

Matters arising from internal audit work completed during the period

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report highlights key issues that the Audit and Governance Committee should be aware of in fulfilling its role of providing independent oversight of the adequacy of the council's governance, risk management and internal control framework. It summarises the work undertaken during the year to 14 December 2012 by the council's Internal Audit Service under the internal audit plan for 2012/13.
- 1.2 A full table of all the audit work currently planned for 2012/13 is included at Appendix B, setting out brief notes of the progress made on each project and the outcomes where work has been completed. It also clarifies where planned assignments have been deferred or removed from the plan, and where additional work has been included in the programme for the year.
- 1.3 The Internal Audit Service continues to follow our risk-based audit methodology, using a risk and control evaluation-based approach ('RACE-based') combined with compliance testing of key controls, computer assisted audit techniques ('CAATs') and follow-up work.

2 Key issues

Corporate arrangements in relation to information governance

- 2.1 The council's information governance arrangements remain substantially unchanged since the last meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee in September 2012. The arrangements are still subject to further development, and assurance cannot yet be provided over the corporate controls in place.
- 2.2 Assistance is being provided by the Internal Audit Service to develop the documentation required by the council as we begin to work more closely with the NHS and take on responsibility for public health.

Legislative compliance

- 2.3 The Deputy County Secretary and Solicitor presented a report to the Audit Committee in June 2012 addressing assurance over the council's compliance with legislation, in which he stated that "a high degree of assurance can be provided" over the council's "compliance with legislation focussed specifically on local government, from a governance perspective (as opposed to service specific) legislation". However he also stated that "a lesser degree of assurance can be provided in relation to legislation that is local government-specific but relates to functions".
- 2.4 We have undertaken specific compliance testing and have provided substantial assurance over the Registrar's Service's compliance with the legislation governing the solemnisation of marriages. We have almost completed our work on the Trading Standards Service.
- 2.5 We have also undertaken work on the role of the independent reviewing officers (IROs) who are required to assess the adequacy of social care provision for

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children looked after and child protection cases. Our work has not focussed solely on the IROs' compliance with relevant statutory guidance but it should be noted that the IROs are not fully compliant with the statutory guidance relating to their work, and that a high court judgement was made in June 2012 against the council and one of its IROs.

Direct payments

- 2.6 We have completed our detailed work on direct payments within both ACS and CYP, and are continuing to consider with management the issues that will be raised as elements of these services transfer to the council's new Benefits Service that will be operated by One Connect Ltd.