



INFRASTRUCTURE & GOVERNMENT

West Wiltshire District Council

Internal Audit

Strategic Plan 2006/07 – 2008/09

July 2006

AUDIT

1. Introduction

The role of internal audit

Internal audit provides an independent and objective opinion to the Council on the control environment comprising risk management, control and governance by evaluating its effectiveness in achieving the Council's objectives.

This assurance is designed to assist the Council both in ensuring that a robust and effective control environment is in place, and in preparing the annual statement on internal control.

The purpose of the strategic plan

This plan sets out how we will generate our opinion to the Council on the control environment, and provides details of how we will plan, undertake and report on our work.

Our plan is set out as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: How we prioritise and plan our work
- Section 3: The areas we will review
- Section 4: The resources we have available
- Section 5: How we will follow up our work
- Section 6: How we can be contacted

2. How we prioritise and plan our work

Our planning

We plan our work on the basis of the level of risk to which the Council is exposed.

We focus our work on those areas where the Council is subject to the highest levels of risk.

Our work encompasses four areas of the Council's activities

- governance
- risk management
- internal control
- performance measurement.

Governance

Risk
management

Internal control

Performance
measurement

2. How we prioritise and plan our work

Governance

The function of governance is to ensure that the Council fulfils its overall purpose, achieves its intended outcomes for citizens and service users, and operates in an effective, efficient and ethical manner.

Good governance involves

- focusing on the Council's purpose and intended outcomes
- performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles
- promoting and demonstrating values for the whole organisation
- developing the capacity and capability of the Council to be effective
- taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk
- engaging stakeholders and making accountability real.

We review the impact on governance at every stage of our work. In addition to this, we undertake periodic reviews of the Council's high level governance mechanisms.

Governance

Risk
management

Internal control

Performance
measurement

2. How we prioritise and plan our work

Risk management

Risk can be defined as the existence of more than one possible outcome. Risk management is the extent to which the Council identifies the opportunities and threats arising from the existence of risk and takes appropriate action.

We review the Council's risk management arrangements in two ways.

Firstly, we undertake periodic reviews of the mechanisms in place within the Council to identify, assess and manage risk at both strategic and operational levels.

Secondly, we review on a rolling basis the action that the Council is taking to address the strategic risks that it has identified, i.e. those that could prevent the Council's high level objectives from being achieved.

Governance

Risk
management

Internal control

Performance
measurement

2. How we prioritise and plan our work

Internal control

The Council operates a number of streams of financial transactions, incorporating both the receipt and the payment of funds. These include

- receipt of council tax and national non-domestic rates
- receipt of grants and other funding
- receipt of payment for services
- payments to suppliers
- payments to members and staff
- payment of benefits
- treasury management transactions.

We review the controls in place over such financial transactions streams, to ensure that they are identified, authorised, processed and recorded appropriately.

We will focus our work on both the design and the operation of the Council's internal financial control mechanisms.

Governance

Risk
management

Internal control

Performance
measurement

2. How we prioritise and plan our work

Performance measurement

Each year, the Council is required to measure its operational performance, using a range of indicators set out by the Government.

The Council's performance is then published, with this publication being subject to external audit.

We review the indicators compiled by the Council, prior to their publication. The aim of this review is to ensure that indicators have been calculated appropriately, and that sufficient evidence is in place to support the calculations.

Governance

Risk
management

Internal control

Performance
measurement

3. The areas we will review

Over the life of this plan, we will undertake reviews within each of the areas identified. This section sets out the specific areas that we will review in each financial year. The precise timing of our reviews will be agreed each year.

	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Governance	✓	-	✓
Risk management	-	✓	-
Strategic risk review 1	Access to recreation	Backbench members	IT systems
Strategic risk review 2	Workforce planning	Partnership working	Use of resources
Strategic risk review 3	Political control	Customer first	tbc
Strategic risk review 4	Contracts *	Regeneration schemes	tbc
Strategic risk review 5	Pay reform project	-	-
Internal financial control	✓	✓	✓
Performance measurement	✓	✓	✓
Contingency	✓	✓	✓

* Encompassing street cleansing, grounds maintenance and refuse collection

3. The areas we will review

This section sets out the areas that we will review in 2006/07, together with the timescales and senior management sponsors for our reviews.

	Timescale	Sponsor
Governance	early 2007	Ian Jamieson
Strategic risk review 1 – Access to recreation	October 2006	Ian Gallin
Strategic risk review 2 – Workforce planning	early 2007	Sharon Larkin
Strategic risk review 3 – Political control	February 2007	Andrew Pate/Nicola Mathiason
Strategic risk review 4 – Contracts *	September/October 2006	Tim Darsley
Strategic risk review 5 – Pay reform project	September 2006	Sharon Larkin
Internal financial control	January – March 2007	Ian Jamieson
Performance measurement	April/May 2007	Ian Gallin

* Encompassing street cleansing, grounds maintenance and refuse collection

4. The resources we have available

Our people

Our team is composed of dedicated public sector specialists, who have experience of both the Council and the wider local government sector as a whole.

Neil Hankinson, Manager, manages the delivery of our services and liaises with members and senior management.

Saverio DellaRocca, Senior Manager, ensures that our robust quality assurance mechanisms are adhered to.

Simon Perks, Assistant Manager, works with the Council and with the internal audit team across a range of operational and financial reviews.

The internal audit service is lead by Will Carr, Partner, who is responsible for the overall delivery of our services.

This core team is assisted by a range of audit and advisory staff from our public sector practice.

Resource input

We do not propose a specific number of days for each review, or for the delivery of our plan as a whole. Instead, we undertake to input the amount of resources required to complete our work to appropriate standards of quality and to provide the Council with the level of assurance required.

Neil
Hankinson



Saverio
DellaRocca



Simon Perks



5. How we will follow up our work

Our follow up procedures

As part of each review undertaken, we will agree with senior managers the action to be taken to address any weaknesses identified. Each agreed action will be allocated to a specific officer, and will have a deadline for implementation.

Our escalation procedures

Where actions are not implemented within the agreed timescale, we will discuss this with the appropriate senior manager in order to achieve a resolution.

6. How we can be contacted

By telephone

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By fax

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