

**INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2022/2023****REPORT OF THE TREASURER****For Approval****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform members of the direction of internal audit activity and seek approval of the annual operational Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Members are recommended to adopt the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), the Fire Authority is responsible for ensuring an adequate and effective internal audit. I, as Treasurer to the Fire Authority, am charged with ensuring this responsibility is discharged.
- 3.2 To accord with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and ensure that the annual opinion on the Fire Authority's internal control environment is delivered in line with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), audit coverage has been prepared using a risk model based on that accredited by CIPFA incorporating a number of factors:
- System Factors
  - Managerial and Control environment
  - Value of transactions
  - Volume of transactions
  - Opinion critical
  - May incur legal penalties
- 3.3 In recognition that all of the Brigade's systems, arrangements and establishments could not be audited in one year, the Strategic Audit Plan is produced in a way that ensures all relevant risk areas are covered for opinion purposes. This allows the most relevant and comprehensive annual opinion on the Fire Authority's control environment to be given to the Audit and Governance Committee. Additionally the Strategic Audit Plan has been tailored to add value to the activities of the Fire Authority and reflects our knowledge gained about the Authority and the Brigade. I will ensure that the annual audit programs are adequate to test the key controls in the core systems.

- 3.4 In order to ensure audit coverage is targeted in areas where most benefit would be gained and the wider views of the Brigade are taken into account, the Executive Leadership Team has reviewed and agreed the audits proposed for 2022/23.

#### **4 INTEGRATION**

- 4.1 Internal Audit coverage of the Fire Authority in respect of its financial systems is integrated with audit work carried out at Hartlepool Borough Council. This arrangement maximises the audit coverage for the Fire Authority from Internal Audit inputs.
- 4.2 Although Internal Audit and the Fire Authority's External Auditor, Mazars, carry out their work with different objectives some of the processes are similar and it is good professional practice that both parties should work closely together. Mazars have actively promoted effective co-operation and closer working with Hartlepool Borough Council Internal Audit Section.
- 4.3 The arrangements for ensuring effective joint working include close discussion between Internal / External Audit during the audit planning process, regular joint meetings and the exchange of information and reports.

#### **5. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2022/2023**

- 5.1 In order that a comprehensive opinion on the Fire Authority's control environment can be given, the proposed coverage for 2022/2023 is detailed below.

Advice and Support
Asset Management Systems
Budget Holder Responsibilities and Support Arrangements
Cash/Bank Reconciliations
Creditors
Data Quality – Data Protection Compliance
Data Quality – GDPR Compliance
Debtors
National Fraud Initiative
Officers Expenses
Payroll
Pensions
Procurement Contract Procedure Rules Compliance
Retained Firefighter Claims
Stores
Value Added Tax

- 5.2 100 audit days coverage is required to give a meaningful opinion in accordance with statutory requirements and the audits listed above will be managed in line with this budget. Internal Audit coverage of the Fire Authority in respect of its financial systems is integrated with audit work carried out at Hartlepool Borough Council. This arrangement maximises the audit coverage for the Fire Authority from Internal Audit inputs. Additionally the Strategic Audit Plan is tailored to add value to the activities of the Fire Authority and reflects Internal Audit knowledge gained about the Authority and the Brigade. Following discussions with HBC, the overall fee for delivering the audit plan at 100 days for 2022/23 is £31,012.
- 5.3 As was mentioned in paragraph 3.3, it is not possible to cover all auditable areas at the CFA in any one year. The table below details those areas that will not be covered in 2022/23, but will form part of the audit risk assessment in future years.

Age Discrimination Act
Attendance Management
Bribery Act
Capital Grant
Communication - Land Lines
Communication - Mobile Phones
Complaints Procedure
Contract Audit
Corporate Manslaughter Act
Data Quality – Freedom of Information
Disclosure and Barring Scheme (Safer Recruitment)
Disabled Discrimination Act
Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy Procedures
Employees Registers of Interest/Gifts and Hospitalities
Ethics Review
Fleet Management
Full Time Fire Stations
Grant Administration
Health and Safety
HR/Payroll System
Income
Inventories
IT Management
Part Time Fire Stations
Partnerships
Performance Management Systems/PI's
Public Interest Disclosure Act
Proceeds of Crime Act
Recruitment, Selection and Retention
Risk Management
Scheme of Delegation
Sustainability
Training School

**6. DELIVERING THE AUDIT**

6.1 Regular liaison is an essential feature of effective audit. In this context, Internal Audit will:

- Have frequent meetings with Brigade officers to discuss the short-term audit program and to provide the opportunity to raise any concerns,
- Provide feedback to the Treasurer on progress on the Audit Plan and the outcomes of audit work,
- Following audit reviews, agree action plans scheduling recommendations, identifying responsibilities and timescales,
- Discuss and focus audit recommendations on improving controls and delivering benefits to the Brigade and the Fire Authority.

**CHRIS LITTLE  
TREASURER TO THE AUTHORITY**