

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	
	FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE	
date	13 April 2007	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY 2007- 2010

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is to inform Members of the audit strategy for the three year period 2008 to 2010 and to present the planned work to be undertaken by Internal Audit during the 2007/8 financial year.

2. BACKGROUND

In previous years the audit plan for the forthcoming year has been presented to the Nottinghamshire & City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority in conjunction with the annual report for the previous financial year.

3. REPORT

In recognition of changes to the corporate governance arrangements within the Authority, it is considered more appropriate to present the forward plan to the Finance and Resources Committee at an early stage in the financial year so that Members are informed of the proposed schedule of work and can obtain a better view of the regulatory framework in their role as audit committee. The Internal Audit Strategy 2008-2010, Internal Audit Annual Plan 2007/2008 and Internal Audit Strategic Plan 2008-2010.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant financial implications arising from the issues identified and the associated recommendations.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no personnel implications arising from the report.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial assessment has revealed there are no equalities issues arising from this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The strategy and annual plan are based on risk assessments undertaken by Internal Audit, while the Authority's Integrated Risk Management approach will be reviewed within the Governance programme.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Audit Strategy for 2008 to 2010, and the Audit Plan for 2007/8 be approved.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

None.

Peter Hurford
TREASURER TO THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

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INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY 2008 - 2010

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Combined Fire Authority

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The requirement for the Fire Authority to maintain an Internal Audit function is derived from the local government legislation including Section 151 of the Local government Act 1972 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, amended in 2006, in that a relevant body must:
- “maintain an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with the proper internal audit practices”.
- 1.2 The responsibility for ensuring an effective internal audit function rests with the Authority Treasurer as part of his Section 151 obligations.
- 1.3 Internal Audit is an assurance function that primarily provides an independent and objective opinion to the Authority on the control environment comprising risk management, control and governance by evaluating its effectiveness in achieving the organisation’s objectives.
- 1.4 It objectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.
- In particular it:
- (a) carries out a risk based review and evaluation of the Authority’s financial and other systems and procedures;
 - (b) provides management and Members with advice and assurance to assist them in the effective discharge of their responsibilities;
 - (c) plans audit work having regard to the Services Corporate plans.
- 1.5 Internal Audit’s work will also cover the local Code of Corporate Governance, which establishes the framework of the Authority’s internal control environment. Overall, the results of Audit work will allow the Treasurer to deliver an audit opinion on the Authority’s internal control environment and contribute to the annual Statement on Internal Control, as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003.
- 1.6 Responsibility for the design and correct operation of internal controls rests with departmental managers. Internal Audit is not a substitute for effective internal control. Its task is to carry out an independent review of the soundness of internal control systems to highlight weaknesses and recommend improvements where necessary. Accountability for the response to the advice and recommendations of Internal Audit lies with management, who either accept and implement the advice or formally reject it, thereby accepting the risk outlined.

2 Internal Audit Standards

- 2.1 Internal Audit operates in accordance with the Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government issued by CIPFA. Compliance with the Code is reviewed annually both by the Head of Service for Internal Audit and the External Auditor.
- 2.2 A thorough recruitment process is applied to the appointment of Audit staff to ensure the Section has the appropriate professional skills and experience to fulfil its objectives. Internal Audit staff work in accordance with an Internal Audit Manual, incorporating an

Internal Audit Protocol, which provides guidance to Internal Auditors to help them carry out their work in accordance with professional standards and the CIPFA Code of Practice.

3 Internal Audit Strategy

- 3.1 Internal Audit produce an Internal Audit Strategy consisting of a three year risk-based programme, and an annual plan. The programme and plans have been developed in consultation with the Treasurer and Head of Finance and Resources.
- 3.2 The Internal Audit plans include an element of contingency to allow Internal Audit to be responsive to changes in conditions and to requests for assistance from the Head of Finance and Resources.
- 3.3 Objectives are prepared for each planned Internal Audit assignment and are normally discussed with relevant line managers before the work is started. Internal Audit will usually give reasonable notice to the relevant manager of the start of an audit and will minimise any disruption to the smooth running of the area under review. However, Internal Audit reserves the right to make unannounced visits where the Treasurer or Head of Finance and Resources considers it necessary.

4 Strategic and Annual Plans

- 4.1 Appendices 1 and 2 provide details of the Internal Audit three year strategic plan for 2007/8 to 2009/10, and the annual plan for 2007/8, respectively. The plans are based on a risk analysis matrix, with high risk systems and services being audited every two years (on average), medium risk areas every three years and low risk areas every five years. The Internal Audit risk assessed work makes up approximately two thirds of the planned work, with the other third comprising 'managed audit' work, carried out on behalf of External Audit to provide a level of assurance on the operation of high level controls associated with financially significant systems. This work is carried out in the final quarter of each financial year and is not directly linked to the Internal Audit risk assessment.

5 Internal Audit Reporting

- 5.1 Internal Audit reports its findings in draft to appropriate managers, who have the opportunity to discuss and influence the findings and recommendations. The formal draft report is then issued to the Head of Finance and Resources, who is responsible for responding to reports on behalf of the Chief Fire Officer. Recommendations are risk ranked and reports contain an audit opinion on the area reviewed. There are four separate audit opinions, namely sound, satisfactory, unsatisfactory and unsound. If an opinion is unsatisfactory or unsound, a follow-up audit is normally carried out six months later to ensure that the recommendations have been implemented.
 - 5.2 Final Audit reports are circulated in accordance with a list agreed with the Head of Finance and Resources and the Treasurer. In order to provide an additional level of scrutiny, and to strengthen the independence of Internal Audit, from 2006/7 the circulation list includes the Chairman of the CFA and Chair of Finance and Resources Committee, in addition to the Chief Fire Officer and Head of Performance. Reports are also passed to the Information Services Department, which carries out follow up enquiries to ensure that Audit recommendations are implemented.
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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE & CITY OF NOTTINGHAM COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2007/2008

Area of Service Activity	Risk Ranking	Planned Audit	Managed Audit	Annual Plan	Intended Scope
Payroll	High		7	7	Managed audit
Pensions	Medium	8	4	12	Review of transfer of manual records to Axise system + Managed Audit
Capital & Assets	Low	8		8	Review of new asset management system and procedures
Premises	Medium			0	
Purchasing/Creditors	Medium		6	6	Managed audit.
Supplies & Services (Expenses)	Low			0	General review across range of employee claims and associated controls
Transport	Low	5		5	Follow-up to unsatisfactory audit report (Dec 2006)
Financial Management / Kypera	High	12		12	Review progress on system developments.
Treasury Management	Medium		6	6	Managed audit
Income/Debtors	Medium		5	5	Managed audit
Trading Activities	Medium			0	
IT Audit	Medium	7		7	Topic/scope to be agreed with the Head of Finance & Resources
Cardiff Checks / Contingency	Medium	10		10	Selection of paid invoices by Finance & Resources Committee Members for detailed investigation.
Corporate Governance	High	10		10	
Partnership Schemes	Medium			0	
Risk Management	High			0	
Advisory Service & Client Management	n/a	7		7	
Total Audit Days for the Year		67	28	95	

COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY - INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2008 to 2010

SERVICE AREA	Assessed Risk Factor	Audit Frequency (Years)	AUDIT DAYS PLANNED FOR 2008 /10								
			Year to 31st March 2008			Year to 31st March 2009			Year to 31st March 2010		
			Planned	Managed Audit	Total Days	Planned	Managed Audit	Total Days	Planned	Managed Audit	Total Days
Payroll	HIGH	Annual Mngd Audit		7	7	12	7	19	12	7	19
Pensions	MEDIUM	Annual Mngd Audit	8	4	12		4	4		4	4
Assets	LOW	4	8		8			0			0
Premises	MEDIUM	3			0	12		12			0
Purchasing & Creditor Payments	MEDIUM	Annual Mngd Audit		6	6		6	6	11	6	17
Supplies & Services	LOW	4			0			0			0
Transport	LOW	4	5		5			0			0
Financial Management / Kypera	HIGH	2	12		12			0	12		12
Treasury Management	MEDIUM	Annual Mngd Audit		6	6		6	6		6	6
Income & Debtors	MEDIUM	Annual Mngd Audit		5	5		5	5		5	5
Trading Activities	MEDIUM	3			0	10					0
Computer	MEDIUM	3	7		7	7		7	7		7
Capital	MEDIUM	3			0			0			0
Cardiff Checks / Contingency	MEDIUM	3	10		10	10		10	10		10
Corporate Governance	HIGH	2	10		10			0			0
Risk Management	HIGH	2				9		9			
Partner Schemes	MEDIUM	3			0			0	8		8
Client Management	n/a		7		7	7		7	7		7
Total Planned Days For The Year			67	28	95	67	28	95	67	28	95