

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

15 January 2024

Report of the Chief Audit Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 INTERNAL AUDIT AND COUNTER FRAUD UPDATE

This report provides Members with an update on the work of both the Internal Audit function and the Counter Fraud function.

Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations require the Council to *undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control, and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards and guidance.*
- 1.1.2 Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) require that periodic reports on the work of Internal Audit should be prepared and submitted to those charged with governance.
- 1.1.3 This Progress Report provides the Governance and Audit Committee with an accumulative summary view of the work undertaken by Internal Audit for the period September 2023 to January 2024, together with the resulting conclusions where appropriate.
- 1.1.4 Members are invited to review the Internal Audit Progress Report at **[Annex 1]** for the period September 2023 to January 2024.

1.2 Legal Implications

- 1.2.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations place a statutory requirement on local authorities to undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of systems of risk management, governance and control in line with the PSIAS.
- 1.2.2 The Council has a legal duty under s151 of Local Government Act 1972 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations to ensure that there are appropriate systems in place to prevent and detect fraud.
- 1.2.3 The Local Government Act 1972 provides the Council with the ability to investigate and prosecute offences committed against them.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.3.1 An adequate and effective Internal Audit function provides the Council with assurance on the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of Council resources in delivery of services, as well as helping to identify fraud and error that could have an adverse effect on the finances of the Council.
- 1.3.2 Fraud prevention and detection is an area subject to central government focus with initiatives such as the National Fraud Initiative and Local Government Counter Fraud and Corruption Initiative. The message coming from these initiatives is that effective fraud prevention and detection releases resources and minimises losses to the Council through fraud.

1.4 Risk Assessment

- 1.4.1 This report, summarising the work of the Internal Audit function, provides a key source of assurance for the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of its framework for governance, risk management and control.
- 1.4.2 Failing to have an efficient and effective Counter Fraud function could lead to an increased level of fraud. This report, summarising the work of the Counter Fraud function, provides a key source of assurance for the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of its counter fraud arrangements.

Background papers:

Contact: Richard Benjamin

Nil

Richard Benjamin
Chief Audit Executive