

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 6TH JULY 2022
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: LOUISE WILLIS/CHRIS ASTALL

SUBJECT: INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND HEAD OF
INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION 2021-22:
INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT:
INTERNAL AUDIT FOLLOW UP SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of Report

1. To present to Members the Internal Audit Annual Report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2021-22, a progress report on audit plan delivery and Recommendations Follow Up Report.

Recommended: That Members

[1] Consider the information detailed in the report and appendices.

Background

2. Internal audit is an assurance function that provides an independent opinion to the Authority on the organisation's governance and internal control environment. Internal audit services are provided by Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA).
3. Recommendations made by MIAA are presented formally in a report to relevant senior officers. Each recommendation is prioritised as Critical, High, Medium, or Low to reflect the assessment of risk. It is a management responsibility to respond to the recommendations and identify actions that can be taken to mitigate or reduce the risk.
4. Delivery of actions associated with audit recommendations are monitored and tracked on the Service's Cheshire Planning System (CPS).
5. In accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Head of Internal Audit (HoIA) is required to provide an annual opinion, based upon and limited to the work performed, on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes (i.e. the organisation's system of internal control). This is achieved through a risk-based plan of work, agreed with management, approved by the Authority and monitored by the Performance and Overview Committee.

Information

Internal Audit Annual Report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2021-22

6. The purpose of the Head of Internal Audit Opinion is to contribute to the assurances available to the Statutory Officers and the Authority which underpin their assessment of the effectiveness of the organisation's system of internal control. The Opinion will assist the Statutory Officers and the Authority with completion of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).
7. The Internal Audit Annual Report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2021-22 is attached to the report as Appendix 1. Members will see that the Internal Auditor's overall opinion at 4.2.2 is that 'Substantial Assurance', can be given that there is a good system of internal control designed to meet the organisation's objectives, and that controls are generally being applied 'consistently'.

Internal Audit Progress Report

8. The report provides an update on progress with delivery of the internal audit plan. The Progress Report is attached to the report as Appendix 2.

Internal Audit Follow Up Summary Report

8. The report provides an update to members on the implementation of prior year audit recommendations and notes good progress has been made in taking forward the improvements in internal control. The Follow Up Summary Report is attached to the report as Appendix 3.

Financial Implications

9. Internal audit is an outsourced service funded from base budget. Any additional financial implications arising from internal audit recommendation are assessed individually as part of the management response to final audit reports.

Legal Implications

10. Legal implications are considered when audit reports are presented to senior managers.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. There are no differential impacts on any particular section of the community arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

12. There are no specific impacts on the environment arising from this report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Information provided by Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA)

Appendix 1 - Internal Audit Annual Report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2021/ 22

Appendix 2 - Internal Audit Progress Report

Appendix 3 - Internal Audit Follow Up Summary Report