



## Herefordshire Council

Internal Audit Plan 2014/15

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Our audit activity is split between:

- **Key Control Audit**
- **Fraud/Governance Audit**
- **IT Audit**
- **Operational Audit**
- **Follow Up Audit**
- **Urgent Work/Special Projects**

## Role of Internal Audit

The Internal Audit service for Herefordshire Council is provided by the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP). SWAP has adopted and works to the Standards of the Institute of Internal Auditors and is also guided by interpretation provided by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The work of the Partnership is also guided by the 'Internal Audit Charter' which is presented to the Audit and Governance Committee today for approval for 2014-15.

Internal Audit provides an independent and objective opinion on the Authority's governance, risk and control environment by evaluating its effectiveness. In order to achieve this, the audit activity is split across the review categories listed to the left.

## Background

It is recommended by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards that organisations nominate a 'Board' to oversee (monitor and scrutinise) the work of Internal Audit. As such, in addition to senior management oversight, this Council has determined that, the Audit and Governance Committee will undertake this function. The plan is presented in Appendix A to this report and represents the internal audit activity for the 2014/15 financial year for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

It should be noted that plan days are only indicative for planning our resources. At the start of each audit an initial meeting is held to agree the terms of reference for the audit which includes the objective and scope for the review. Any changes to individual plan items, in terms of days, are managed within the annual payment made by the Council. The plan is produced with a view to providing assurance to both Officers and Members that current and imminent risks faced by the Authority are adequately controlled and managed. The plan will have to remain flexible as new and emerging risks are identified. Any changes to the agreed plan will only be made through a formal process involving the Chief Financial Officer - (Section151 Officer).

## The Annual Plan

## The Annual Plan

To ensure that to the best of our ability we have covered the necessary risks, the annual internal audit plan has been developed with the co-operation and approval of the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer), following meetings between Internal Audit and members of the Senior Management Team. The audit plan is notionally broken down across various audit categories; the following summarises each:

**Key Control Audit** – focus primarily on key risks relating to the Council’s major financial and IT systems. It is essential that all key controls identified by the External Auditors are operating effectively to provide management with the necessary assurance. For this year we have not had the opportunity to liaise with the Council’s External Auditors but have included the full suite of Key Control Audits so that SWAP can become familiar with the operating controls in these major financial areas. The work will not duplicate, but rather complement the work of the External Auditors.

**Fraud/Governance Audit** – SWAP operate a specialised Fraud Team who will undertake proactive fraud reviews and also provide a reactive service to Partners should the need arise. Governance reviews focus primarily on the key risks relating to cross cutting areas that are controlled and/or impact at a corporate rather than service specific level. It also provides an annual assurance review of areas of the Council that are inherently higher risk. This work will, in some cases, enable SWAP to provide management with added assurance that they are operating best practice as we will be conducting most of these reviews at all our Partner Sites.

The Annual Plan - Continued

**The Annual Plan - Continued**

**IT Audits** – are completed to provide the Authority with assurance with regards to their compliance with industry best practice. Some of these audits have come from our awareness of current IT risks.

**Operational Audits** - are a detailed evaluation of a service or functions control environment. A risk evaluation matrix is devised and controls are tested. Where weaknesses or areas for improvement are identified, actions are agreed with management and target dated.

**Urgent Work/Special Projects** – SWAP also undertake urgent work, special investigations and projects on a responsive basis at the request of the Senior Management and approved by Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer).

The schedule provided at Appendix B details the Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2014/15.