



Southern Internal Audit Partnership

Assurance through excellence
and innovation

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024-25 (Q4)

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Introduction

The role of internal audit is that of an:

‘Independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes’.

The Council is responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate risk management processes, control systems, accounting records and governance arrangements. Internal audit plays a vital role in advising the Council that these arrangements are in place and operating effectively.

The Council’s response to internal audit activity should lead to the strengthening of the control environment and, therefore, contribute to the achievement of the organisation’s objectives.

The aim of internal audit’s work programme is to provide independent and objective assurance to management, in relation to the business activities; systems or processes under review that:

- the framework of internal control, risk management and governance is appropriate and operating effectively; and
- risk to the achievement of the Council’s objectives is identified, assessed and managed to a defined acceptable level.

The internal audit plan provides the mechanism through which the Chief Internal Auditor can ensure most appropriate use of Internal Audit resources to provide a clear statement of assurance on risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.

Internal Audit focus should be proportionate and appropriately aligned. The plan will remain fluid and subject to on-going review and amendment, in consultation with the relevant Directors and Audit Sponsors, to ensure it continues to reflect the needs of the Council. Amendments to the plan will be identified through the Southern Internal Audit Partnership’s continued contact and liaison with those responsible for the governance of the Council.

Your Internal Audit Team

Your internal audit service is provided by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership. The strategic lead will be Iona Bond, Deputy Head of Partnership, supported by Jade Lakeland, Audit Manager.

Conformance with internal auditing standards

The Southern Internal Audit Partnership service is designed to conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). Under the PSIAS there is a requirement for audit services to have an external quality assessment every five years. In September 2020 the Institute of Internal Auditors were commissioned to complete an external quality assessment of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership against the PSIAS, Local Government Application Note and the International Professional Practices Framework.

In selecting the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) a conscious effort was taken to ensure the external assessment was undertaken by the most credible source. As the authors of the Standards and the leading Internal Audit authority nationally and internationally the IIA were excellently positioned to undertake the external assessment.

In considering all sources of evidence the external assessment team concluded:

'The mandatory elements of the IPPF include the Definition of Internal Auditing, Code of Ethics, Core Principles and International Standards. There are 64 fundamental principles to achieve with 118 points of recommended practice. We assess against the principles. It is our view that the Southern Internal Audit Partnership conforms to all 64 of these principles.'

'We have also reviewed SIAP conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and Local Government Application Note (LGAN). We are pleased to report that SIAP conform with all relevant, associated elements.'

Conflicts of Interest

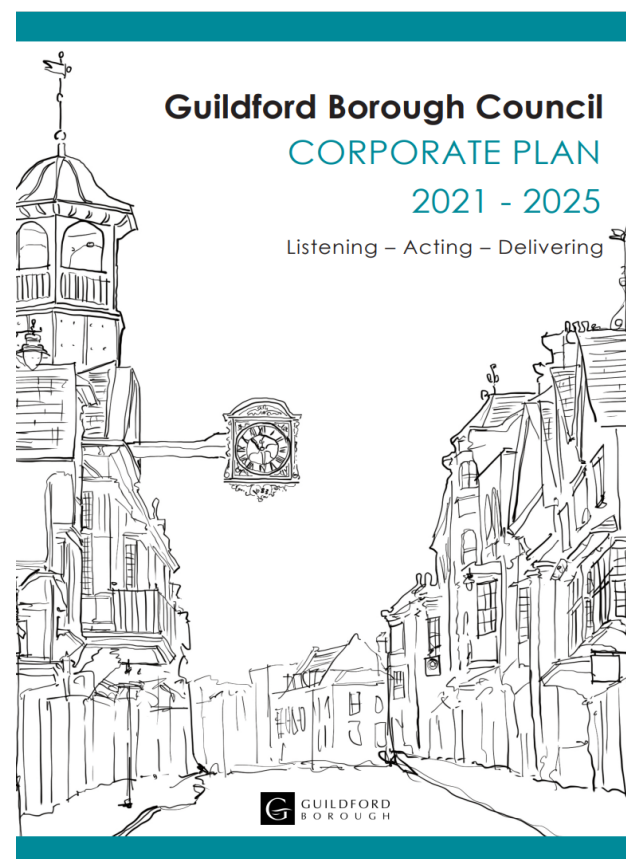
We are not aware of any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the team which are required to be disclosed under internal auditing standards.

Guildford Borough Council – Corporate Priorities 2021 – 2025

Guildford Borough Council have set their Corporate Plan for 2021 to 2025 which sets out their priorities for the next four years:

- **Homes and Jobs – Residents having access to the homes and jobs they need**
- **Environment – Protecting the environment**
- **Community – Empowering communities and supporting people who need help**

These three key priorities are underpinned by a range of 21 objectives, projects, and initiatives.



Council Risk

The corporate risks assessed by the Council are a key focus of our planning for the year to ensure it meets the organisation's assurance needs and contributes to the achievement of their objectives (those of a high and medium risk highlighted below *).

Risk Number	Title	Net Risk Score
CR2	Financial sustainability	17
CR3	Fraud prevention	16
CR5	Failure to make lawful decisions and follow governance	12
CR6	Failure to meet target of becoming net carbon zero by 2030	17
CR9	Non adherence to procurement processes and contracts	16
CR11	Recruitment and retention of staff	17
CR1	Incident or accident at a council property or premises	8
CR4	Major data breach	8
CR7	Safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children	8
CR8	Insufficient IT model for level of change	12
CR10	Cyber security incident resulting in loss of IT systems or data	9
CR12	Guildford-Waverley collaboration objectives	9
CR13	Governance of companies and charitable trusts	6

* As identified in the Corporate Risk Register Q4 2023/24, presented to Corporate Governance and Standards Committee July 2024.

We will continue to monitor the corporate risk register over the course of the year to ensure our plan remains agile to the rapidly changing landscape.

Developing the internal audit plan 2024/25

In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards there is a requirement that internal audit establish a risk-based audit plan to determine the resourcing of the internal audit service, consistent with the organisation’s goals.

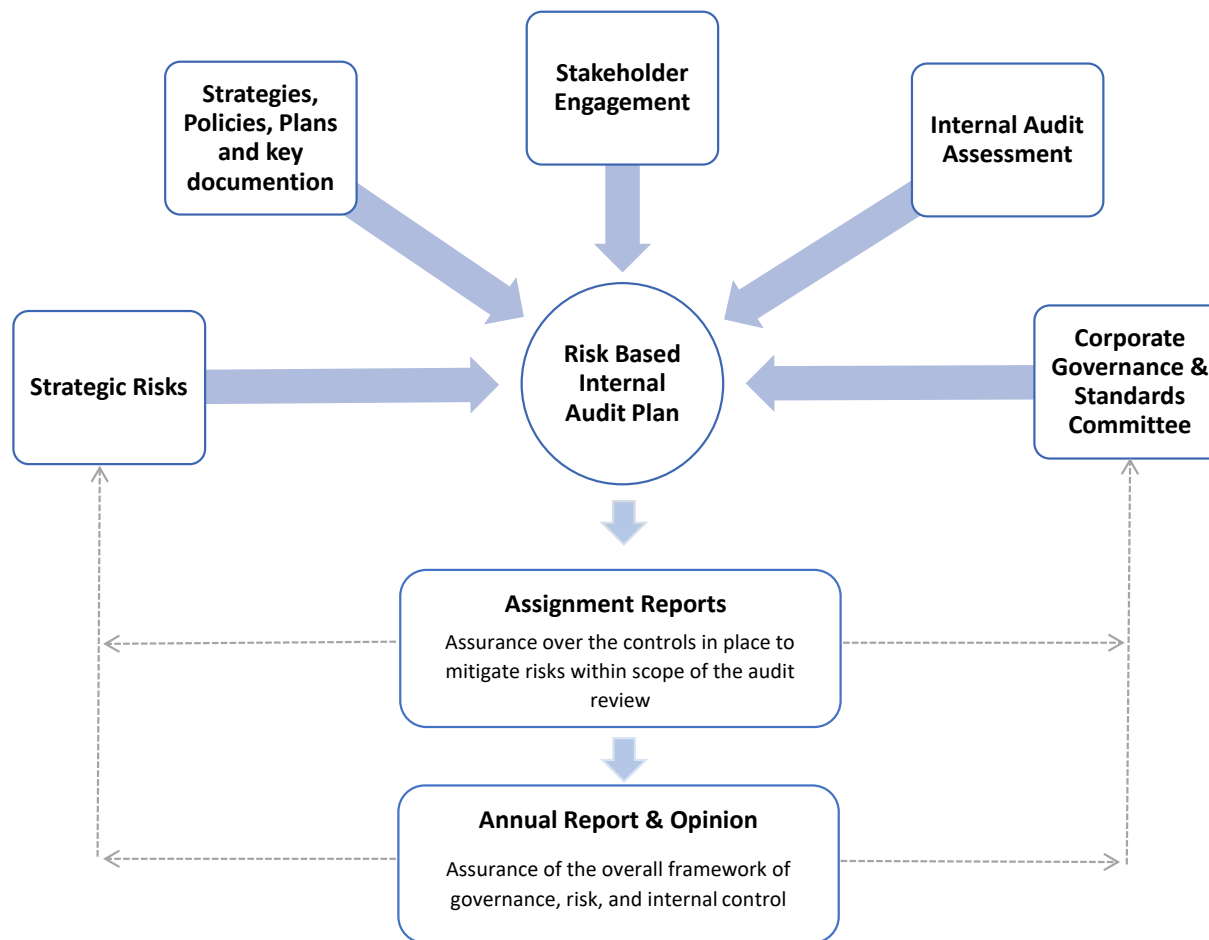
Audit planning is a perpetual process throughout the course of the year to ensure we are able to react to new and emerging risks and the changing needs of the organisation.

To ensure internal audit focus remains timely and relevant, the Southern Internal Audit Partnership has moved to a quarterly planning process.

Based on conversations with key stakeholders, review of risk registers, key corporate documents and our understanding of the organisation, the Southern Internal Audit Partnership have developed a plan of proposed internal audit coverage during quarter 4.

The Council are reminded that internal audit is only one source of assurance and through the delivery of our plan we will not, and do not seek to cover all risks and processes within the organisation.

We will however continue to work closely with other assurance providers to ensure that duplication is minimised, and a suitable breadth of assurance is obtained.



Internal Audit Plan 2024-25 – Quarter 4

Audit	Sponsor (Joint Strategic Director)	Indicative Scope	Strategic / Committee Risk	Quarter
Annual Governance Statement	Finance	Assurance over the framework to compile, contribute and deliver the AGS.	-	Q1
Council Tax	Finance	Assurance over the governance and control framework to support the effective delivery of the Council Tax service.	CR13	Q1
National Non-Domestic Rates	Finance	Assurance over the governance and control framework to support the effective delivery of the NNDR service.	CR13	Q1
Medium Term Financial Planning	Finance	Assurance over the process, assumptions and development of the medium-term financial strategy.	CR14, CR12	Q2
Housing Rents	Community Wellbeing	Cyclical review of the rent collection process.	CR13	Q2
Fleet Operations	Community Wellbeing	Assurances over the processes in place for the management and operation of the Council's fleet, including maintenance, inspections and MOT's.	-	Q2
Identity and Access Management	Place	Assurance over policies and procedures in place to ensure access to systems and data is appropriately authenticated, limited to least privilege principles and auditable.	-	Q2
Improvement Plan – Framework of Governance	Chief Executive	Assurance over the governance framework in place for the development, delivery and ongoing monitoring of the Improvement Plan	-	Q2
IT – User and Access Management	Place	Assurance over policies and procedures in place to ensure access to systems and data is appropriately authenticated, limited to least privilege principles and auditable.	CR4, CR10	Q3
Commercial Interests - Companies	Finance/Legal	Assurance over the governance and control frameworks in place relating to the Council's interests in companies and charitable trusts.	CR 13	Q3

Audit	Sponsor (Joint Strategic Director)	Indicative Scope	Strategic / Committee Risk	Quarter
Repairs and Maintenance (HRA)	Community Wellbeing	Assurance over the governance arrangements in place for the management and operation of responsive repairs works.	-	Q3
Repairs and Maintenance (Non HRA – internal requisitioning and recharging)	Community Wellbeing	Assurance over the framework of governance for internal repairs and maintenance requisitioned and recharged.	-	Q3
Household Waste Collection	Community Wellbeing	Assurance over the governance and control frameworks in place to deliver the household waste collection service.	-	Q4
Safeguarding	Community Wellbeing	Assurance over the governance and control frameworks in place relating to Safeguarding.	CR 7	Q4
Follow Up – Key Financial Systems	Finance	<p>Follow up of implementation of management actions from those key financial systems undertaken in 2023/24 where a limited assurance opinion was issued.</p> <p>This will include systems where all management actions have been implemented.</p>	-	Q4
Charitable Trusts	Finance/Legal	Assurance over the governance and control frameworks in place relating to the Council's interests in charitable trusts.	CR 13	Q4
Medium Term Financial Planning (Part 2)	Finance	Assurance over the process, assumptions and development of the medium-term financial strategy.	CR 2	Q4
Management		To include audit planning, reporting, attendance at Corporate Leadership Board and Corporate Governance & Standards Committee, action tracking, liaison with key stakeholders and annual report and opinion (2023-24).	-	Q1 - 4