



Southern Internal Audit Partnership

Assurance through excellence
and innovation

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024-25 (Q1)

Prepared by: **Neil Pitman, Head of Partnership**
February 2024

Introduction

The role of internal audit is that of an:

‘Independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes’.

The Council is responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate risk management processes, control systems, accounting records and governance arrangements. Internal audit plays a vital role in advising the Council that these arrangements are in place and operating effectively.

The Council’s response to internal audit activity should lead to the strengthening of the control environment and, therefore, contribute to the achievement of the organisation’s objectives.

The aim of internal audit’s work programme is to provide independent and objective assurance to management, in relation to the business activities; systems or processes under review that:

- the framework of internal control, risk management and governance is appropriate and operating effectively; and
- risk to the achievement of the Council’s objectives is identified, assessed and managed to a defined acceptable level.

The internal audit plan provides the mechanism through which the Chief Internal Auditor can ensure most appropriate use of Internal Audit resources to provide a clear statement of assurance on risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.

Internal Audit focus should be proportionate and appropriately aligned. The plan will remain fluid and subject to on-going review and amendment, in consultation with the relevant Directors and Audit Sponsors, to ensure it continues to reflect the needs of the Council. Amendments to the plan will be identified through the Southern Internal Audit Partnership’s continued contact and liaison with those responsible for the governance of the Council.

Your Internal Audit Team

Your internal audit service is provided by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership. The team will be led by Neil Pitman, Head of Southern Internal Audit Partnership, supported by Karen Shaw, Deputy Head of Partnership; and Keith Phillips, Penny Knowles, and James Short, Audit Managers.

Conformance with internal auditing standards

The Southern Internal Audit Partnership service is designed to conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). Under the PSIAS there is a requirement for audit services to have an external quality assessment every five years. In September 2020 the Institute of Internal Auditors were commissioned to complete an external quality assessment of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership against the PSIAS, Local Government Application Note and the International Professional Practices Framework.

In selecting the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) a conscious effort was taken to ensure the external assessment was undertaken by the most credible source. As the authors of the Standards and the leading Internal Audit authority nationally and internationally the IIA were excellently positioned to undertake the external assessment.

In considering all sources of evidence the external assessment team concluded:

'The mandatory elements of the IPPF include the Definition of Internal Auditing, Code of Ethics, Core Principles and International Standards. There are 64 fundamental principles to achieve with 118 points of recommended practice. We assess against the principles. It is our view that the Southern Internal Audit Partnership conforms to all 64 of these principles.'

'We have also reviewed SIAP conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and Local Government Application Note (LGAN). We are pleased to report that SIAP conform with all relevant, associated elements.'

Conflicts of Interest

We are not aware of any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the team which are required to be disclosed under internal auditing standards.

West Sussex County Council – Our Council Plan 2021 – 2025

In the development of the Our Council Plan, West Sussex County Council have recognised it needs to operate in a different context to that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and have responded by building a new model of priorities for the next four years and beyond.

Our Council Plan acts as a framework for the Council to operate in a way that means they are clear on what they want to achieve and what they will do to achieve their priorities, but we are flexible to respond to whatever comes our way.



This plan sets out where the Council will focus its efforts over the next four years. It is set out and organised around four priorities with an underpinning theme of climate change.

- **Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations**
- **A sustainable and prosperous economy**
- **Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential**
- **Making the best use of resources**

The priorities are underpinned by a range of 'outcomes' of things they will aim to achieve for people who live and work in the county and 'key performance indicators and targets to measure their progress and impact in achieving their stated outcomes.

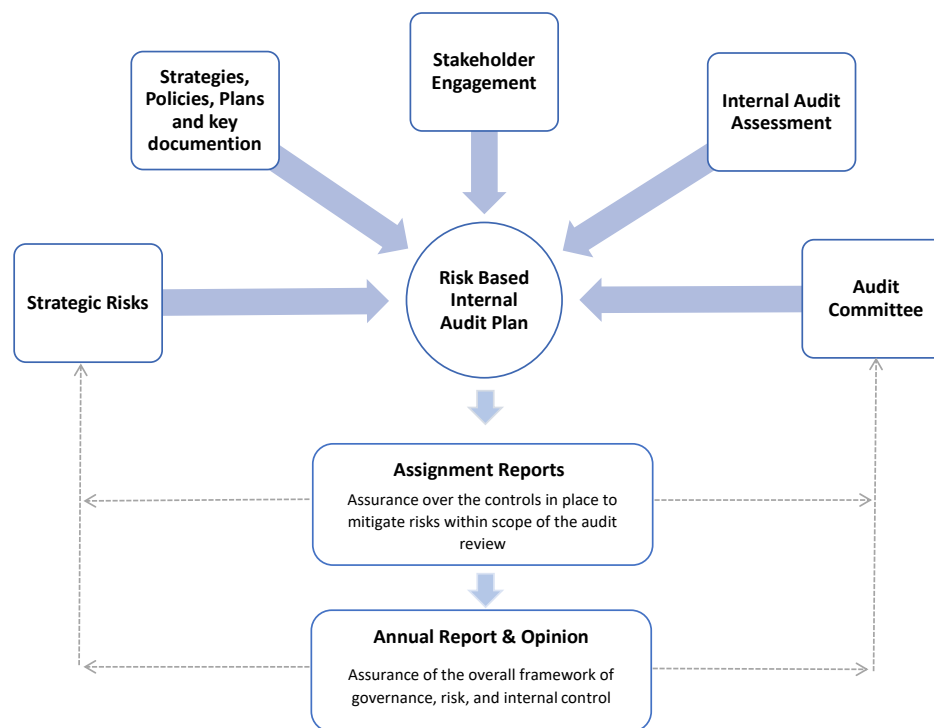
Developing the internal audit plan 2024/25

In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards there is a requirement that internal audit establish a risk-based audit plan to determine the resourcing of the internal audit service, consistent with the organisation's goals.

Audit planning is a perpetual process throughout the course of the year to ensure we are able to react to new and emerging risks and the changing needs of the organisation.

To ensure internal audit focus remains timely and relevant the Southern Internal Audit Partnership has moved to a quarterly planning process.

Based on conversations with key stakeholders, review of risk registers, key corporate documents and our understanding of the organisation, the Southern Internal Audit Partnership have developed a plan of proposed internal audit coverage during quarter 1.



The Council are reminded that internal audit is only one source of assurance and through the delivery of our plan we will not, and do not seek to cover all risks and processes within the organisation.

We will however continue to work closely with other assurance providers to ensure that duplication is minimised, and a suitable breadth of assurance is obtained.

Internal Audit Plan 2024-25

Audit	Directorate Sponsor	Scope/ Risk	Corporate/ Directorate Risk	Quarter
Governance				
IR35 - Follow up	DHR/OD	Follow up of previous review (Limited)	CR11	Q1
Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations				
Flexi Duty (WSFRS)	CFO	To review the governance and controls in place to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear, the system is operating as expected and in line with the Standard Operating Procedures to provide operational resilience, with effective reporting and oversight		Q1
Financial Assessments	DF&SS	To complete an end-to-end review of the financial assessments process with a focus on efficiency, accuracy and completeness.	FSS49	Q1
ASC Improvement Programme - work streams	DA&H	Assurance of the governance and delivery of individual workstream(s)		Q1
Public Health Statutory Responsibilities	DA&H	Focus of audit resource on existing assurance gaps from the ongoing Q4 (23/24) mapping exercise.	PH65	Q1
Modern Slavery		Cross cutting review to attain assurance the Council obligations are being met (including contracts).		Q1
A sustainable and prosperous economy				
Civil Parking	DPS	Review of governance, agreements and interactions with districts and boroughs to fulfil Council responsibilities / obligations.		Q1
Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential				
Blue Badges	DPS	Assurance over the end to end process followed for blue badges. To include overview of proposed new operating model.		Q1

Audit	Directorate Sponsor	Scope/ Risk	Corporate/ Directorate Risk	Quarter
School Place Planning	DCYP&L / DPS	Assurance on processes for identifying future requirements for school places to ensure capacity enables WSCC to meet service requirements. To include review school development projects to attain a holistic approach.	ES018 ES023 ES045	Q1
Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP)	DCYP&L	Assurance that additional investment of resource to address existing backlogs is providing the desired outcomes.	ES027	Q1
School Thematic - SATS Returns	DCYP&L	Assurance over the data quality and accuracy of the returns within schools.		Q1
Home to School Transport	DCYP&L	To provide assurance of ongoing governance and controls to support the delivery of home to school transport during a period of escalating demand and cost.		Q1
Making the best use of resources				
Main Accounting	DF&SS	Key financial review (to incorporate journals, bank reconciliation, cf/bf balances etc.)		Q1
SmartCore - Governance	DF&SS	Review of the new governance structure to support the future delivery of the project		Q1
Grants / Other				
Chichester Harbour		Fulfil requirements of the small bodies return	-	Q1
Supporting Families (Claim 1)		Requirement to verify sample of claim.	-	Q1
Multiply		Grant certification	-	Q1
Management				Q1-4

Audit Sponsor

Chief Executive
Becky Shaw

Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Sabrina Cohen- Hatton	Director of Adults & Health (DA&H) Alan Sinclair	Director of Children, Young People & Learning (DCYP&L) Lucy Butler	Director of Place Services (DPS) Lee Harris	Director of Finance & Support Services (DFSS) Taryn Eves	Director of HR/OD (DHR/OD) Gavin Wright	Director of Law & Assurance (DL&A) Tony Kershaw
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