

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Updated Internal Audit & Assurance Plan 2020/21

Final Decision-Maker	Audit & Governance Committee
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Dawlings – Portfolio Holder for Finance & Governance
Lead Director	Lee Colyer – Director of Finance, Policy & Development
Head of Service	Rich Clarke – Head of Audit Partnership
Lead Officer/Author	Rich Clarke – Head of Audit Partnership
Classification	Non-exempt
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

1. **Approve** the updated to the 2020/21 Internal Audit & Assurance Plan.
2. **Note** the approach for keeping the plan current through the year.
3. **Note** the Head of Audit Partnership’s conclusion that he has updated the plan with independence and objectivity, free from undue influence.

Explain how this report relates to the Corporate Priorities in the Five Year Plan:

- The Internal Audit & Assurance Plan supports good governance which underpins achievement of all the Council’s priorities.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Audit & Governance Committee	15 September 2020

Updated Internal Audit & Assurance Plan 2020/21

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 An update to the Internal Audit & Assurance Plan for 2020/21 following significant changes to the Council's risks and priorities during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In April 2020 this Committee approved (by email) Mid Kent Audit's Annual Internal Audit & Assurance Plan 2020/21. Since then the Council's risks and priorities have changed substantially during the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 2.2 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (the "Standards") direct that we produce a risk based plan 'at least' each year. Given the changed risks we have felt obliged to revisit the plan in March because of changed circumstances. The attached paper summarises those changes.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee could opt to restate its wish to deliver the 2020/21 plan as it stood. We would not recommend that option as it will need us to undertake work we no longer believe represents a priority and ignore new priorities. That would make an effective Head of Audit Opinion at year end difficult to deliver.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 We recommend the Committee approves the changed plan, with our outline approach for keeping currency as risks and priorities change.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 We have consulted officers at Head of Service and Director level in changing the plan. The outline approach also fits with previous messages to the Committee on how we compile and oversee audit programmes.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 We have already begun work on some common matters of the 2020/21 Internal Audit & Assurance Plan. On approval we will also begin work on the changed matters, working towards a Head of Audit opinion next June.
- 6.2 We will update Members on plan progress later in 2020.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Legal including Human Rights Act	The Council is required by Regulation to operate an internal audit service, including agreeing a plan at least annually. Therefore, the Council must approve a plan to maintain regulatory conformance.	Rich Clarke Head of Audit Partnership
Finance and other resources	The work programme set out in the plan is produced to be fulfilled within agreed resources for 2020/21	
Staffing establishment	The work programme set out in the plan is produced to be fulfilled within agreed resources for 2020/21.	
Risk Management	The audit plan draws on the Council's risk management in considering the areas for audit examination. In turn, audit findings will provide feedback on the identification, management and controls operating within the risk management process.	
Data Protection	We collect and store information in the course of our audit work examining areas of the Council. We use that information in accordance with our collaboration agreement which, in turn, is in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.	
Environment and Sustainability	No direct implications.	
Community Safety	No direct implications.	
Health and Safety	No direct implications.	
Health and Wellbeing	No direct implications.	
Equalities	No direct implications.	

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Updated Internal Audit & Assurance Plan 2020/21
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The appendix includes reference to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (full document [at this link](#)). Further background papers, including detailed resource calculations, risk assessments and notes from consultation meetings can be made available on request.