## DRAFT - AUDIT SCOPE & OBJECTIVES 2011 – 2014

**FINANCIAL SYSTEMS AUDITS**

**Budgetary Preparation and Control**

The Council is facing challenging financial conditions whilst maintaining current and in many cases increased demand for services. It is therefore important for the Council to have strong financial management systems and budgetary preparation and control is a key management function in planning, cost control and gaining efficiency.  Also, Members need good quality financial information to make informed decisions about which services to provide and at what level. Internal audits task in this time of re-organisation and resource change is to provide management with the assurance that the financial controls they depend on are robust and operating effectively. Internal audit plans to review the following areas of Budgetary Preparation and Control over the next 3 years.

Internal audit will review the annual budget cycle to ensure that it is working effectively and that satisfactory controls are in place to ensure that the annual budget is prepared in accordance with the budget cycle.  Areas that will be reviewed will be, assessing whether budgets are promptly prepared and any subsequent amendments are referred to, approved and accurately recorded on the Financial Information System; review the responsibilities for budgetary control to ensure that they are clearly defined; ensure that a financial risk management process is in place to determine the level of reserves.

**Government & European Grants**

Government and European Grants are a key source of funding for the Council and in turn it is responsible for ensuring that there are appropriate financial controls and governance arrangements in place for the management of grants.  It is important that the Council ensures that all Grants are identified and that applications and reviewed in accordance with government guidance and meet grant requirements. Over the next 3 years internal audit will review Government and European Grants to ensure that grant funding is planned, applied in line with grant requirements, monitored and controlled by management.

**Council Tax & Non-Domestic Rates**

Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates are a key source or income for the Council.  Over the next 3 years internal audit will review Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates and in particularly the specific objectives set will ensure that Liability, Billing, Collection, Refunds, Recovery and Enforcement Regulations, are up-to-date and adhered to.  The focus of the audits will be to ensure that all calculations, decisions, actions, payments & refunds are valid, controlled and accurately recorded on both systems.

**Capital Contracts**

Investing in the Councils infrastructure is essential to providing high quality public services. Management needs assurance for internal audit that are robust controls in place and that the governance arrangements surrounding capital contracts are effective and that there is an effective monitoring process from projects in place.

Over the next 3 years, internal audit will review capital contracts in order to give assurance that the procurement regulations and that the appraisal process is followed. Officer roles and responsibilities are clearly defined for each capital project. That capital contracts are fully authorised, risk assessed, sustainable, planned and costed.

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## Payroll

One of the key Council financial systems is Payroll it enables staff to receive payment and has the responsibility to make the appropriate deductions from salaries as required by the government and pension funds. Over the next 3 years, the role of internal audit will be to establish that a timetable has been established between Payroll and departments which is adhered and if not reasons sought and corrective action taken. That there are effective procedures and controls in place to ensure that staff receive the correct rate of pay, that pension and tax deduction are accurate, and that appropriate information controls are in place to safeguard the staff and the Council. Internal audit will check to ensure that all payroll input is authorised and checked by departments ensuring that payroll data is valid, correct, complete and in accordance with financial regulations and operational procedures.

## Capital Accounting

The Prudential Code requires councils to consider the short and medium term affordability, and the long term sustainability of their capital investment. It is therefore important to ensure that we have robust policies in place covering Capital Accounting, the Asset Register and Valuations. Over the next 3 years internal audit will review that procedures ensure that the capital expenditure programme is regularly reviewed and reported and that the fixed asset register is reconciled to the Financial Ledger as part of the year-end closedown procedure.

## Debtor Accounts

In order to ensure that all payments due to the Council are received promptly internal audit will review the Debtors processes. Over the next 3 years internal audit will confirm that there are written Debtor procedures and list of authorised users exists with responsibilities as defined within the Financial & Security Regulations. We will review the Debtors system to ensure that all calculations, decisions, actions, payments & refunds are valid, controlled and accurately recorded through test sampling and systems testing.

## Treasury Management

Prudent investment of cash balances which are not needed immediately, gives the Council an additional source of income. Internal audit covers Treasury Management, Borrowing, Lending and Investment Policy. Internal audit also check the strategy and procedures operated to ensure they are appropriate adhered to and compliant with the Prudential Code. Over the next 3 years internal audit will review whether the service is operated by properly trained staffed, is risk assessed, whether cash flow statements are maintained and transactions accurately recorded. Internal audit will also review whether external service providers are appointed in accordance with the Council procurement manual and written agreements are in place.

## Creditor Payments and Purchasing IDEA

In testing controls and procedures internal audit is required to test systems controls and examine supporting documentation. With the increase in transaction volume arising from computerised records, internal audit is not able to properly provide assurance without using a proven software assurance tool for analysis. Over the next 3 years internal audit will use IDEA audit software to review creditor and purchasing data for duplicate payments, missing invoices, tax compliance and over payments. By performing simple to construct exception testing internal audit will be able to spot internal control weaknesses and provide recommendations for improvements.

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## Cash Income and Banking

Cash, Income and Banking occurs in all departments to a larger or less extent. Over the next 3 years internal audit will review the new bank reconciliation process that was introduced during the last financial year. The specific objectives will be to assess whether cash/income receipt and banking responsibilities are compliant with the Council Financial & Security Regulations. Also, internal audit will review the processes operated to ensure that transactions are promptly and accurately recorded on the financial system with reconciliations undertaken and discrepancies recorded and explanations obtained.

## General Ledger Operations

General Ledger Operations are a key function within the Council and it is particularly important that all transactions are recorded accurately within agreed timescales in order that the Council is able to produce accurate financial information to assist with the decision making process. During the course of 2011 - 2012 an Oracle Purchasing module will be introduced.

As a key function within the Council, over the next 3 years internal audit will focus its attention on whether transactions including journals and feeders are promptly and accurately coded and balances reviewed in line with set timetables. Internal audit will also look at whether the Final Accounts and data returns for Whole of Government Accounts are accurately prepared and submitted by due dates. In addition adherence to Accounting Standards, Financial Regulation policy & procedures will also be tested.

## Tendering Procedures

The Council is under great financial pressure and it will be very challenging to maintain the current levels of public services and meet new demands when resources are tight. More emphasis is being placed on the need to do more to demonstrate cost effectiveness, efficiency and competitiveness across the services. It is particularly important that the Council secures value for money when purchasing goods and services. Tendering procedures form a key role in the purchasing process.

Internal audit over the next 3 years whether departmental services are following the recognised tendering process. Assess whether tendering regulations and procedures are adequately detailed in the Procurement Manual and being followed in such areas as roles, duties, authorisations and responsibilities. It will also look at whether the regulations are followed in terms of advertising, invitation, receipt, opening, evaluation; selection process is obtaining value for money.

## Contract Operating Leases

There are a number of issues arising from the introduction of International Accounting Standard (IAS) one of which is IAS 17: Leases. The Council needs to have a detailed plan to ensure they identify all arrangements falling under IAS 17, and that they account for such arrangements correctly. The Council has a large number of leases of varying sizes and complexity and they will have to consider how they are going to review these leases in order to ensure that there restated accounts are IFRS compliant. There is a risk that without a proper plan and set timescales, all lease arrangements may not be identified and therefore financial statements may not be complete.

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During the next 3 years internal audit, will review Contract Operating Leases and will concentrate on whether proper control procedures are being operated and is compliant with the Prudential Code. We will also review whether e-procurement is delivering the expected benefits. Internal audit will also review whether there are arrangements in place to assess that contracts and operating leases are compliant with contractual undertakings; and whether departmental budgets are set with consideration of commitments

## Car Allowances and Subsistence

The Single Status scheme for Travel & Subsistence has now been fully implemented and recent changes to the HMRC rates have been taken into account with rates being adjusted accordingly. Internal audit will review Car Allowances and Subsistence and will specifically look at whether there is a policy in place covering the claiming of travel and subsistence allowances with instructions featured in the Financial & security regulations. As part of the 3 year audit plan we will look at various services Car Allowance and Subsistence Claims to ensure that the Claims made are genuine, the forms are correctly completed and authorised with payments made promptly and reporting to meet HMRC requirements.

## Stock Taking and Work in Progress

Stocks represent an asset to the Council and can vary greatly in nature. However, good stock control is important to ensure that the assets of the Council are protected. Inventories should be maintained on a continuous basis by all services. During the next 3 years internal audit will review Council stores and depots to ensure that appropriate procedures are operated in accordance with Council Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and to a professional standard. We will also check that store and depots records are complete and accurate with stocks correctly accounted for in terms of receipt, issue, record keeping, calculation, valuation and review authorisation.

# BUSINESS SYSTEMS AUDITS

## Pyramid

The Council has a Planning and Performance Management Framework (PPMF) which was approved by the Executive in November 2008. This describes how the Council plans and manages performance at each level, from community planning to individual employee. Pyramid is the tool used to monitor and report performance in the structure laid out by the PPMF.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether the Council has established a performance indicators and data quality policy, procedures have been established to ensure relevant information, data, documentation and IT facilities are held securely and are readily accessible by authorised persons and supporting information, data, reports, etc are produced and retained

## Resource Link

ResourceLink is a web-enabled integrated suite of HR and Payroll modules. The heart of the system is a single data repository which holds all employee-related information, which can be accessed and updated by users across the Council according to individual authority

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levels. Information is held regarding employees' skills, qualifications and career development, pay run processing, p11d, back pay, car mileage, expenses and net to gross calculations. Reports are produced for various purposes throughout the system.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether the ResourceLink system functionality is meeting operational requirements with well managed day-to-day tasks, good quality information provided in the form of reports and securely operated with proper regard for legal and business continuity requirements.

## Planning/Building Standards

Details of applications in relation to Development Management and Building Standards are recorded and held on the UNI-Form Database with all documents attached to the Civica Document management system. All Development Management documentation is available to view on Public Access via the Council's website, whereas only specific documents in relation to BS are public. The Systems ensure that a fair and consistent approach is taken in the processing of all applications.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether application procedures, including those in respect of fees and collection of income, are in accordance with Statute, and the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and that all applications and appeals are appropriate, bona fide and treated consistently with fees banked and properly accounted for.

## Care First

CareFirst case management system comprises a comprehensive suite of integrated modules covering the full spectrum of children's and adults services client groups. The application is fully compliant and satisfies the latest government requirements for statutory returns it has integrated workflow to support case management operations and can exchange information with central government systems. There is also a performance management tool to provide an integrated view of activities.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether procedures been established for ensuring that employees, stakeholders, partners, contractors/agencies, service providers and suppliers, etc involved in partnership workings are aware of the organisation's integrity and ethical behaviour standards and code of corporate governance and that those procedures are being adhered to.

## Leisure Management System

The system manages, manipulates and analyses customer data including, membership administration, activity, facility, class and course bookings and tracking. There is an electronic Point of Sale facility to analyse income taken, basic stock control functionality and a comprehensive reporting package. An online booking feature will be made available to use on the Council's web page in the near future.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether accounting records maintained agree with information held in the Council's General Ledger, Information held on the system is accurate, secure and accessed only by authorised staff, stores procedures are followed and the system correctly reflects the stocks held at the Council's Leisure premises.

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## Fleet Management

The Tranman Fleet Management system fully utilises job recording, ordering for Fleet apart from fuel, invoicing, fuel transactions imported from Vectec fuel system, manual fuel transactions from private garages, Esso card transactions, recharging service users for fuel, defect reporting, driver/licence checks, training data, transfers to GL, accident recording, external hire desk including charging to customers, internal hires, budget accounting , stock – Issues/transfers/stock-takes, vehicle scheduling and a comprehensive reporting package for KPI's.  The next stage of the Tranman project is to link in with the Debtors system.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether the functionality and use made of the system's plant hire module and production of performance data for asset management are appropriate for business and reporting requirements.

## E-Benefits

E-Benefits are used by the contact centre staff to process new claims and changes of circumstances for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claimants.  Information gathered is passed to both the core benefits system (Northgate) and as a set of output documents to our document management system (Comino).  E-Benefits can set up new claims, or suspend benefit for those who have an appropriate change, as well as updating some of the income and household details for claims, all as a result of the answers given when processing the claim in e-Benefits.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether e-Benefits uptake rate has increased in low uptake areas, is used for new applications, with paper applications used only as a last resort and information held on the system is correct and accurate.

## Roads Costing System

The costing ledger allows income and expenditure to be collected on a job by job basis (per works order) allowing actual balances to be monitored across many years.  TOTAL comprises the Costing Ledger, General Ledger and Labour/Plant allocation modules. These modules are totally integrated and also link to the Oracle General Ledger, Northgate Payroll and Oracle Accounts Payable corporate systems.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether input and output controls are in place and any problems are identified promptly, computer reports produced are useful and all relevant authorised documentation is filed in the appropriate manner, and is available for inspection.

## Environmental Health, Trading Standards & Licensing *(Regulatory Services)*

IDOX information management system is the principal system for recording service requests, interventions with businesses and the actions taken by the service of animal health, environmental health, trading standards and licensing standards. The system also programmes future inspections and produces management reports on performance, trends etc as well as providing statutory performance data. This also assists in reviewing service delivery and identifying areas for service improvement.

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Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether policies, procedures and controls are in place and followed, operational databases are managed with accurate recording of service requests, inspections, interventions and actions taken across the key areas of enforcement activity, Inspection programmes and reports produced meet service requirements and areas for improvement are identified.

## Customer Service Centre

The Lagan Customer Relationship Management System integrated with Macfarlane Telephony is used within the Customer Services Centre, allowing the customer base to interact with the Council in an efficient manner through all methods of customer contact (face to face, by telephone or online). The Customer Services Centre is controlled from the main CSC Telephony Service Point where the management and systems team are based along with the main team of CSC telephony agents. This is supported by a network consisting of eleven satellite Service Points (including the 3 Islands Partnership) spread across the Council area. Customer Service Centre Staff can process information for Northgate Revenues and Benefits, Northgate E-Benefits, Civica EDMS and Civica Cash Receipting.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether policies, procedures and controls are in place, complied with and effective, outcomes are achieved against targets and identify any areas for improvement.

## Electronic Timesheets

The Electronic Timesheet system is a custom built web-based application developed in-house by ICT staff; it involves staff at offices throughout the Argyll & Bute area keying timesheet details of employees to the system and printed off by authorised payroll staff in Campbeltown who then key the details into the payroll system.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether input and output controls are in place and any problems are identified promptly, computer reports produced are useful and all relevant authorised documentation is filed in the appropriate manner, and is available for inspection.

## E-Procurement

The Pecos system houses a collection of electronic catalogues from various suppliers where goods and services can be ordered via easy-to-use, online forms for catalogue, non-catalogue and rapid entry requisitions. Approval requests are automatically routed to authorised personnel as per user profiles predefined within the system. There is electronic matching of order, invoice and receipts with various reports available to run.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will assess whether procurement objectives, policies and procedures have been established to ensure that the system complies with legislation, professional, best practice and the Council's requirements, standards and objectives and records are created and maintained to evidence all purchasing activities.

# CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AUDITS

## Partnerships

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The Council has taken note of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 (the Act) which provides a statutory basis for Community Planning in Scotland. There is a duty under section 15 of the Act that requires Local Authorities to initiate, facilitate and maintain the Community Planning process. The duty under section 16 of the Act places a statutory duty to participate in Community Planning on Local Authorities, Enterprise, Health, Police, Fire bodies, and the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport. Strategic and local structures have been developed and meetings are held 3 times per year and are attended by those required to participate in Community Planning in terms of the Section 16 of the Act. The Council is actively working with its partners to identify a clear set of priorities that meet the needs of the community.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will review whether senior management; members and leaders of partner bodies remain committed to partnership working and there are effective governance arrangements for partnership working – specifically scrutiny and accountability. Internal audit will also review the involvement of communities in the partnership and can demonstrate the impact of partnership working in delivering real outcomes for people and communities.

### Asset Management

In recent years to ensure the widest possible review of audit topics related to capital expenditure and procurement, internal audit has undertaken a Major Capital Review with audit reports being generated as required. The Asset Management Strategic Board (AMSB) is responsible for the development and implementation of a range of procedures and processes to ensure best practice in asset management. The AMSB achieved some early success in championing the business case process and capital/asset management plans. The AMSB has achieved significant improvement in the Council's approach to asset management over the last 2 years particularly by prioritising and targeting specific asset groups. The work plan for 2011/12 continues this approach and will require the full commitment of Development and Infrastructure and Community Services Departments.

The objective for internal audit over the next 3 years will be to verify that appropriate progress is made and the Boards objectives are achieved in according to plan. The asset management process which is being developed is highlighting possible resource issues for the future in relation to the gathering and recording of performance data. These are acknowledged by the AMSB and will manifest themselves initially in the Property Services Service Review being carried out in 2011. Thereafter other Services may encounter similar situations. Internal audit will look to see that the AMSB addresses the need for challenge in Services' use of land and buildings both leased and owned.

### Financial Management & Efficiency

Within the Audit Plan, the audit of Financial Systems has a separate audit programme. However Finance plays a far wider role in the Council's operations. Therefore the audit of financial management in relation to Corporate Performance over the next 3 years will look at the emphasis placed by the Council on ensuring financial management skills are being widely distributed. Ensure there is regular and high quality challenge of financial matters with a robust financial planning process, linking strategic objectives to financial strategy. Ensure that there is a medium to long-term financial strategy with a clear understanding of cost drivers and how costs change in response to changing levels of activity.

With the funding cuts announced by the Scottish Government a greater emphasis is being placed on efficiency by all Councils. Any efficiency projects will have a financial impact for the Council. Over the next 3 years internal audit will review whether efficiency has been

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incorporated into Council plans. Is the culture supporting improved efficiency, are plans for measuring the scale of efficiencies achieved realistic and based on the correct information to monitor progress.

## Procurement

A new Procurement Manual has been approved by the SMT and issued for general use; this has coincided with the completion of a Capital Programme Planning and Management Guide and Corporate Project Management Guidelines. The issue of sometimes lengthy procedural documents such as the Procurement Manual, a Capital Planning and Management Guide and Project Management Guidance from three different sources within the Council can create confusion to a greater or lesser extent. Procurement accounts for over £100m of spending and its management and supporting systems remain key to the Council achieving BV. Therefore, the importance of procurement has been recognised in the past but also in the new audit plan. Previous audits have assessed the effectiveness of the system of internal control and the associated risk management structures and processes covering procurement.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will concentrate on the Council objective of getting best value in procurement. That procurement decisions demonstrate a clear understanding of how to best satisfy its core supply needs, manage its suppliers and contracts, have efficient and robust processes and systems to support advanced procurement activity.

## People management

The Council is undergoing a major transformation exercise which has resulted in the re-structuring of all departments. This has brought benefits such as the centralisation of the HR function enabling better reporting. Over the next 3 years internal audit will look at how well the Council operates its HR strategies, policies, procedures and structures to support effective people management. This will therefore include ensuring that HR strategies, policies, procedures and structures are supported by effective people management and integrate workforce planning within its strategic and financial planning processes. Internal audit will be auditing to ensure that management communicate effectively, involve staff on issues that affect them and develop the performance of its staff to achieve set objectives.

## Governance and Accountability

Governance and accountability within the Council has received prominence with the introduction of a Corporate Governance Statement last year. This is now an annual task which results in a report and action plan presented to the Audit Committee and Council. The Council has also been working at a corporate, departmental and service level along with its external partners to meet statutory requirements and support effective public performance reporting.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will review whether the Council continues to have clear roles and responsibilities that enable good governance and strong accountability. That processes within the Council support members and senior officials to be effective in their roles and engage with stakeholders to support real accountability and maintain effective governance when the organisation delivers services through external parties. That the Council promotes effective and stakeholder-focused public performance reporting and that the Council's performance reports provide good quality information for effective public accountability.

## Risk Management

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Responsibility for promoting risk management and defining the framework within which it will operate has recently passed to the Chief Executive's unit - Strategic Finance. The service took this opportunity to conduct a more comprehensive review of the structure and processes supporting risk management. New arrangements have been proposed, based on a substantial development of those processes currently in place, and are contained in a document entitled Managing Risk and Opportunities. Therefore the Council is ensuring that Risk Management is an effective part of the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will undertake audits to ensure that the organisations risk management activities are actively supported and promoted by senior officers/ members. Review the developing risk management structure and processes to ensure that it is identifying and prioritising risks and responses to ensure risk management is contributing towards the achievement of corporate objectives.

## Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs)

The Accounts Commission issued its Direction for the financial year 2009/10, in December 2008. The Commission's 2008 Direction represented a significant change in approach to the responsibilities for external audit. It placed increased emphasis on self determination by councils for performance material reported to the public, in accordance with the principles and guidance underlying Best Value. Consequently, the Council external auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP, did not review the accuracy of the individual SPIs for 2009/10. Internal Audit therefore made the decision to review the 20 SPIs that the Council had to submit to Audit Scotland. Of the 20 audited, 12 were judged correct 5 had to be amended after discussion with the appropriate departmental staff and the remaining 3 required considerably more effort from Internal Audit before the final figures could be agreed.

In reviewing the 2010/11 SPIs, emphasis will be placed on the 3 that were difficult to agree last year, to ensure that their systems for recording data have improved and the SPIs are correct. Spot checks will also be carried out on some of the remaining 17 SPIs to ensure that both systems recording and reporting remains correct. Over the next 3 years internal audit will review all 20 SPIs to ensure that systems remain robust and accurate prior to release of performance data to Audit Scotland for national publication.

## Performance management

The Council's Corporate Plan has been reviewed and is now a simplified document based on the new vision and values. The Plan clearly identifies priority outcomes for the Council that are linked directly to National Outcomes. Performance management is a feature of quarterly meetings between the Chief Executive and Executive Directors where performance successes, challenges and planned actions to address challenges are discussed. Quarterly reports are presented to the Council's Executive Committee and Member scrutiny takes place of the Departmental and Council scorecards.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will look to ensure that the Council is improvement oriented, demonstrates a performance culture and has the processes in place to deliver performance management; internal audit will look at how the Council uses the 4 Cs' Consult, Compare, Challenge and Complete in effectively reviewing its services; that is can demonstrate effective strategic planning integrating strategy and resources to improve outcomes and; the Council considers staff performance, partnership working, a clear vision and sense of purpose which reflects local needs, the views of local people, national priorities, and will secure improved outcomes.

## PSIF (Public Service Improvement Framework)

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The Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) is designed to drive quality and deliver excellence in local authorities and other public sector organisations. It is an evidence-based tool that helps services to gauge their performance, identify examples of best practice and areas for improvement and benchmark with other organisations. PSIF requires an honest and critical evaluation of the service against a series of statements. The process draws on the knowledge and expertise that officers have gained from working within the service. Applying PSIF is a key activity through which the Council will continuously improve services for its customers.

Internal audit over the next 3 years will provide an independent review facility. The objective being to ensure that planned activity is being achieved. That team roles and responsibilities have been met, and that processes have been followed for gathering and recording evidence. That, consensus days have been conducted in a consistent manner and scoring has followed a defined process and has led to improvement planning.

## Information management

Information management is of key importance to the Council because of its geographical location and communication challenges. Within the Audit Plan there is a specific section for Business Systems, in terms of data integrity and controls. With regard to BV over the next 3 years internal audit will focus on the importance of information management for management and members in understanding the Councils activities. Internal audit will also look at whether there is sufficient information management and technology support for effective service delivery.

## Community & Customer Engagement

As part of the Council's commitment to Community Planning Partnership (CPP) the Council has set up 4 Local Area Community Planning Groups (LACPGs) as well as 3 Community Planning Partnership Thematic Groups. The Council has a Community Engagement Action Plan which is reviewed and updated and this is reported to the Community Planning Partnership Management Committee. The Management Committee, LACPGs and the Thematic Groups report to the CPP on a regular basis. Council CPP and Single Outcome Agreement Annual Reports are submitted to the CPP. The Management Committee agreed to the formation of a 3rd Sector and Communities CPP Sub-Group to ensure that Community Engagement is given the same strategic guidance and monitoring as the other CPP Thematic Groups. The Council is working with its Community Partners to identify a clear set of priorities that meet the needs of the community. The Council is developing a co-ordinated approach to improving customer service.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will review community involvement by the Council in terms of demonstrating its commitment to and understanding the needs and aspirations of communities. Internal audit will look at whether communities get involved in the decision-making process and planning; and that there are monitoring arrangements in place to record the level of community engagement. In addition, internal audit will concentrate on the extent to which the Council interacts with its customers; both customer focus and responsiveness must be evident in a co-ordinated approach to improving and developing customer services. That customer standards and accessibility effectively improve service provision.

## Equality & Sustainability

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The focus of the equality audit is principally on the Single Equalities Act and the responsibilities it places on the Council and its management. With regard to Sustainability, the Council is committed to achieve primarily through a reduction in greenhouse gases, the recycling of waste and the increased use of energy from renewable sources, to deliver increased levels of sustainability in its operations.

Over the next 3 years internal audit will review how the Council demonstrates it is providing equality of opportunity within a diverse workforce and delivering positive outcomes for its diverse communities. Internal audit will review whether sustainability issues are embedded in the Council's vision and strategic direction. That sustainability issues are embedded in governance arrangements and its use of resources contributes to sustainability.