

Meeting of:	Governance and Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 23 October 2023
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Corporate Performance and Resources
Report Title:	Call-in Following Internal Audit Recommendations Not Yet Fully Implemented
Purpose of Report:	For Members to be assured by Directors that action is being taken to action agreed Internal Audit recommendations which have not yet been fully implemented
Report Owner:	Head of Regional Internal Audit Service
Responsible Officer:	Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	No Elected Members have been consulted. Legal Services and Head of Finance
Policy Framework:	The proposals in this report are in accordance with the policy framework and budget
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governance and Audit Committee has a number of core functions and responsibilities within its remit. • It receives reports and presentations throughout the year to enable it to carry out those core functions and responsibilities effectively and to provide it with confidence in the financial governance of the Authority. • Following the presentation of Internal Audit's Recommendation Monitoring report to its September Committee, Members required further assurances from the respective Directors that appropriate action was being taken to address recommendations agreed from 2021/22 audit reports but had not yet been fully implemented. • The Director of Social Services and the Director of Resources have therefore been invited into Governance and Audit Committee. • Committee is requested to consider and note the assurances provided by the respective Directors regarding the action being taken to address the Internal Audit recommendations made in 2021/22 which have not yet been fully implemented. 	

Recommendations

1. That the Committee consider and note the assurances from the respective Directors regarding the action being taken to address the Internal Audit recommendations made in 2021/22 which have not yet been fully implemented.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure the Governance and Audit Committee is satisfied that appropriate action is being taken to address Internal Audit recommendations which have been outstanding since 2021/22.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Governance and Audit Committee receives regular reports from the Council's Internal Audit team giving them assurance around the governance arrangements, risk management processes and internal control environment in operation across all services provided by the Council.
- 1.2 One such report is the Recommendation Monitoring report; the latest presented to Committee on 18 September 2023.
- 1.3 Although, in general there was a positive response to the implementation of agreed Internal Audit Recommendations across the Council, Members noted that it was stated in this report that some recommendations made in 2021/22 had not been fully implemented as agreed and that the agreed implementation dates were getting revised.
- 1.4 One of the recommendations related to Corporate Safeguarding (final report issued August 2021) and two related to Cyber Security (final report issued January 2022), as shown at Appendix A.
- 1.5 Members of the Governance and Audit Committee have invited the respective Directors into Committee to provide them with an update of the progress of the implementation of these agreed Internal Audit Recommendations, and to give the assurance that appropriate action is being undertaken to make the necessary improvements.
- 1.6 Effective Governance and Audit Committees help to raise the profile of governance, internal control, risk management and financial reporting issues within an organisation, as well as providing a forum for the discussion of issues raised by internal and external auditors. They enhance public trust and confidence in the financial governance of an authority.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** To assist the Committee in ensuring that appropriate governance arrangements, risk management processes and internal controls are in place, respective Directors have been invited to Committee to provide an update on the progress of the implementation of agreed Internal Audit Recommendations made during 2021/22.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** Internal Audit work collaboratively with operational managers to ensure in the short and longer term the efficient, effective and economic use of public money is maintained throughout service delivery, the assets of the Council are safeguarded and there is sound financial management across the services provided.
- 3.2** They do this by identifying strengths and weaknesses within the audit reviews undertaken and where weakness are identified, make recommendations to improve the overall control environment. If these recommendations are agreed and implemented by operational managers it gives senior management and Members of the Committee assurances longer term that public money is being used appropriately and fraud and error is minimised.
- 3.3** The Annual Internal Audit Plan contains audit reviews that will be service specific and will assist in understanding how those services undertake the five ways of working and deliver the well-being objectives.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** None as a consequence of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** There are no resource implications as a direct consequence of this report.

Employment

- 5.2** None as a direct consequence of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** The provision of an adequate and effective Internal Audit function is a legal requirement under the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 as amended from time to time. There are no equalities implications as a direct consequence of this report.

6. Background Papers

None

Extract summary from the Internal Audit report on Recommendation Monitoring presented to Governance and Audit Committee 18 September 2023

Recommendations Made in 2021/22 Audits but Still Have Future Target Dates (Shown as Appendix B in original report)

Audit	Final Report Date	Recommendation	Category	Agreed Action	Agreed Date	Current Position
Corporate Safeguarding	10/08/2021	The Operational Manager, Safeguarding & Service Outcomes maintain a record of all staff that have attended the Level 1 safeguarding training in person going forward.	Medium	<p>We will be producing a Manager Cascade to cover the content of Safeguarding Level 1/A. Managers with non-PC based staff will be expected to deliver this information as part of their new starter induction process and every two years at a set date for all staff. A template to record attendance will be provided to the manager to complete and this will be updated in the individuals learning account in iDev.</p> <p>Due to the need to create the learning material, communication and upskilling of managers and establishing a cohesive iDev process, it is anticipated that this work will be completed by April 2022.</p>	<p>30/04/22</p> <p>Revised Date April 2023</p> <p>New revised date agreed Nov 2023</p>	Toolkit developed and being reviewed and a pilot being arranged
Cyber Security	18/01/2022	Council-wide training in cyber resilience is to be introduced for all staff.	Medium	For inclusion within the mandatory staff training programme, alongside safeguarding. Agreed but budgetary constraints make it a challenge	<p>Jan 2022</p> <p>Revised 31/5/23</p>	Proposal discussed at IGB

Audit	Final Report Date	Recommendation	Category	Agreed Action	Agreed Date	Current Position
					Revised 15/9/23	
		The Council is to document the plans in place outlining the actions which help it to remain cyber resilient.	Medium	ICT Cyber strategy will be drafted in consultation with OM and together with findings from the Digital Maturity Assessment.	Jan 2022 Revised 31/05/23 Revised 1/09/23	This is in progress but has been reliant on the release of the Digital Strategy which is due for sign-off by SLT and Cabinet.