

Committee: **Governance and Audit Committee**

Date of meeting: **27th July 2022**

Report Subject: **Internal Audit Charter**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Steve Thomas – Leader, Executive Member
Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Louise Rosser – Audit and Risk Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	14/07/22		27/07/22					

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Governance and Audit Committee with the Internal Audit Charter for 2022/23 (Appendix A) for consideration and agreement.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) require the Authority to have an Internal Audit Charter that sets out the service's purpose, authority and responsibility.
 - 2.2 The Charter is to contain a number of elements to include:
 - The mandatory nature of the definitions of a number of terms;
 - The responsibilities and objectives of Internal Audit;
 - To require and enable the Audit and Risk Manager to deliver an annual opinion;
 - To explain how Internal Audit's resource requirements will be assessed;
 - To define the role of Internal Audit in any fraud related or consultancy work;
 - To explain the arrangements in place for avoiding conflicts of interest;
 - The organisational independence of Internal Audit;
 - The accountability, reporting lines and relationships between the Audit and Risk Manager and (i) those charged with Governance (ii) those to whom the Audit and Risk Manager may report;
 - Establishing Internal Audit's right of access to all records, assets, personnel and premises, including those of partner organisations, and explanations as it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities.
 - 2.3 The Charter must be periodically reviewed by both the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and the Governance and Audit Committee. This is undertaken on an annual basis.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The Committee consider the attached Internal Audit Charter:

Option 1

Approve the Internal Audit Charter in line with good practice and the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

Option 2

Suggest amendments to the Charter and then approve it

Option 3

Do not approve the revised Charter

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The Local Government Act (1972) and the Accounts and Audit Regulations (Wales) 2014 require the Council to maintain an effective Internal Audit Service in accordance with proper internal audit practices. The Authority's Internal Audit Service has adopted the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) for this purpose.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no direct financial implications arising from production of the Internal Audit Charter.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Options 1 and 2 comply with the requirements of the PSIAS. Option 3, failure to review and approve the Internal Audit Charter would need to be reported in the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Manager as a non-compliance with the PSIAS and, if deemed appropriate, included in the Annual Governance Statement. This could in turn result in increased activity by the external auditor and a resultant increase in audit fees.

5.3 ***Legal***

Provision of an adequate audit service contributes to the Section 151 Officer being able to fulfil her statutory duties under the Local Government Act (1972).

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no direct staffing implications arising from the revision of the Internal Audit Charter.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

The Internal Audit Charter is updated on an annual basis. The last revision was in July 2021.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

An effective Internal Audit Service and Governance & Audit Committee will assist with the stewardship of public money providing assurance to the communities of Blaenau Gwent on the robustness of the Authority's internal controls.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Governance & Audit Committee are consulted on the compilation of the Internal Audit Charter and its annual review.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The work of Internal Audit is intended to provide advice and guidance on system improvements resulting in an improved control environment for the future of the Authority.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The provision of an effective Internal Audit Service, as set out in the Internal Audit Charter, demonstrates the Authority's intent to consider the adequacy of its control environment including the identification and prevention of fraud.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The work of Internal Audit includes placing reliance on audits led by other local authorities and cross departmental reviews.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The work of Internal Audit aims to provide assurance on the whole of the Authority's control environment.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

There are no direct implications arising from the production of the Internal Audit Charter.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Internal Audit Charter is reviewed on an annual basis.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

- Appendix A - Internal Audit Charter