



NORWICH City Council

Committee Name: Audit
Committee Date: 17/07/2024
Report Title: Work Programme

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for an open and modern council

Report from: Interim Head of Legal and Procurement

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

This report sets out the committee's work programme to fulfil its terms of reference as set out in the council's constitution and agreed by council.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the committee considers and agrees the work programme, and if further information is required.

Policy Framework

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.
- An open and modern council.

This report meets the corporate priority to ensure Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

Report Details

Introduction

1. In accordance with its terms of reference, which is part of the constitution, the committee should consider the proposed work programme, as set out below. The terms of reference meet the relevant regulatory requirements of the council for accounts and audit matters, including risk management, internal control and good governance.
2. The programme includes requests for further information agreed by the committee and reflects the actions identified as part of the committee's self-assessment.
3. The committee may wish to propose further reports on additional topics relevant to the committee's terms of reference.

Work Programme 2024/25

4. The proposed work programme for 2024/25 is set out on the table attached to this report at Appendix A. The work programme comprises the standing agenda items and annual reports.
5. As part of the self-assessment review and in line with CIPFA guidance, it has been proposed that members of the committee meet independently with the External Auditor and Head of Internal Audit. It is therefore proposed to hold an informal session before the formal committee meeting on 17 September where the Draft Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement will be considered for the committee to meet with the auditors without officers being present. This will not replace the usual informal briefing for members on the Statement of Accounts and separate arrangements will be made for this.
6. Additional items are placed on the work programme during the year either from officer discussion at committee or with the chair, including items that the officers consider relevant to the committee.
7. Due to other work streams some reports may come to a later meeting than first expected. Also there has been some impact on the scheduling of reports to committee following changes to the key officers supporting the committee and to the rescheduling of meetings due to the run-up to the General Election. Members will be aware that the reports on Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL) governance arrangements and assurance will now be considered at the September meeting. This will enable the Scrutiny Committee to consider the NCSL Business Plan at its meeting on 18 July 2024, before the Audit Committee considers the governance arrangements.
8. The work programme includes reports that have not yet been assigned to a particular meeting.

Actions Arising from previous meetings

9. The action tracker of issues agreed at these meetings is attached to this report at Appendix B.

Self-Assessment – Actions tracker

10. The attached Appendix C contains the actions agreed at the reconvened meeting (19 March 2024/14 May 2024). Actions not completed in 2023/24 have been added to the 2024/2025 Self-Assessment Action Plan.

Training and development

11. All members of the committee have attended the “Effective Audit Committee” training facilitated by Ian Fifield. As part of the self-assessment exercise, members of the committee will be surveyed on their skills and training needs.
12. The chair attends meetings of the Chairs of Audit Committees Forum - Eastern Region and where appropriate information from these meetings will be shared with members of the committee.

Consultation

13. The committee will review the work programme and actions identified as part of the annual committee self-assessment exercise at each meeting.

Implications

Financial and Resources

Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council’s stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan and Budget.

14. The service expenditure falls within the parameters of the annual budget agreed by the council.

Legal

15. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report; reviewing its work programme supports the audit committee in delivering its role effectively, operating in line with good practice identified by CIPFA, supported by DLUHC.

Statutory Considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	None
Health, Social and Economic Impact	None

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Crime and Disorder	None
Children and Adults Safeguarding	None
Environmental Impact	None

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Include operational, financial, compliance, security, legal, political or reputational risks to the council	There are no risk implications.	None Risk management reports feature in the programme.

Other Options Considered

16. There is no alternative. The committee may wish to propose further reports on additional topics relevant to the committee's terms of reference.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

17. As a result of the delivery of the work programme the committee will have assurance through audit conclusions and findings that internal controls, governance and risk management arrangements are working effectively or confirmation that there are plans in place to strengthen controls.

Background papers:

None

Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft Work Programme 2024/2025

Appendix B – Action tracker – actions arising from meetings of the committee held on 21 November 2023, 23 January 2024 and 19 March/14 May 2024.

Appendix C - Actions arising from the Committee's Self-Assessment approved on 14 May 2024, and updated to include outstanding actions.

Contact Officer:

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Audit Committee – Schedule of Meetings

Date	Item
17/09/2024	<i>Informal session with Head of Internal Auditor and External Auditor</i>
	Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2023-24
	Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023-24
	Draft Statement of Accounts 2023/24
	Financial Regulations
	Governance Arrangements for NCSL
	Assurance Mapping of Levels of Assurance of NCSL
	Work Programme
22/10/2024	Global Internal Audit Standards
	Internal Audit Progress Update 2024/2025 - Q1
	Risk Management Update
	Risk Management Policies and Strategies
	Work Programme
26/11/2025	<i>Held for Formal or Informal Audit Committee</i>
28/01/2025	Work Programme
	Cyber Assurance
	Internal Audit Progress Update 2024/2025 - Q3
	Statement of Accounting Policies
	Work Programme
11/03/2025	Audit Committee - Self Assessment
	Strategic and Annual Internal Audit Plans 2024/2025
	Review of Accounting Policies
	Work Programme
To be confirmed	External Auditor's Audit Plan 2024/2025
	Internal Audit Progress Update 2024/2025
	Work Programme

**Audit Committee 17 July 2024
Work Programme - Action Tracker**

Date of Meeting	Minute Item	Action to be taken	Responsible officer	Comments
23 Jan 24	6. Progress Report on Internal Audit Activity 2023-2024	(5) that consideration is given to including an internal audit review of mandatory training across the council in the next year's audit plan.	Interim Head of Legal and Procurement (Sameera Khan)	Considered at ELT Interim Head of Legal and Procurement to report back on outcome of ELT review
19 Mar 24/ 14 May 24	6 & 7 2023/24 Quarter 3 Corporate Risk Register	(2) ask the Interim Chief Finance Officer to ask the executive leadership team (ELT) and Cabinet to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) upgrading the risk score for CORP22 to 20; (b) reinstating Health & Safety Compliance on the corporate risk register; (c) inclusion of risk mitigation for mould and damp in council housing; (d) inclusion of inherent risk scores on the Corporate Risk Register and more detail on actions and mitigation to provide further understanding on status; (e) review CORP21 to include reputational risk and liability; 	Chief Finance Officer (Alistair Rush)	

**Audit Committee 17 July 2024
Work Programme - Action Tracker**

Date of Meeting	Minute Item	Action to be taken	Responsible officer	Comments
		<p>(f) consider using risk management software and specific software for management of electronic signatures;</p> <p>(g) note the errors in data on the spread sheet and avoid</p>		
<p>19 Mar 24/ 14 May 24</p>	<p>6 & 7 2023/24 Quarter 3 Corporate Risk Register</p>	<p>(3) recommend to the Scrutiny Committee that:</p> <p>(a) it seeks assurance on the NCSL Business Plan in relation to performance monitoring and governance, particularly in relation to housing repairs and street cleaning;</p> <p>(b) asks for a representative of NCSL to attend the Scrutiny Committee where the business plan is considered;</p> <p>(c) refers any concerns about the governance and control environment surrounding the company to this committee (Audit Committee);</p> <p>(d) that it scrutinises the council's business continuity arrangements.</p>	<p>Interim Head of Legal and Procurement (Committee Officer)</p>	<p>Report to Scrutiny Committee</p>

**Audit Committee 17 July 2024
Work Programme - Action Tracker**

Date of Meeting	Minute Item	Action to be taken	Responsible officer	Comments
19 Mar 24/ 14 May 24	6&7 2023/24 Quarter 3 Corporate Risk Register	(1) The chair will write to the chair of Scrutiny Committee outlining the committee's concerns regarding the performance of NCSL in relation to its business plan and requesting that members of the Audit Committee attend the Scrutiny Committee where the business plan will be considered. (2) Note that Councillor Osborn is to provide wording to the chair and Interim Chief Finance Officer on his recommendations to amend CORP21.	Councillor Price Chair of Audit Councillor Osborn	
19 Mar 24/ 14 May 24	9 Progress Report on Internal Audit Activity	(2) ask that reference to the non-compliance with the council's contract management framework is referred to in the Annual Governance Statement.	Interim Head of Legal and Procurement	
19 Mar 24/ 14 May 24	10. Strategic and Annual Internal Audit Plans 2024/25 to 2026/27	(2) ask the Interim Head of Legal and Procurement to follow up the details of the ELT review of mandatory training for officers and report back to the committee.	Interim Head of Legal and Procurement	

**Audit Committee 17 July 2024
Work Programme - Action Tracker**

Date of Meeting	Minute Item	Action to be taken	Responsible officer	Comments
19 Mar 24/ 14 May 24	11. DLUHC Consultation Response – Addressing the Local Audit Backlog in England	(2) ask members to liaise with the Interim Head of Legal and Procurement regarding individual press statements on these arrangements.	Interim Head of Legal and Procurement	
19 Mar 24/ 14 May 24	13. Work Programme	(2) agree the changes to the work programme and hold a separate informal meeting for a briefing on the AGS and statement of accounts.	Interim Head of Legal and Procurement / Committee Officer	

Updated May 2024

Audit Committee 17 July 2024 – Work Programme
Appendix C

Action	Owner	Date for Completion	Progress
1. Review the decision-making powers of Audit Committee with Cabinet with a view to the Audit Committee recommending the AGS and Financial Statements to Full Council for approval. (Q3)	Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Procurement / Monitoring Officer	July 2024	There has been a delay to a general review of the constitution due to the General Election.
2. Update the Audit Committee's terms of reference to include the purpose of the Audit Committee. (Q4)	Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Procurement / Monitoring Officer	July 24	There has been a delay to a general review of the constitution due to the General Election.
3. For the next annual report of the Audit Committee ensure the following are included: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement 2022 • Results of the annual evaluation, development work undertaken and planned improvements • How it has fulfilled its terms of reference and the key issues escalated in the year. (Q8) 	Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Procurement / Monitoring Officer	July 2024	Completed

Action	Owner	Date for Completion	Progress
4. Update the Audit Committee's terms of reference to explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement. (Q9)	Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Procurement / Monitoring Officer Jackie Rodgers	July 2024	There has been a delay to the general review of the constitution due to the General Election.
5. Ensure that Audit Committee's agenda covers all of the core areas in its terms of reference over the year. (Q10)	Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Procurement / Monitoring Officer Section 151 Officer Chair and members of the Committee	2024/25	The work programme is reviewed at each meeting.
6. Audit Committee to meet privately with the external auditors and head of internal audit each year. (Q12)	Audit Chair and audit Committee members	During 2024/25	Proposed that this will take place
7. Audit Committee to consider whether the use of substitutes should continue. (Q13)	Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Procurement / Monitoring Officer	July 2024	There has been a delay to the general review of the constitution due to the General Election.
8. Audit Committee members to undertake an evaluation of their knowledge, skills and training needs every two years. (Q15)	Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Procurement / Monitoring Officer	To do in 2024/25	In progress – survey to be circulated to members

Action	Owner	Date for Completion	Progress
9. As a result of the evaluation in 7 above, arrange training to address training needs of Audit Committee Members. (Q16)	Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Procurement / Monitoring Officer		In progress – see above
10. As a result of 7 above, if training cannot address any skills or knowledge gaps to a satisfactory level, consider revising the membership of the Audit Committee to address this. (Q14 & Q17)	Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Procurement / Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair and Group Leaders	2024/25 – if necessary	In progress – see above
11. Obtain feedback on Audit Committee's performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work. (Q20)	Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Procurement / Monitoring Officer	By end of Oct 24.	
12. Evaluate whether and how the Audit Committee is adding value to the Council by completing the 2 nd CIPFA assessment tool, 'evaluating effectiveness of the audit committee' (Q27)		By end of Oct 24	

Action	Owner	Date for Completion	Progress
13. Review results of Self-Assessment of Good Practice exercise at a committee meeting. (Q29)		March 24	Approved 14 May 2024
14. Ensure all Members participate in the 2 nd CIPFA assessment tool, 'evaluating effectiveness of the audit committee' exercise. (Q29)	Audit Chair	When the exercise is scheduled	
15. Appointment of a second Independent Person	Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Procurement	Brought forward from 2023/2024 Committee Self-Assessment Exercise	