsible for following up all high priority recommendations and those arising from overall no and limited assurance reports to ensure that management have implemented them in the agreed timescales. It is management's responsibility to ensure that the agreed actions for medium and low priority actions are implemented. All outstanding recommendations will be monitored.

Results of audit follow up will be communicated as appropriate and a summary of the results will be reported to senior management and the Audit & Governance Committee.

Where significant risk exposures and control issues, including fraud and governance issues, are identified, they will be reported to the Audit & Governance Committee.

12 Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme

The Internal Audit activity will maintain a quality assurance and improvement programme that covers all aspects on the Internal Audit activity. The programme will include an evaluation of the internal audit activity's conformance with the Definition of Internal Auditing and the International Standards and an evaluation of whether internal auditors apply the Code of Ethics. The programme also assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal audit activity and identifies opportunities for improvement.

The Audit Manager will periodically report to the Audit & Governance Committee on the internal audit service purpose, authority, and responsibility, as well as performance relative to its plan. Reporting will also include significant risk exposures and control issues, including fraud risks, governance issues, and other matters needed or requested by the Executive Leadership Team and the Audit & Governance Committee.

In addition, the Audit Manager will communicate to the Executive Leadership Team and the Audit & Governance Committee on the internal audit service's quality assurance and improvement programme, including results of ongoing internal

assessments and improvement plans and external assessments. External assessments will be conducted at least every five years by a professionally qualified and experienced assessor.

The improvement plan resulting from the internal and external assessments will be reported to and monitored by the Audit & Governance Committee.

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