

7. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT BLOCK 1, 2020/21 (A1362/7/JW)

1. Purpose of the report and Key Issues

This report presents to Members' the internal auditors' recommendations for the first block of the 2020/21 audit and the agreed actions for consideration. The Internal Auditors will be available at the meeting to answer any questions relating to the audit report or process as usual.

Key Issues

- The auditors give an opinion based on five grades of assurance (High/Substantial/Reasonable/Limited/No). The three areas audited, Payroll, Information Governance and Creditors, have all been given a Substantial Assurance.
- The priority of agreed actions is determined based on a scale of 1 – 3, with 1 representing a fundamental system weakness which needs urgent attention, 2 a significant weakness which needs attention, and 3 no significant weakness but merits attention. Managers have responded to one Priority 2 action and four Priority 3 actions.

2. Recommendation

- 1. That the internal audit reports for the three areas covered under Block 1 for 2020/21 (in appendices 1 to 3) be received and the agreed actions considered.**

3. How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

As identified in the Annual Governance Statement, the Internal Audit process is regarded as an important part of the overall internal controls operated by the Authority and recommendations are addressed by the Authority's managers in the management response to the audit report.

4. Background Information

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require that the Authority maintains an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices in relation to internal control. The contract for the internal audit service is let to Veritau Ltd. The internal audit plan for 2020/21 was approved by the Authority meeting in July 2020.

5. Proposals

Managers have carefully considered the internal auditors' recommendations and the agreed actions are set out in the audit reports in Appendices 1 to 3 For members' consideration.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

6. Financial:

There are resource implications of implementing recommendations and this is why the priority rating of recommendations is important as this has to be managed within existing budgets and staffing levels, taking account of the level of risk agreed by management. The

cost of the Internal Audit Service Level Agreement is found from within the overall Finance budget.

7. Risk Management:

The Internal Audit process is regarded as an important part of the overall internal controls operated by the Authority.

8. Sustainability:

There are no implications to identify.

9. Equality

There are no implications to identify.

10. Climate Change

There are no implications to identify.

11. Background papers (not previously published) - None

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Payroll

Appendix 2 - Information Governance

Appendix 3 - Creditors

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Justine Wells, Head of Finance, 11 March 2021