



# Resources Directorate Internal Audit Section



## Internal Audit Progress Report (As at 28 February 2022)

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# INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The Internal Audit Progress Report sets out performance in relation to the Internal Audit Plan. It summarises the work performed, the priority recommendations raised, the critical findings, emerging trends, and relevant value for money findings.

The Audit Plan 2021/22 was approved on 23 March 2021. The Plan provides the framework for audit work each year and is aligned to the Council's corporate governance arrangements, whilst also being responsive to any changes to the risks faced by the Council during the year.

This progress report provides a summary account of the audit activities, findings and progress against the Audit Plan as at 28 February 2022.

### 1.2 Independence and objectivity

The Internal Audit section reports to the Audit Manager. In line with the provisions of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (1100), organisational independence is maintained, as the Audit Manager is not responsible for managing any functions beyond the Internal Audit and Investigation teams. The Audit Manager reports administratively to the Head of Finance and functionally to the Governance and Audit Committee for audit-related matters. There have been no impairments of independence or objectivity.

### 1.3 Continuing professional development

Auditors completed their year-end personal reviews and formalised their objectives for 2021/22 in accordance with corporate requirements. Prior to discussing performance, auditors updated their skills assessment in application of the IIA Professional Competencies Framework.

The results of personal reviews and skills assessments informed the year-end Audit Manager's review against the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (Standard 1300), from which a generally strong baseline of knowledge and skills was recognised across the audit team.

## 2. SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED

The following audit summary covers the work programme for 2021/22, and the associated activities, resources, findings and measures of performance as at 28 February 2022.

### 2.1 Current activities

During the year to date the priorities and approach of the audit team were to deliver a combination of management support through consultation and engagement in high-risk areas, and to progress targeted assurance engagements from the Audit Plan.

#### Schools control risk self-assessment (CRSA) action plans

Members will be aware of the Control Risk Self-Assessment (CRSA) exercise completed towards the end of the financial year 2020/21 through which all schools were required to respond to a detailed set of internal control statements, identify actions for improvement in the event of any gaps, and to provide a portfolio of evidence to support the assertions made within their returns.

Following this exercise and associated reporting to Headteacher and Chair of Governors forums, action plans containing recommendations for the schools sampled have been issued and a summary report has been issued to the Director of Education. As at the end of February 2022, nearly 85% of the action plans have been finalised with an agreed course of action in each respective school. Responses to the remaining action plans are being sought in order to conclude the exercise. Alongside individual school audits being completed this year, the implementation of recommendations through the CRSA exercise will be tracked, monitored and reported to support effective control environments across schools.

#### COVID-19 related consultancy services

The Internal Audit Team has continued to provide advice and guidance on the design and implementation of effective controls in the administration of Welsh Government COVID-19 grants schemes to achieve compliance and control, and arrangements for the effective prevention and detection of fraud.

In the financial year to date, audit and counter-fraud consultancy has been provided in respect of the following Welsh Government grant schemes:

- Financial Recognition for Social Workers Scheme
- Economic Resilience Fund

- Wales Culture Recovery Fund (round 2) – Freelancer Support.
- Economic Resilience Fund (Extension)
- Cardiff Growth Funds
- Winter Fuel Support Scheme
- Emergency Business Fund

#### Audits completed

A number of assurance audit engagements have commenced, and this work continues to be undertaken predominantly on a desktop basis.

The table below shows a list of audits and their reporting status as at 28 February 2022, whereby 47 new audit engagements were completed to at least draft output stage and 22 audit engagements from the prior year have been finalised. A summary of the audit outputs and opinions in the year to date is shown below.

**Figure 1.** Audit outputs and opinions (at 28 February 2022)

Status	Number of completed audits	Opinion				
		Effective	Effective with opportunity for improvement	Insufficient with major improvement needed	Unsatisfactory	No opinion given
Draft	11	2	7	1	0	1
Final	57	3	29	14	1	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>
	47	<i>New Audit Engagements completed</i>				
	22	<i>Finalised Audit Engagements from 2020/21</i>				

It is pleasing to report that since the last reporting period, all draft audit outputs issued have been allocated an opinion of effective or effective with opportunity for improvement.

**Figure 2.** 2021/22 Audit outputs and opinions (at 28 February 2022)

No.	Assurance Audit Engagement	Audit Opinion
1.	Fraud, Bribery and Corruption	Effective
2.	Housing Rents	
3.	Resources – Income and Debtors	
4.	Main Accounting	
5.	Homelessness - Temporary Accommodation	Effective with

6.	Education - SOP - Review of Band B	opportunity for improvement	
7.	PTE – Income and Debtors		
8.	Members' Remuneration and Allowances		
9.	Marlborough Primary School		
10.	Mary Immaculate High School		
11.	Special Leave		
12.	Treasury Management		
13.	Governance and Legal Services - Pre-Contract Assurance		
14.	Bilingual Cardiff		
15.	City Deal 2020/21		
16.	Disciplinary Policy		
17.	Purchasing Cards		
18.	Cradle to grave audit		
19.	Glamorgan Archives		
20.	Adults, Housing & Communities - Pre-Contract Assurance		
21.	Libraries		
22.	British Council Grants - Follow up		
23.	Concessionary Travel		
24.	Performance Management		
25.	Payroll & HR – In Year-Testing		
26.	Social Services – Child Health and Disability (CHAD)		
27.	Whistleblowing Processes		
28.	Establishment Reviews		Insufficient with major improvement needed
29.	Joint Equipment Service		
30.	Payments to Care Leavers		
31.	Economic Development - Pre-Contract Assurance		
32.	Waste Collections		
33.	Education and Lifelong Learning - Pre-Contract Assurance		
34.	Planning, Transport and Environment - Pre-Contract Assurance		
35.	Cardiff West Community High School	Unsatisfactory	
Audit Work with 'No Opinion'			
36.	Joint Committees - Prosiect Gwyrdd	Consultancy, certification, advice and guidance	
37.	Joint Committees - Port Health Authority		
38.	Joint Committees - Glamorgan Archives		

39.	Service and Process Consultancy – Welsh Government Grants		
40.	Rumourless Cities Grant		
41.	Cardiff Further Education Trust Fund 20/21		
42.	Norwegian Church Preservation Trust 20/21		
43.	Education Improvement Grant 20/21		
44.	Creditor Payments CRSA 2021/22	Control Risk Self-Assessments	
45.	Payroll CRSA 2021/22		
46.	National Fraud Initiative	Data matching counter-fraud exercise	
47.	Pre-Contract Assurance – People and Communities	Assurance via wider directorate engagements	
Concluded Audits from the Prior Year			
48.	Risk Based Verification	Effective	
49.	Audit of scrutiny functions	Effective with opportunity for improvement	
50.	Wellbeing of Future Generations		
51.	Follow-up audit - contracts in Waste Management		
52.	Norwegian Church Preservation Trust 2019/20		
53.	Creditor Payments - In year testing 2020-21		
54.	Council Tax		
55.	Housing Benefit / Local Housing Allowances / Council Tax Reduction		
56.	IT Business Continuity		
57.	Follow-up audit - St. Peter's		
58.	Taxation		
59.	Directorate Risk Management		
60.	Programme and projects risk management		
61.	Education Improvement Grant 2019/20		
62.	Gatehouse		Insufficient with major improvement needed
63.	Follow-up audit - fly tipping		
64.	Recycling in HWRCs		
65.	St. Cuthbert's RC Primary School		
66.	Payment Card Industry		
67.	Cardiff Bus - governance relationship with Cardiff Council		
68.	Contract Monitoring and Management		
69.	Education - Asset Management		

Further to the table above, the outputs that were not been given an assurance opinion and the reasons for this were as follows:

**Figure 3.** Completed audits without an assurance opinion (at 28 February 2022)

Audit	Comments
Joint Committees - Prosiect Gwyrdd	Work to support completion of Statement of Accounts.
Joint Committees - Port Health Authority	
Joint Committees - Glamorgan Archives	
Service and Process Consultancy – Welsh Government COVID-19 Grants	Compliance, control and counter-fraud guidance
Rumourless Cities Grant	Grant certification
Cardiff Further Education Trust Fund 2020/21	
Norwegian Church Preservation Trust 2020/21	
Education Improvement Grant 2020/21	
Creditor Payments CRSA 2021/22	Developing and coordinating a Control Risk
Payroll CRSA 2021/22	Self-Assessment exercise
National Fraud Initiative	Data matching counter-fraud exercise
Pre-Contract Assurance – People and Communities	No recent contact awards to examine, so assurance to be achieved through a sample of contacts relating to Adults, Housing and Communities and Children’s Services (under portfolio of Corporate Director)

The report status for the year to date is shown in **Appendix A**.

## 2.2 Resources

Committee has been advised of the reduced capacity in the Team during the year to date, most notably as a result of cases of long-term sickness. As the team is small, any reduction in staff resource has an impact on the delivery of the Audit Plan. At the time of reporting there are no long-term staff sickness cases, although there are further matters will have an impact on the staff resources available in the short-term as detailed below.

It is with great sadness that we report the loss of a member of our Audit Team who passed away in recent weeks. Our thoughts are with the family of our dear friend and colleague at the current time. In due course, our Audit Management Team will reflect on the skill and grade composition of the Team, and an appropriate decision will be made on the use of the available budget for future staffing needs.

Our Principal Auditor has recently accepted a job outside of the Council and will be leaving the Team during March 2022. We wish him well in his new role, and a recruitment exercise is being initiated for a replacement officer to this important audit management role.

Committee will be aware that to support the delivery of the Audit Plan, two audit engagements have been commissioned with an external provider under the direction and control of the Audit Manager. The audits of information governance and cloud computing will be delivered by the end of the financial quarter to support the assurance work delivered by the in-house team.

Timesheet data contained 1,238 chargeable days across the team as at the end of February 2022, against a pro-rata plan of 1,499 days. The primary reasons for the difference were a vacant Principal Auditor post during much of quarter one, long-term sickness, nine weeks of work for accountancy by a CIPFA trainee as part of their development, and more time coded in respect of development activities and general meetings than anticipated across the team, some of which related to participation in wellbeing initiatives.

One auditor continues to have funding for study in place, for the Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) Qualification with ISACA.

### 2.3 Annual plan

The Committee approved the Audit Plan 2021/22 in its meeting in March 2021. The annual Audit Plan is designed to be of sufficient size to enable decisions on the timing and prioritisation of audit engagements to be made as each year progresses. Each year a proportion of the Audit Plan is targeted for delivery, and the target for 2021/22 is 70%.

Whilst set on an annual basis, the Audit Plan is adaptable and responsive and subject to ongoing risk assessment, prioritisation, and review throughout the year to maximise assurance and management support. In its meeting on 23 November 2021, the Governance and Audit Committee approved the deferral of 29 audit engagement from the Audit Plan 2021/22 and the addition of a corporate performance management audit. This action did not impact the performance target, indicated the strategic priorities, focussing on the delivery of all planned audits of fundamental systems, a high level of coverage in areas of core governance and a spread of directorate level systems. The revised Audit Plan contained 75% of the audits approved by Committee at the beginning of the year. The target remained to deliver 70% of the original plan.

As at 28 February, a number of audits are underway and at various stages of progression. It is intended to complete the majority of these audit to draft report stage by the end of March 2022, with the remaining audits to be completed early in the financial year 2022/23.

**Figure 4.** Status of audits targeted for completion by the financial year-end

Audit	Status (28.02.22)
Resources – Pre-Contract Assurance	Report Drafting
Llanedeyrn Primary	
Ysgol Bro Edeyrn	
Section 106 Agreements	
Safeguarding	Audit Fieldwork
Waste Management Enforcement	
Information Governance	
NNDR In-Year Testing	
Directorate Recovery Plans	
Value for Money in Digital Initiatives	
Leisure Contract Governance	
Telecare	
Children’s Services - Pre-Contract Assurance	
Shared Regulatory Services in Cardiff	
Creditor payments in-year testing	
Cloud Computing	
Income and Debtors	
Schools Asset Management – Thematic	
Schools Health and Safety - Thematic	
Cantonian High School	
Payment Card Industry - Process Consultancy	Ongoing
Schools with Surplus Balances - Thematic	Audit Planning
Health and Safety	
ICF schemes (incl. Families First)	
Asset Management	
Get Me Home Service	
Business Continuity and Incident Management	
Welsh Government Grants - Assurance	

The position against the full Audit Plan is contained in agenda item 7.2 (annex 6) and is therefore not included as an appendix to this report to avoid duplication. However the report status is shown in **Appendix A**.

#### 2.4 Critical findings or emerging trends (Q4 (as at 28 February) 2021/22)

It is pleasing to report that all draft audit outputs issued in the reporting period had an opinion of effective or effective with opportunity for improvement.

An audit of Cardiff West Community High School has been finalised and accordingly the Executive Summary Report is included within **Appendix B** for the information of the Governance and Audit Committee. A follow up audit has been included within the draft Audit Plan 2022/23 for which Committee approval is sought as part of agenda item 7.2.

#### 2.5 Value for Money findings (Q4 (as at 28 February) 2021/22)

There were no value for money themed audits completed within the reporting period, although an audit of value for money in digital initiatives is being progressed at the time of reporting.

The vast majority of audits undertaken by the Internal Audit Team have objectives which cover value for money assurances, from which a general satisfactory level of assurance can be provided for the reporting period.

### **3. AUDIT PERFORMANCE AND ADDED VALUE**

#### 3.1 Added value

Relationship Manager meetings were held with Directors and their representatives during the development of the Audit Plan in quarter four 2020/21. Further Relationship Management meetings have then been held on a quarterly basis this year, with particular focus given to understanding the priorities and risks within each management team, and the changes to systems or processes planned or underway, in order to direct audit advice and inform the planning of audit engagements.

Feedback from audit clients has been positive in the year to date, high satisfaction rates, although in three instances the client reported that their audit did not 'add value'. The audits of pre-contract assurance in Governance and Legal Services, directorate risk management and project

and programme risk management did not identify particular issues that management were not aware of.

**Figure 5.** Client Feedback

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Communication	19	7	4	0
Advice	12	14	5	0
Report Value	8	17	6	0
Overall Performance	15	11	3	0
Percentages	45%	40%	15%	0%

In the audit outputs issued to date (as at 28 February 2022), there have been 458 recommendations made, of which 353 have been agreed and 105 are being considered by audit clients through draft audit outputs. These are summarised below:

**Figure 6.** Recommendations raised and agreed

Rating	Recommendations made	Recommendations agreed	Recommendations being considered
Red	13	12	1
Red / amber	170	131	39
Amber / green	247	188	59
Green	28	22	6
TOTAL	458	353	105

### 3.2 Performance

The priorities and approach of the audit team are outlined in section 2.1 ('Current Activities') which set the context against which performance is considered. The performance position in respect of quarter three was provided to the Governance and Audit Committee in January 2022, with relevant commentary, and it is provided below for reference ahead of the quarter four statistics which will be collated following the financial year-end.

A core focus of the team during quarter four is to deliver the majority of the audit engagements listed in figure 4 to draft report stage. This will provide a strong level of coverage for the annual opinion from the Audit Manager on the Council's control environment.

Alongside this work, focus is being given to finalising audits on a timely basis and the delivery of audit recommendations within the required timescales. The Audit Manager attended a Senior Management Team meeting on 1 March 2022 to provide relevant analysis, to discuss

performance, and to emphasise the importance of continued management attention in these areas.

**Figure 7.** Performance against targets for 2021-2022 (as at the end of Q3)

Performance Indicator	2020/21 Outcome	2021/22 Target	Q1 Outcome	Q2 Outcome	Q3 Outcome
The percentage of the Audit Plan completed	55%	70%	13%	24%	36%
The average number of audit productive days per FTE	145	150	32.56	64.29	104.46
The average number of finalised audits per FTE	8.51	9	1.64	3.4	5.74
The percentage of draft audit outputs delivered within four weeks* <i>*indicator changed from within 'six weeks' from 2021/22</i>	97%	90%	100%	100%	90%
The percentage of audit recommendations implemented within the agreed timescale	69%	80%	69%	64%	69%

### 3.3 Audit Plan Delivery

In addition to monitoring and managing the numbers of audits delivered, audit engagements are allocated in order to ensure that there is a breadth of assurance by the financial year-end, upon which to provide a complete Audit Manager annual opinion. Sections 2.1 – Current Activities and 2.3 – Audit Plan set out relevant details.

### 3.4 Recommendations

To support Committee monitoring and review, **Appendix C** contains a summary of all open audit actions, **Appendix D** contains the detail of all red and red/amber open recommendations and includes the current management response. **Appendix E** contains the red and red/amber recommendations, which have been completed since the last Committee meeting. Amber / green and green recommendations are provided to Committee via a separate route.

The table below shows the instances where implementation dates have been revised typically by audit clients, for audits which are not recognised as fully addressed (as at 28.02.2022).

**Figure 8.** Revised recommendation implementation dates and status

Directorate / Audit Category	Number of recommendations with revised dates	Actions now implemented	Actions still open
Fundamental	17	11	6
Corporate	39	31	8
External and grants	8	4	4
Adult Services, Housing and Communities	37	16	21
Childrens Services	20	16	4
Economic Development	29	26	3
Education and Lifelong Learning	79	57	22
Planning Transport and Environment	33	24	9
People and Communities	3	3	0
Resources	21	16	5
Governance and Legal Services	5	5	0
Waste Management	79	75	4
	370	284	86
Schools	142	93	49
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>135</b>

**NB** - It should be noted that the table above represents the position as at 28 February 2022, whereas the recommendation tracker appendices show the detailed position against each recommendation at the closest possible date to each Committee meeting.

The position against recommendations is reported in quarterly relationship management meetings to monitor progress and target discussions on effective risk management, and the Audit Manager attends Senior Management Team meetings at periodic intervals during the year to outline and discuss the management response.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

##### **4.1 Summary**

During the year to date, the priorities and approach of the audit team were to deliver a combination of management support through consultation and engagement in high-risk areas, and to progress targeted assurance engagements from the Audit Plan.

The Internal Audit Team has continued to provide advice and guidance on the design and implementation of effective controls in the administration of Welsh Government COVID-19

grants schemes to achieve compliance and control, and arrangements for the effective prevention and detection of fraud.

Over the year the Team has faced reduced capacity which has affected delivery of the Audit Plan. As at 28 February a number of audits are underway and at various stages of progression. It is intended to complete the majority of these audit to draft report stage by the end of March 2022, with the remaining audits to be completed early in the financial year 2022/23. This will provide a strong level of coverage for the annual opinion from the Audit Manager on the Council's control environment.

Alongside the above work, focus is being given to finalising audits on a timely basis and the delivery of audit recommendations within the required timescales. The Audit Manager attended a Senior Management Team meeting on 1 March 2022 to provide relevant analysis, to discuss performance, and to emphasise the importance of continued management attention in these areas.