

Report to:	Audit and Governance Committee Council	Date of Meeting:	15 September 2021 16 September 2021
Subject:	Audit and Governance Annual Report 2020-21 - Work Programme 2021/22 and Terms of Reference		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To present formally the Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee including the Work Programme for 2021/22 and the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

Recommendations:

Recommendations to the Audit and Governance Committee: That the Audit and Governance Committee be requested to:

- (1) agree and refer the Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee to the Council for approval, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) approve the Work Programme for 2021/22, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report; and
- (3) review and approve the Terms of Reference of the Audit and Governance Committee, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report.

Recommendation to the Council:

That Council be requested to approve the Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee.

Reasons for the Recommendations:

To comply with the Terms of Reference of the Committee as set out in Chapter 7 of the Councils Constitution.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No alternative options have been considered – To comply with the formal reporting mechanism.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

(B) Capital Costs – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
None	
Legal Implications:	
None	
Equality Implications:	
There are no equality implications.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	Neutral
Have a neutral impact	Neutral
Have a negative impact	Neutral
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from matters referred to in the Annual Report would have been contained in reports when they were presented to Members during the previous year; or will be contained in future reports during the forthcoming year.	

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: None directly applicable to this report

Commission, broker and provide core services: Good governance is about how the Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the communities we serve. Good governance will enable the Council to pursue its vision and secure its agreed objectives in the most effective and efficient manner.
Place – leadership and influencer: None directly applicable to this report
Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly applicable to this report
Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report
Cleaner Greener: None directly applicable to this report

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.6522/21) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.4723/21) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Council meeting.

Contact Officer:	Ruth Harrison
Telephone Number:	Tel: 0151 934 2042
Email Address:	ruth.harrison@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix 1: The Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee

Appendix 2: The Audit and Governance Work Programme for 2021/22

Appendix 3: The Terms of Reference of the Audit and Governance Committee

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

1. Audit and Governance Annual Report 2020/21

1.1 Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Position statement on Audit Committees states that Audit Committees are a key component of an authority's governance framework. Their function is to provide an independent and high level resource to support good governance and strong public financial management.

1.2 The Position also states that "The audit committee should be held to account on a regular basis by the group to which it is accountable. For a local authority audit committee, this will be the council. The aspects that should be specifically considered include:

whether the committee has fulfilled its agreed terms of reference

whether the committee has adopted recommended practice

whether the development needs of committee members have been assessed and whether committee members are accessing briefing and training opportunities

whether the committee has assessed its own effectiveness or been the subject of a review and the conclusions and actions from that review

what impact the committee has on the improvement of governance, risk and control within the authority.

1.2 Within the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) model Terms of Reference (2018), which the Council adopted in May 2021, there is a requirement to publish an annual report on the work of the committee as well as to report to full council on a regular basis on the committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the committee in meeting its purpose.

1.3 The proposed requirement stems from good practice to outline an Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee to the Council setting out all the activities/decisions taken by the Committee during that year. The report should as a result enhance accountability of the Committee and its decision making and good governance

1.4 The Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee outlines the Committee's work and achievements over the year ending 31 March 2021 and demonstrates to residents and Council stakeholders the important role that is carried out by the Committee and its contribution to the Council's overall governance arrangements.

1.5 Following adoption of the model Terms of Reference of the Committee, by the Council in May 2021 this is the first Audit and Governance Annual Report that has been produced and approved by the Chair of the Committee. The Annual Report along with the Work Programme of the Committee will be developed further over the following 12 months to ensure that the Committee is effective in addressing all elements of the newly adopted model Terms of Reference. The Audit and Governance Committee can expect to receive reports in relation to the Complaints process and Complaints that have been considered by the Audit and Governance Sub Committee, Whistleblowing, Money Laundering and any other ad hoc reports as set out in the Terms of Reference. Appendix 2 to the report sets out the Work Programme of the Committee which consists of a schedule of Meetings for the Committee and the reports that will be considered at each of those Meetings. The Work Programme for each Municipal Year is an important element of Planning the Year ahead as it ensures that the Committee remains on target in reviewing the effectiveness of the Committee and is effectively monitoring/ reviewing the Terms of Reference of the Committee (Appendix 3 to the report). Appendices 2 and 3 should work hand in hand in that all elements of the Terms of Reference should be monitored through the submission of reports/briefings of the Committee. It is also important to note that an element of flexibility in relation to the Work Programme should be applied in order that any ad hoc/urgent pieces work may be undertaken/reviewed by the Committee as and when required.