



Report to Audit and Governance Committee

Date:	27 September 2023
Title:	Chief Auditor Annual Audit Opinion 2022/23
Relevant councillor(s):	N/A
Author and/or contact officer:	Maggie Gibb – Head of Business Assurance (& Chief Auditor)
Ward(s) affected:	N/A
Recommendations:	To note the Chief Auditor’s Annual Internal Audit Report for 2022/23 and the overall ‘reasonable’ opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s governance, risk management and internal control environment for 2022/23
Reason for decision:	N/A

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 To present to Members the Chief Internal Auditor annual assurance opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s internal control environment, risk management and corporate governance arrangements in place during the year.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) established in 2013 and revised in 2017 are the agreed professional standards for internal audit in local government. PSIAS was the Code under which the Internal Audit Service operated during 2022/2023. It sets out the requirement for the Chief Internal Auditor (“Chief Audit Executive”) to report to Senior Management and the Audit Committee (“The Board”) to help inform their opinions on the effectiveness of the Internal Control environment in operation within the Council.

- 2.2 The Chief Internal Auditor's annual internal audit opinion is based on an objective assessment of the framework of governance, risk management and control. Consulting services are advisory in nature and are generally performed at the specific request of the organisation, with the aim of improving governance, risk management and control but still contribute to the overall opinion however each review does not deliver individual assurance opinions.
- 2.3 The annual internal audit opinion contributes to the completion of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). It is specifically scheduled to be considered as part of the Council's annual review of governance and internal control.
- 2.4 No system of internal control can provide absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss, nor can internal audit give absolute assurance.
- 2.5 Based on the work performed during 2022/23, the Chief Auditor's experience, the cumulative knowledge gained through our ongoing liaison with officers, senior management, and the current climate in which the Council is operating, it is the Chief Auditor's opinion the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control, risk management and governance framework was of **reasonable assurance**.
- 2.6 The overall system of internal control facilitated the effective exercise of the Council's functions and provided an **unqualified** opinion regarding the effective, efficient and economic exercise of the Council's functions for 2022/23.
- 2.7 Appendix 1 (**to follow**) provides the basis for the Chief Auditor's opinion and details the work carried out during 2022/23 to support the conclusion of reasonable assurance.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 N/A.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 None.

5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 None.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 N/A.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

7.1 N/A.

8. Next steps and review

8.1 None.

9. Background papers

9.1 2022/23 Business Assurance Strategy (incl. Internal Audit Plan).

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

