

# Cheltenham Borough Council

## Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025

### Internal Audit Update

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**Accountable member:**

Councillor Alisha Lewis, Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets

**Accountable officer:**

Paul Jones, Deputy Chief Executive

**Accountable scrutiny committee:**

None

**Ward(s) affected:**

N/A

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**Key/Significant Decision:**

No

**Executive summary:**

The Council must ensure that it has sound systems of internal control that facilitate the effective management of all the Council's functions. The work delivered by SWAP Internal Audit Services (SWAP), the Council's internal audit service, is one of the control assurance sources available to the Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee, the Executive Leadership Team and Service Leadership Team and supports the work of the external auditor.

The Annual Internal Audit Opinion presented to the Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee provides an overall assurance opinion at the end of the financial year. This Internal Audit Progress Report, however, is designed to give the Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee the opportunity to comment on the

work completed by the partnership and provide 'through the year' comment and assurances on the control environment.

Due to the transition of Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) into the Council, progress reports will now include audits, and agreed actions, for CBH.

### **Recommendations:**

- **That Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee considers the attached reports and makes comment on its content as necessary**
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## **Implications**

### **1.1. Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising from the report

**Signed off by:** Paul Jones, Deputy Chief Executive,  
[Paul.Jones@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:Paul.Jones@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### **1.2. Legal implications**

There are no specific legal implications arising from the report and its recommendation.

Monitoring the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations assists the Council to minimise risk areas and thereby reduce the prospects of legal challenge.

**Signed off by:** One Legal, [legal.services@onelegal.org.uk](mailto:legal.services@onelegal.org.uk)

### **1.3. HR implications**

There are no specific HR implications arising from the content of the report. The HR Team continue to work closely with CBC and SWAP to ensure that any HR related recommendations from audits are actioned.

**Signed off by:** Ann Wolstencroft, Head of Corporate Services,  
[Ann.Wolstencroft@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:Ann.Wolstencroft@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### **Environmental and climate change implications**

None specific arising from the report agreed actions

**Signed off by:** Gemma Bell, Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer),  
[Gemma.Bell@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:Gemma.Bell@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### **1.4. Property/asset implications**

There are no specific Property/Asset implications arising from the content of the report

**Signed off by:** Gemma Bell, Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer),  
[Gemma.Bell@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:Gemma.Bell@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### **1.5. Corporate policy framework implications**

The Internal Audit Plan is aligned to our Corporate Priorities and provide assurance against the achievement of corporate policy.

**Signed off by:** Ann Wolstencroft, Head of Corporate Services,  
[Ann.Wolstencroft@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:Ann.Wolstencroft@cheltenham.gov.uk)

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## **2. Promoting equality and reducing discrimination**

No implications arising from the report agreed actions.

## **3. Performance management – monitoring and review**

Regular monitoring reports are provided to this Committee and, in the interim period regular meetings are held between Internal Audit and the Deputy Chief Executive. New and emerging risks are discussed, and the impact of the recommendations made by Internal Audit are discussed.

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## **4. Background**

- 4.1. The Audit Plan for 2024/25 was approved by this Committee in April 2024. The progress report enables the Audit Committee to monitor the work of the Internal Audit Service and ensure that it remains effective. It also provides the Committee with assurance opinions over areas reviewed within the reporting period, details of audit recommendations and the outcome of follow-up reviews conducted on previous audit recommendations.
- 4.2. We continue to follow up all agreed actions. A report (Annex B) showing all open agreed actions and those that have been actioned during 2024/25 has been included for Members information.
- 4.3. Attached at Annex C is the first draft of an Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26, for the Committee to consider, and feed into. We still need to conduct

consultation with service areas for items to include in future plans. The final Internal Audit Plan will be brought to the Committee for approval in April 2025.

## **5. Reasons for recommendations**

5.1. This report highlights the work completed by Internal Audit and provides comment on the assurances provided by this work.

## **6. Alternative options considered**

6.1. None

## **7. Consultation and feedback**

7.1. None

## **8. Key risks**

8.1. That weaknesses within the control framework, identified by the Internal Audit Activity, continue to threaten organisational objectives, if agreed actions are not implemented.

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### **Report author:**

Lucy Cater, Head of Internal Audit

Assistant Director, SWAP Internal Audit Services, [Lucy.Cater@swapaudit.co.uk](mailto:Lucy.Cater@swapaudit.co.uk)

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Internal Audit Progress Report, January 2025

Appendix B – Open Agreed Actions

Appendix C – Draft Internal Audit Plan 2025/26

