

REPORT TO:	GENERAL PURPOSES & AUDIT COMMITTEE 17 March 2020
SUBJECT:	Internal Audit Update Report April 2019 to January 2020
LEAD OFFICER:	Simon Maddocks, Head of Internal Audit
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Simon Hall Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:	
<p>Internal Audit's work helps the Council to improve its value for money by strengthening financial management and supporting risk management. Strengthening value for money is critical in improving the Council's ability to deliver services which, in turn helps the Council achieve all its visions and aims. The external auditor relies on the work from the internal audit programme when forming opinions and assessments of the Council's performance.</p>	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	
<p>The Internal Audit contract for 2019/20 is a fixed price contract of £383k and appropriate provision has been made within the budget for 2019/20.</p>	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to note the Internal Audit Report for April 2019 to January 2020 (Appendix 1).

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report details the work completed by Internal Audit so far during 2019/20 and the progress made in implementing agreed actions from audits completed in previous years.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The Internal Audit report (Appendix 1) includes the following:
- a list of all audits completed so far in 2019/20 and audits relating to 2018/19, but finalised after the annual report, and
 - lists of follow up audits completed and the percentage of priority one, and other agreed actions implemented.
- 3.2 Internal Audit is responsible for conducting an independent appraisal of all the Council's activities, financial and otherwise. It provides a service to the whole Council, including Members and all levels of management. It is not an extension of, nor a substitute for, good management. The Internal Audit Service is responsible for giving assurance on all control arrangements to the Full Council through the General Purposes & Audit Committee and the Chief Financial Officer (also known as the Section 151 Officer), who is currently the Director of Finance, Investment & Risk. It also assists management by evaluating and reporting to them the effectiveness of the controls for which they are responsible.
- 3.3 Based on the reports finalised and issued since 1st April 2019, an indicative overall **Limited Assurance** level is given as **50%** of individual reports received limited or no assurance. This shows no improvement from the first time that an indication of an overall Limited Assurance was first given at the last meeting of this committee. Members should be concerned that this is the case.

4. FOLLOW-UP REVIEWS

- 4.1 When Internal Audit identifies risks, actions to mitigate them are agreed with service managers. The Council then needs to ensure that these actions are implemented. The Council's targets for agreed actions to be implemented are 80% for all priority 2 and 3 recommendations and 90% for priority 1 recommendations. The performance in relation to the targets set for 2015/20 audits are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Implementation of Agreed Actions

	Target	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Implementation of priority one agreed actions at follow-up	90%	100%	93%	96%	81%	100%
Implementation of all agreed actions at follow-up	80%	94%	91%	90%	81%	93%

5. PROGRESS AGAINST THE AUDIT PLAN

- 5.1 By 31 January **68%** (78% last year) of the 2019/20 planned audit days had been delivered and **42%** (47% last year) of the draft audit reports due for the

year had been issued. The contractor has given assurances that the necessary resources are available to deliver the internal audit plan in-year as usual.

6. PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

- 6.1 Following a decision at the June 2015 meeting of this committee, all finalised internal audit reports are published on the Council's public internet site.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The outcome of all audit work is discussed and agreed with the lead service managers. The final reports and audit recommendations are sent for consideration by Departmental Leadership Teams (DLT). Details are circulated and discussed with Directors on a regular basis.

8. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The fixed price for the Internal Audit Contract is £383k for 2019/20 and there is adequate provision within the budget. There are no additional financial considerations relating to this report
- 8.2 Internal Audit's planning methodology is based on risk assessments that include using the Council risk registers processes.

(Approved by: Ian Geary, Head of Finance, Resources & Accountancy)

9. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance that the Council should take steps to improve the Assurance level within the Council.
- 9.2 Information provided in this report is necessary to demonstrate the Council's compliance with requirements imposed by Regulation 5 of the Local Government Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015. The Council is required to 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.

(Approved by: Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 10.1 There are no immediate human resources issues arising from this report for LBC employees or staff.

(Approved by: Jennifer Sankar, Head HR Place and Interim Head HR Resources for and on behalf of Sue Moorman, HR Director)

11. EQUALITIES, ENVIRONMENTAL AND CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACTS

- 11.1 When Internal Audit is developing the Annual Audit Plan or individual audit programmes the impacts of the issues above are considered depending on the nature of the area of service being reviewed. Issues relating to these impacts would be reflected in the audit reports and recommendations.

12. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1. WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?

No.

- 12.2. The Director of Finance, Investment & Risk comments that there are no immediate data protection issues arising from this report.

(Approved by: Lisa Taylor, Director of Finance, Investment & Risk)

CONTACT OFFICER: Simon Maddocks, Head of Internal Audit

APPENDICES: Internal Audit report for the period April 2019 to January 2020 (appendix 1)