

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 2 nd June 2021
Report Subject	Internal Audit Annual Report
Report Author	Internal Audit Manager
Type of Report	Assurance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Internal Audit Manager is required to deliver an annual Internal Audit opinion and report that can be used by the organisation to inform its governance statement.

The annual report must incorporate:

- The opinion;
- A summary of the work that supports the opinion; and
- A statement on conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), and the results of the quality assurance and improvement programme (QAIP).

This report fulfils that requirement. The audit opinion is that Flintshire has an adequate and effective framework of governance, risk management and control. Audit work undertaken throughout the year is summarised within the report. A self-assessment against the PSIAS, including a review of QAIP was undertaken and reported to the committee in January 2021. This report shows that Internal Audit generally conforms to the Standards, and the QAIP is in operation and effective in promoting continual improvement.

The report and opinion has been used to inform the Annual Governance Statement, presented in another paper to this Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The Committee is requested to consider the report and receive the Internal Audit annual opinion.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT
1.01	The Internal Audit Manager is required to prepare a report giving the annual Internal Audit opinion and summarising the outcome of all Internal Audit work undertaken during the year. This is part of the framework of assurance that assist the Council in preparing the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21.
1.02	It also aids the Governance and Audit Committee in its role to review the effectiveness of the Authority's systems of corporate governance, internal control and risk management and to make reports and raise actions to the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements.
1.03	<p>The report outlines the role of the Internal Audit team and the professional standards it must meet. It includes a statement that the team generally conforms to the PSIAS. It then gives the annual audit opinion.</p> <p>For the year ending 31 March 2021, based on the work the Internal Audit Service has undertaken, the direct assurance from management and external assurance from Audit Wales, my opinion is that Flintshire County Council has an adequate and effective framework of governance, risk management and internal control.</p>
1.04	The report covers the governance framework. In detail this covers corporate governance, information governance, risk management and internal controls. The report highlights where independent external assurance is received which supports the adequacy of the Council's governance arrangements.
1.05	<p>The report gives the level of coverage of the Audit team during the year and summarises the work undertaken in 2020/21. This also includes the direct assurance work undertaken by management during the early part of 2020 and the external review of the Council's approach to managing the pandemic by Audit Wales.</p> <p>A summary of work undertaken by the service by Portfolio is provided on the assurance levels given to the reviews, together with the categorisation and the number of agreed actions to address control weaknesses.</p>
1.06	The work on investigations and advisory work is outlined in the report.
1.07	Due to the pandemic performance of the service has only been monitored since September and reported from November. Overall performance of the team has been positive with all but two targets either achieved or exceeded.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None required.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Internal Audit operate to a risk-based plan designed to enable the annual opinion to be delivered. The report includes an opinion on risk management within the Council.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A – Internal Audit Annual Report.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. Contact Officer: Lisa Brownbill, Internal Audit Manager Telephone: 01352 702231 E-mail: Lisa.brownbill@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>PSIAS, Public Sector Internal Audit Standards: a set of standards that all Internal Audit teams working in the public sector must comply with.</p> <p>Corporate Governance: the system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities. It is founded on the basic principles of openness and inclusivity, integrity and accountability together with the overarching concept of leadership. It is an inter-related system that brings together the underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes.</p> <p>Risk Management: the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences and managing them. The aim is to reduce the frequency of risk events occurring (wherever this is possible) and minimise the severity of their consequences if they occur. Threats are managed by a process of controlling, transferring or retaining the risk. Opportunities are managed by identifying strategies to maximise the opportunity or reward for the organisation.</p>