

Meeting of:	GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	26 SEPTEMBER 2024
Report Title:	INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATION MONITORING
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING & CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	ANDREW WATHAN HEAD OF REGIONAL INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The proposals in this report are in accordance with the policy framework and budget.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report provides members of the Governance and Audit Committee with a position statement on internal audit recommendations that have been made to identify those that have been implemented and those that are overdue. • A position statement in respect of internal audit high and medium priority recommendations made, implemented and overdue as of 31st July 2024 is detailed in Appendix A. • A recommendation is made to enhance an identified weakness in a control to mitigate the identified risk, so until the recommendation is implemented the risk remains. • To date 18 medium priority recommendations have been made following the conclusion of audits from this year's annual plan. All have been agreed. • There is 1 high priority overdue recommendation made prior to 2024-25 and the progress of this continues to be monitored. The details of these are in Appendix B. • There are also 5 recommendations made in audits completed in 2022-23 which still have a future implementation date. The detail of these are in Appendix C. • The monitoring of recommendations is undertaken regularly by the Audit team and any undue delays or issues are highlighted to Senior Management and ultimately this Committee.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide members of the Committee with a position statement on internal audit recommendations made, implemented and outstanding as at 31st July 2024 and

consider the information provided in respect of the status of the high and medium priority recommendations made by the Regional Internal Audit Service .

2. Background

2.1 In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the internal audit activity must assess and make appropriate recommendations to improve the Council's governance, risk management and internal control. The Regional Internal Audit Service (RIAS) Strategy states that the implementation of agreed recommendations will be monitored.

2.2 Recommendations are made at the conclusion of an audit review if it is felt that improvements should be made to mitigate risk and strengthen controls. Recommendations are included, if appropriate, in the final audit report and recipients are asked to provide responses to indicate whether they agree with the recommendations and how and when they plan to implement them. To assist managers in focussing their attention, each recommendation is classified as being either high, medium or low priority.

2.3 Table 1 shows the recommendation categorisation as follows:

Table 1 – Recommendation Categorisation	
Risk may be viewed as the chance, or probability, of one or more of the organisation's objectives not being met. It refers both to unwanted outcomes which might arise, and to the potential failure to realise desired results. The criticality of each recommendation is as follows:	
High Priority	Action that is considered imperative to ensure that the organisation is not exposed to high risks.
Medium Priority	Action that is considered necessary to avoid exposure to significant risks.
Low Priority	Action that is considered desirable and should result in enhanced control.

2.4 To ensure maximum coverage of the annual plan based on the capacity available within the team, the RIAS monitors the implementation of the high and medium priority recommendations, but the low priority recommendations are left to management to successfully implement.

2.5 Once the target date for implementation has been reached the relevant Officers will be contacted and asked to provide feedback on the status of each agreed high and medium priority recommendation. The implementation of these recommendations is monitored using MK Insight internal audit software to ensure that improvements are being made.

2.6 Any audits concluded with a *No Assurance or Limited Assurance* opinion will also be subject to a follow up audit.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 **Appendix A** provides the status of the high and medium priority internal audit recommendations made as of 31st July 2024. This includes all audits completed with recommendations in 2024-25 and any audits completed in previous years where recommendations are yet to be implemented.

3.2 The status of the recommendations made following the completion of audits from the 2024-25 audit plan is summarised in **Table 2** below. It is pleasing to note that 5 recommendations have been implemented, there are currently no overdue recommendations and there are 13 recommendations that have a future target date.

Table 2 – Recommendation Status – Audits Completed 2024-25

	No. Made			Not Agreed	Imp.	Overdue			Future Target Date
	High	Med.	Total			High	Med.	Total	
2024-25	0	18	18	0	5	0	0	0	13

3.3 **Appendix A** also includes the recommendations made in relation to audits completed in previous years which are yet to be implemented. This information is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3 – Outstanding Recommendations – Audits Completed Pre-2023-24

	No. Made			Not Agreed	Imp.	Overdue			Future Target Date
	High	Med.	Total			High	Med.	Total	
2022-23	0	11	11	0	6	0	0	0	5
2023-24	17	64	81	0	46	1	0	1	34

3.4 **Appendix B** provides the detail of the high priority overdue recommendation which was made in the Parking Enforcement audit completed during 2023-24. The progress of this continues to be monitored and where required, delays in progress are escalated to the relevant Chief Officers.

3.5 As stated, a recommendation is made to enhance an identified weakness in a control to mitigate the identified risk, so until the recommendation is implemented the risk remains. Table 3 also shows that 5 recommendations, made in audits completed in 2022-23, still have a future implementation. Detail of these and the progress made are at **Appendix C**.

3.6 In addition, there are 34 recommendations, made during audits undertaken in 2023-24 that also have a future target date. However, several of these audits were finalised within the last 6 months and the proposed implementation timescales agreed.

3.7 The monitoring of recommendations is undertaken regularly by the Audit team and any delays or issues are highlighted to the Council's Corporate Management Board and ultimately this Committee.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report however effective audit planning and monitoring are key contributors in ensuring that the Council's assets and interests are properly accounted for and safeguarded.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 That members of the Governance and Audit Committee note the content of the report and consider the information provided in respect of the status of the high and medium priority recommendations made by the Regional Internal Audit Service.

Background documents

None