



SOUTHAMPTON
CITY COUNCIL

2024/25 Internal Audit Plan

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Executive Summary

This document sets out Internal Audit's programme of work for 2024/25, following appropriate engagement across the authority including but not limited to, CEO, Executive Directors, Directors, Heads of Service and the previous Chair of Governance Committee.

The Plan is informed by:

- Legal/ government requirements, specifically including grant sign offs by Internal Audit.
- Outcomes of prior Internal Audit reviews, for example 2023/24 higher risk exceptions will be considered for followed up during 2024/25, along with any outstanding 'open or in progress' actions from follow up reviews performed during 2023/24.
- Consultation with the Council's senior management and member as noted above.
- Risk assessment methodology and adequate coverage of activities across the authority in order to inform the annual opinion on the effectiveness of the control environment.

The planned level of audit work is reduced compared to previous years particularly in relation to follow up work when ensuring adequate mitigation of risk exposure is in place. This is due to reduced resources within Internal Audit & Counter Fraud as part of this year's agreed budget savings. Service areas and Executive Directors will be required to monitor and report their own progress implementing action plans within each directorate, although Internal Audit will lightly track progress and if needed realign work accordingly.

Primarily the Plan is risk based, although a number of fundamental areas, for example key financial processes such as Payroll, Accounts Payable and Receivable are reviewed every year due to the inherent risk exposures and transaction levels. A significant focus for any review included would be financial sustainability given ongoing budgetary pressures.

Detail regarding the standards applicable to Internal Audit are set out in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards:

<http://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/standards/public-sector-internal-audit-standards>

Proposed Audits

Children & Learning				
Audits	Audit Type	Provisional Scope	Strategic Risks	Corporate Objectives
Unregulated Placement	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1,5,6	1,3,12
Independent Family Safeguarding	Full	Scope to include a review of new arrangements.	1,5,6	1,3,12
Childcare Savings	Full	Scope to include a review of key compliance controls.	1,5,6	10,12
Childrens Homes	Full	Project implementation and set up - operational controls.	1,5,6	1,3,6,12
SEND including Out of City	Full	Scope to include a review of key financial & procurement controls.	1,5,6	2,12
Cantell School	Full	Scope to include a review of key operational controls.	1,5	2,12
Valentine School	Full	Scope to include a review of key operational controls.	1,5	2,12
Compass	Full	Scope to include a review of key operational controls.	1,5	2,12
Direct contact and levels of Supervision	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1,5	1,12
Direct Payments Childrens	Follow-up	Follow up required on raised exceptions.	1,5,6	1,3,12
Supporting Families Grant	Grant	Grant verification required.	-	-
Children & Learning - Enabling Services				
Childcare Payments/ Special Guardianship Allowance	Follow-up	Follow up required on raised exceptions.	1,6	10,12

Community Wellbeing				
Audits	Type	Provisional Scope	Strategic Risks	Corporate Objectives
Joint Funding	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls and unitary process comparison.	1,4	10,11,12
Care Act Eligibility	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1,4	1,3,9,10,11,12
Continuing Healthcare	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls and unitary process comparison.	1,4	3,9,10,11,12
Stronger Communities	Full	Scope to include a review of provision of anti-social behaviour arrangements.	1,4	all
Local Health Resilience Planning	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls and capacity.	1,2,4,7	all
Community Wellbeing - Enabling Services				
Multiply Grant	Grant	Grant verification required.	-	-

Enabling Services				
Audits	Type	Provisional Scope	Strategic Risks	Corporate Objectives
Annual Gov Statement	Full	Scope to include a review of assertions and evidence.	all	all
Expenses Travel & Subsistence	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1	7,8,9,10,12
Payroll	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1,8	7,8,9,10,12
Accounts Receivable	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1	7,8,9,10,12
Accounts Payable	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	all	7,8,9,10,12
IT Application & Operating Systems	Full	Scope to include a review of key IT controls.	1,3,8	7,8,9,10,12
Data Management	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1,3,8	7,8,9,10,12
Business Continuity Planning	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls across the authority.	1,3	all
PUSH	Full	Annual accounts verification.	-	-
Purchasing Cards	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1	7,8,9,10,12
Key Controls (Financial)	Full	Scope to include on-site testing & unannounced visits.	all	all
Appointeeships	Follow-up	Follow up required on raised exceptions.	1,4	1,3,7,9,10,12
Budgetary Control Savings Proposals	Follow-up	Follow up required on raised exceptions.	all	all
Housing Rents and Debt	Follow-up	Follow up required on raised exceptions.	1	1,10,12
IDEA - Data Analytics	Analytics	Including duplicate payment	all	all
Self-serve agreed action tracker	Consultancy	Implementation of tracker.	all	all
Corporate Reporting & Attendance	Consultancy	Attendance at relevant directorate & committees etc.	all	all
National Fraud Initiative (NFI) & Counter Fraud	Consultancy	Mandatory NFI - data matching. Anti-money laundering	all	all

Growth & Prosperity				
Audits	Type	Provisional Scope	Strategic Risks	Corporate Objectives
Capital Projects/ Programme	Full	Project review.	all	all
Valuation Property Plant & Equipment (Tec forge)	Full	Scope to include a review of key valuation controls linked to insurance provision.	1	12
Water Quality	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1,2,7	1,3,10,12
Asbestos	Follow-up	Follow up required on raised exceptions.	1,2,7	1,3,10,12
Transforming Cities Fund	Grant	Grant verification required.	-	-
Electric Charging Points Contract	Grant	Grant verification required.	-	-
Local Authority Bus Subsidy	Grant	Grant verification required.	-	-
Local Transport Capital Block funding	Grant	Grant verification required.	-	-
Growth & Prosperity – Residential Services				
Stock Condition	Follow-up	Follow up required on raised exceptions.	1,7,9	1,12, 13

Residential Services				
Audits	Type	Provisional Scope	Strategic Risks	Corporate Objectives
Housing Depot (Responsive repairs)	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1,4,5,7	1,7,8,9,12
Housing Depot (Total)	Full	Scope to include a review of feeder system key controls.	1,4,5,7	1,7,8,9,12
Temporary Accommodation	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1,4,5	1,3,6,12
Prevention (Rough sleeping)	Full	Scope to include a review of prevention arrangements.	1,4,5	1,3,6,12
Parking PCN & Enforcement	Full	Scope to include a review of key controls.	1	9,12
Waste Operations (including trade environmental services review)	Follow-up	Follow up required on raised exceptions.	1,7	3,10,12
Voids	Follow-up	Follow up required on raised exceptions.	1,4,5	1,7,8,9,12
Housing Rents and Debt	Follow-up	Follow up required on raised exceptions.	1	1,10,12
Disabled Facilities Grant	Grant	Grant verification required.	-	-

Strategy & Change				
Audits	Type	Provisional Scope	Strategic Risks	Corporate Objectives
Transformational Plan	Consultancy	Audit plan requires alignment to transformation work schedule.	-	-

Strategic Risks (as of 31st March 2024)

Ref	Risk
1	Failure to have robust and agreed plans to address the in year and ongoing significant budget pressures in a sustainable way.
2	Major incident or service disruption (including serious health protection threats) leading to delivery failure that significantly impairs or prevents the Council's ability to deliver key services and/or statutory functions
3	Cyber security incident or disruption leading to delivery failure that significantly impairs or prevents the Council's ability to delivery key services and/ or statutory functions.
4	Failure to design and implement an effective new delivery model for Adult Social Care which results in improved outcomes for residents within available resources in a sustainable way.
5	Failure to safeguard children resulting in a preventable incident.
6	Failure to ensure an effective and sustainable children's social care system.
7	Failure to meet our health and safety responsibilities.
8	Failure to ensure the City Council's information is held and protected in line with Information Governance policies and procedures.
9	Contractor refuses to accept/recognise its contractual and, or financial obligations in respect of the required fire protection compliance work in certain high rise residential blocks.
10	Failure to ensure delivery of statutory air quality standards.
11	Failure to grow the local economy and attract investment into the city.
12	The council could receive and be liable to pay a potentially significant number of equal pay claims arising from a working practice that has been identified within a service area.
13	Decent Homes - wording to be added

Corporate Plan - Strategic Objectives

Ref	Strategic Objectives
1.	<p>Safe and stable home environments</p> <p>A safe place to call home should be a fundamental right for everyone. Home, in whatever form that takes, gives stability and a sense of belonging. It is here we make memories, and it helps us to build a strong foundation for our lives. We will focus on helping individuals to remain in a safe home, by providing quality housing across the city, and access to support when needed.</p>
2.	<p>Accessible education and skills pathways</p> <p>From early years and throughout life, accessing good quality education and developing useful skills provides strong foundations from which people can build. We are committed to working with partners and businesses across the city to enable more Southampton residents to have the opportunity for higher-skilled, higher-paid jobs. We will support access to education, training, and advice throughout people’s lives.</p>
3.	<p>Healthy and active residents</p> <p>Physical and mental health and well-being are key for a good quality of life and a thriving city. They impact people’s life chances, education, and employment opportunities. We will work to protect and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of everyone who lives, works, and learns in Southampton.</p>
4.	<p>Sustained infrastructure investment</p> <p>We will continue work to ensure that Southampton benefits from funding opportunities on a continuous basis. Building better sustainable infrastructure, with safer, more affordable, and accessible modes of travel options around Southampton will support our communities and businesses to grow. This will enable economic, environmental, and social benefits and offer opportunities for all.</p>
5.	<p>Growth that benefits local people</p> <p>Everyone benefits most when there is growth and opportunity that local people can tap in to. Whether that’s local business, more job opportunities or investment in the city that attracts visitors to our events, shopping and attractions.</p>
6.	<p>Welcoming and supporting communities</p> <p>Our focus is on working with communities to creating a welcoming environment for all people from all backgrounds. We will continue to celebrate and embrace Southampton as a culturally rich and diverse city. The successful delivery of the internally focused outcomes in this plan are rooted in the culture of our organisation. We are transforming the way we deliver services to ensure we are an efficient, well-run organisation with clear and sustainable goals.</p>

7. Strong centralised enabling support services

Continuing our drive for productivity and efficiency, we are evolving the way we work, and the way we set up work to improve our services, maximise skills and capacity, and build a stable, efficient, and innovative organisation.

8. Positive organisational culture

A positive, open culture supports people to feel inspired, connected and empowered. We want to develop an ambitious, forward-thinking, and optimistic organisation. Having the right people working in the right way and understanding and embedding our values will help us create an enabling council that supports a city of opportunity.

9. Increased self-serve

Where practical we are working to make sure people can easily access useful information and digital council services. We are continuing to develop systems and approaches to enable residents, employees and partners to help themselves. With new digital and data strategies we are working to ensure we have systems that work for everyone.

10. Good governance

Fast paced, robust decisions and actions are supported by good governance. Promoting accountability, transparency, and efficiency in our decision-making will build trust and stability across the organisation and city.

11. Consistent good practice

We are dedicated to upholding ethical, fair, and transparent practices, understanding what we need to do and embedding good practice throughout the organisation. This will build trust, deliver better and more consistent services, reduce cost and risk, and promote long-term stability.

12. Balanced budget

We are committed to achieving long-term financial sustainability for the council. This is so we can invest purposefully into the city and help it to grow to its full potential.