

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Audit & Accounts Committee

22 October 2021

TITLE:	Internal Audit Periodic Report 2020/21
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Sybil Ralphs - Council Leader SMDC
CONTACT OFFICER:	John Leak - Head of Audit
WARDS INVOLVED:	Non Specific

Appendices Attached – Appendix 1 Audits Completed – 2020/21 Audit Plan

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Council to “undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance”. In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Head of Audit must report periodically to the Audit Committee on the internal audit activity’s performance relative to its plan.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the committee note the information contained within this report.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the findings of the remaining audits undertaken by the Council’s Internal Audit service for the 2020/21 financial year. This includes the number and classification of recommendations made, agreed and where applicable, implemented by management.
- 3.2 Due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic including continued diversion of audit resources to support the corporate response to the administration of the Governments various business grants support schemes, the Audit Plan for 2020/21 took longer than usual to complete.
- 3.3 All audit recommendations have been agreed, and to date 93% of 2020/21 audit recommendations that are due have been implemented. Where deficiencies in internal control have been identified and not corrected, Internal

Audit are satisfied that they will be resolved in an appropriate manner and they will continue to monitor such cases. It should be noted that it is the responsibility of relevant Managers to implement agreed recommendations.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

4.1 The assurance provided by the work of Internal Audit informs the Annual Governance Statement and therefore helps to confirm effective use of financial and other resources to ensure value for money.

5. Alternative Options

5.1 There are no options to consider.

ANDREW P STOKES
Chief Executive

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

None

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6. Detail

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the findings of the remaining audits undertaken by the Council's Internal Audit service for the 2020/21 financial year. This includes the number and classification of recommendations made, agreed and where applicable, implemented by management.
- 6.1.2 The work of the internal audit service is primarily based upon an annual risk assessed audit plan, which for the financial year 2020/21 was agreed by this Committee at the 3rd July 2020 meeting. The Internal Audit service also carry out work outside of the audit plan for which a contingency is usually built in. This unplanned work consists mainly of internal control consultancy work and special investigations into suspected fraud and irregularity.
- 6.1.3 Due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic including continued diversion of audit resources to support the corporate response to the administration of the Governments various business grants support schemes, the Audit Plan for 2020/21 took longer than usual to complete.

6.2 Audit Reports Issued

- 6.2.1 A summary of the remaining audits completed from the 2020/21 Audit Plan is shown in the table below. Further details of these audits outlining key issues and strengths and improvements are shown in **Appendix 1**.

Service	Audit	Recommendations			Assurance
		High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	
Legal & Election Services	Elections	0	1	7	Satisfactory
Finance	Payroll	0	1	5	Satisfactory
Revenues & Benefits	Housing Benefits	0	2	6	Satisfactory

- 6.2.2 A further breakdown of all of the audits completed during the 2020/21 financial year including the current status of audit recommendations is detailed in the Annual Report later on this agenda. All audit recommendations have been agreed, and to date 93% of 2020/21 audit recommendations that are due have been implemented. Where deficiencies in internal control have been identified and not corrected, Internal Audit are satisfied that they will be resolved in an appropriate manner and they will continue to monitor such cases. It should be noted that it is the responsibility of relevant Managers to implement agreed recommendations.

6.2.3 Councillors will note that in addition to every individual audit recommendation being allocated a risk, every audit completed has been given an ‘assurance opinion’ based upon Internal Audit’s assessment of the internal control environment. These assurance opinions inform the annual audit opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s internal control environment. The control levels are defined as follows:

Control Level	Definition
Substantial	There is a robust framework of controls designed to achieve the objectives and controls are consistently applied.
Satisfactory	There is a sufficient framework of controls which for the most part, are consistently applied. However, weakness in the design or inconsistent application of controls within a few areas put achievement of particular objectives at risk.
Limited	Weaknesses in the system or the level of non compliance with controls in a number of areas are such to put the system objectives at risk.
Unsatisfactory	There is a significant breakdown in the framework of controls, which leaves the system open to significant abuse or error.