



Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham, Executive Director - Resources

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date:	14 November 2022
Subject:	Work Programme

Summary:

This report provides the Committee with information on the core assurance activities currently scheduled for the 2022 work plan.

Recommendation(s):

1. To review and amend the Audit Committee's work plan ensuring it contains the assurance areas necessary to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2023.
2. To review and approve the proposed training and development programme.
3. Consider the actions identified in the Action Plan.

Background

The work plan, as attached at Appendix A, has been compiled based on the core assurance activities of the Committee as set out in its terms of reference and best practice.

Training and Development Programme

The 2022 edition of *Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police* has been published (October 2022). It builds on previous editions but aims to better target the guidance at the most appropriate audience. It includes:-

- An audit committee position statement – which sets out the purpose, model, core functions and membership of the audit committee. The statement represents CIPFA's view on the audit committee practice and principles that local authorities in the UK should adopt.
- Practical guidance for audit committee members and officers responsible for guiding the audit committee.

- There are several appendices available, including example terms of reference, improvement tools and a knowledge and skills framework. These are available across all parts of this publication.

We will be arranging a training and development event in December 2022 – covering:

- **Effective Audit Committee** – We propose to recap and run through any changes. We will also undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of the Committee – benchmarked against this best practice guidance.
- **Horizon scanning** – picking up some of the big issues and risks facing public sector, how they potentially impact the governance and control framework of the council. Looking to develop the forward work plan – agenda items.

This will be an in-person event (half day at Lincoln),

Audit Committee & Overview Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) Joint Working

A meeting was held on the 5th October 2022 to consider the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny’s guidance on how audit, and the councils’ scrutiny functions can work more closely together – improving the effectiveness and impact of both.

The following actions were agreed:

- Chairman / Vice-Chairman meet quarterly to consider relevant risks, issues etc. Exchange ideas & information.
- Work plans should be shared.
- Find out what similar arrangements are in place in other Councils – so we can learn from good practice.
- Draw up a joint working protocol to help wider understanding of roles and remit – followed by some training for Chair / Vice Chairmen.
- Joint training / workshops on matters of common interest to help inform future / relevant agenda items.

Emerging Risks

A verbal update / discussion on any emerging high-risk areas that the Committee may wish to consider for future agenda items.

Action Tracker

Appendix B – keeps track of actions agreed by the Committee and future potential agenda items.

Conclusion

The work plan helps the Audit Committee effectively deliver its terms of reference and keeps track of areas where it requires further work and/or assurance.

Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Work Programme
Appendix B	Action plan

Background Papers

No Background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Lucy Pledge, Head of Audit and Risk Management, who can be contacted on 01522 553692 or lucy.pledge@lincolnshire.gov.uk .

14 November 2022 – 10.00 am		
Item	Contributors	Assurances Required/ Sought
Statement of Accounts 2021/22 – Lincolnshire County Council & Pension Fund	Sue Maycock (Head of Finance – Corporate) Representatives of Mazars	<p>Ensure that the explanatory forward to the accounts help the public understand the authority's financial management of public funds.</p> <p>Consider the outcome of the External Audit and the appropriateness of management responses.</p> <p>Consider any concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.</p> <p>Consider the proposed Value for Money Conclusion and any matters arising.</p>
Audit Completion Report 2021/22 – Lincolnshire County Council & Pension Fund	Representatives of Mazars	<p>Consider the outcome of the External Audit and the appropriateness of management responses.</p> <p>Consider any concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council</p> <p>Consider the proposed Value for Money Conclusion and any matters arising.</p>
Revised Counter Fraud Policies	Lucy Pledge – Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management	<p>Gain assurance that the Council has effective arrangements in place to fight fraud locally.</p> <p>Ensure that counter fraud resources are effectively targeted to the Council's key fraud risks.</p>
Counter Fraud Progress Report – October 2022	Gary Douglas (Principal Investigator)	Gain assurance that the Council has effective arrangements in place to fight fraud locally. Ensure that counter fraud resources are effectively targeted to the Council's key fraud risks.
14 November 2022 – 10.00 am		

Item	Contributors	Assurances Required/ Sought
Internal Audit Progress Report – September 2022	Lucy Pledge (Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management)	<p>Gain an understanding of the level of assurances being provided by the Head of Internal Audit over the Council's governance, risk and internal control arrangements and why.</p> <p>The Internal Audit Plan focuses on the key risks facing the Council and is adequate to support the Head of Audit opinion.</p> <p>Confirm that the plan achieves a balance between setting out the planned work (must do's) for the year and retaining flexibility to changing risks and priorities during the year</p>
6 February 2023 – 10.00 am		
Item	Contributors	Assurances Required/ Sought
Combined Assurance Status Reports – 2022/23	Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Chief Fire Officer	<p>Understand the level of assurances being provided on the Council's critical systems, key risks and projects and how they link to the Committees role and remit and the Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>Seeking assurance that they are working well and that any significant risk and issues are being actively managed.</p>
Draft Audit Committee Annual Report 2022	Lucy Pledge (Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management)	Provide assurance that the Committee has adequately discharged its terms of reference and has positively contributed to how well the Council is run.
27 March 2023 – 10.00 am		
Item	Contributors	Assurances Required/ Sought

External Audit Strategy – Lincolnshire County Council & Pension Fund 2022/23	Representatives of Mazars	Seek assurance over progress and delivery of the external audit plan and that any risks to successful production of the financial statements and audit are being managed.
Statement of Accounts 2022/23 – Accounting Policies	Sue Maycock (Head of Finance – Corporate)	Confirm that the appropriate accounting policies are being applied and understand the impact of any material changes that affect the Council's or Pension fund accounts.
March 2023 – 10.00 am		
Item	Contributors	Assurances Required/ Sought
Internal Audit Progress Report – March 2023	Lucy Pledge (Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management)	Gain an understanding of the level of assurances being provided by the Head of Internal Audit over the Council's governance, risk and internal control arrangements and why. Confirm that the plan achieves a balance between setting out the planned work (must do's) for the year and retaining flexibility to changing risks and priorities during the year. Is adequate to support the Head of Audit opinion.
Risk Management Progress Report - March 2023	Debbie Bowring (Principal Risk Officer)	Seek assurance that risk-related issues are being addressed.
Counter Fraud Plan 2022/23	Matthew Waller – Team Leader – Audit	On the overall effectiveness of the Authority's arrangements to counter fraud and corruption.

Internal Audit Plan 2022/23	Lucy Pledge (Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management)	<p>That the Internal Audit Plan focuses on the key risks facing the Council and is adequate to support the Head of Audit opinion.</p> <p>Confirm that the plan achieves a balance between setting out the planned work for the year and retaining flexibility to changing risks and priorities during the year.</p> <p>Ensure that the Internal Audit Resource has sufficiently capacity and capabilities to maintain an effective internal audit function.</p>
Internal Audit Progress Report	Lucy Pledge (Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management)	Gain an understanding of the level of assurances being provided by the Head of Internal Audit over the Council's governance, risk and internal control arrangements and why.
Fraud Risk Register	Matthew Waller (Team Leader – Audit)	Confirm that the Council's counter fraud activity is targeted and effective.

Items to be programmed:

- **Integration of Health and Social Care (including IMT)** – Glen Garrod (Executive Director of Adult Care and Community Wellbeing) – Date TBC.
- **Financial Resilience and Financial Management Code update** – progress on improvement actions and assessment of Council's financial resilience. November 2023

Appendix B - Audit Committee Action Plan 2022/23

Audit Committee Action Plan 2022/23			
Action	Terms of Reference Outcome	Key Delivery Activities	When
Lessons Learned From Public Interests Reports Workshop Working with Overview & Scrutiny Management Board	Working Effectively Together / Moving Forward Our Joint Working	Meeting with Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Audit Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Management Board to agree way forward Meeting held 5th October 2022. Further work needed to help determine how this can work in practice – ensuring that these arrangements are effective and has an impact.	Work in progress – next meeting to be arranged January 2023.
Implement a training programme on key aspects of the Audit Committee terms of reference	Audit Committee Effectiveness	Training & Development plan developed.	November 2022

Audit Committee Action Plan 2022/23

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		Agreed at Sept 2022 meeting – dates to be scheduled.	
Re-start Lincolnshire Audit Committee Forum	Audit Committee Effectiveness	Set up event	March 2023
Complaints process – oversight and action	Effectiveness of complaints process	<p>Meeting with Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Audit Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Management Board to agree way forward.</p> <p>Discussed at meeting on the 5th October 2022 – more information needed on current information presented to scrutiny committees.</p>	January 2023