

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

21 July 2016

Report of the Director of Finance

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

1 Purpose of the Report

To advise the Committee of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and the requirement to review the system of internal control.

2 Information and Analysis

This is the first year that the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 are in force. The requirement for a review of the effectiveness of internal audit has been replaced with a wider requirement to review the effectiveness of the system of internal control.

The Audit Committee is responsible for reviewing the Annual Governance Statement, reviewing and approving other aspects of the Council's governance framework and for approving, monitoring and reviewing the outcome of audit activity throughout the Authority. It is, therefore, the appropriate Committee of the County Council to consider the outcomes of this review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control.

The Council is required to have a sound system of internal control which:

- (a) facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;
- (b) ensures the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and
- (c) includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council must take two actions as part of the requirement to review the internal control system, they are:

- (i) conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control (described in bullet points (a) to (c) above);

- (ii) prepare an annual governance statement.

In order to provide members with the necessary assurances around the effectiveness of the system of internal control it is appropriate to consider and reflect on the work of the Audit Committee, the assurances received from internal and external audit and evidence from the statement of accounts. In particular it is appropriate to refer members to the following:

- The Annual Governance Statement approved at the Audit Committee meeting on 10 May 2016;
- The evidence of compliance with International Auditing Standards presented at the same meeting;
- The work of internal auditors culminating in the Annual Audit Report from the Assistant Director of Finance (Audit) presented to this meeting;
- The ISA260 report presented to this meeting by the Council's external auditor KPMG;
- The detail contained within the Strategic Risk Register which has been regularly presented to members and the latest version of which is on today's agenda;
- The standard and quality of the Statement of Accounts for 2015-16 and in particular the transparency illustrated by the disclosures made.
- The Council's spending against budget, reserves and achievement of budget reductions are monitored on a regular basis and reported to both management, portfolio holders, Cabinet, Audit Committee and Council. In addition the Audit Committee and Cabinet receive reports detailing the Council's significant Treasury management operations;

As members will be aware, PwC concluded a review of the Audit Services Unit (reported to Committee 28 July 2014). Such reviews are required annually by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, with an external review being conducted at least once every five years. PwC provided a positive view of the Unit's effectiveness and compliance with the PSIAS. Additionally, the External Auditor continues to rely on the work of Internal Audit for assurance purposes. Consequently I am satisfied that Audit Services achieved adherence to the standards set out in the PSIAS, and that this provides a sound basis from which the Council rely on the assurances provided by Audit Services in respect of the effectiveness of the internal control system.

The work of Audit Services is subject to the requirements of the Unit's Audit Manual. This Manual will be reviewed during the coming months as part of

consideration of the systems and procedures used by the Unit alongside the Quality Assessment and Improvement Programme. Cabinet will also be asked to approve the Council's "Audit Charter" as part of a review of that document.

3 Legal Considerations

The Audit Services Unit discharges the Authority's statutory responsibilities under Regulation 5, Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and significant aspects of the statutory duties of the Director of Finance arising under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: financial, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity; human resources, environmental, health, property, transport and social value considerations.

5 Officer's Recommendation

That the Committee considers the information provided in this report as evidence of the effective operation of the internal control system.

PETER HANDFORD

Director of Finance