

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

7 SEPTEMBER 2017

PROGRESS ON 2017/18 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

Report of the Head of Internal Audit

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the progress made to date in delivering the 2017/18 Internal Audit Plan and any developments likely to impact on the Plan throughout the remainder of the financial year.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members approved the 2017/18 Audit Plan on 22 June 2017. The total number of planned audit days for 2017/18 is 1,134 (plus 956 days for other work including counter fraud and information governance). The performance target for Veritau is to deliver 93% of the agreed Audit Plan.
- 2.2 This report provides details of how work on the 2017/18 Audit Plan is progressing.

3.0 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN PROGRESS BY 31 JULY 2017

- 3.1 The internal audit performance targets for 2017/18 were set by the County Council's client officer. Progress against these performance targets, as at 31 July 2017, is detailed in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 Work is ongoing to complete the agreed programme of work. It is anticipated that the 93% target for the year will be exceeded by the end of April 2018 (the cut off point for 2017/18 audits). **Appendix 2** provides details of the final reports issued in the period. A further 5 audit reports have been issued but remain in draft and fieldwork is underway with other scheduled audits.

Contingency and Counter Fraud Work

- 3.3 Veritau continues to handle cases of suspected fraud or malpractice. Such assignments are carried out in response to issues raised by staff or members of the public via the Whistleblower Hotline, or as a result of management raising concerns. Since the start of the current financial year, 11 cases of suspected fraud or malpractice have been referred to Veritau for investigation. Two of these are internal fraud cases, one relates to social care and four are external fraud. A further four cases relate to applications for school places. A number of these investigations are still ongoing.

Information Governance

- 3.4 Veritau's Information Governance Team (IGT) continues to handle a significant number of information requests submitted under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts. The number of FOI requests received between 1 April 2017 and 31 July 2017 is 420 compared with 422 requests received during the corresponding period in 2016/17. The IGT is currently exceeding the performance response target of 95% for 2017/18 with approximately 97.51% of requests so far being answered within the statutory 20 day deadline. The IGT also coordinates the County Council's subject access requests (SARs) and has received 58 such requests between 1 April 2017 and 31 July 2017.¹
- 3.5 Veritau is continuing to assist with the implementation of the County Council's information governance framework (including the update of information asset registers, preparation of data sharing agreements, data breach reporting and investigation, and the provision of advice and training). As part of this, Veritau auditors also continue to undertake a programme of unannounced audit visits to County Council premises in order to assess staff awareness of the need to secure personal and sensitive information.

Variations to the 2017/18 Audit Plan

- 3.6 All proposed variations to the agreed Audit Plan arising as the result of emerging issues and/or requests from directorates are subject to a Change Control process. Where the variation exceeds 5 days then the change must be authorised by the client officer. Any significant variations will then be communicated to the Audit Committee for information. The following variations have been authorised since the plan was approved. The variations follow discussions with management and reflect changes in current priorities:

Review of Foundation Housing contract	+5 days
Contingency (balance nil)	-5 days
Net change to plan	nil

Follow Up of Agreed Actions

- 3.7 Veritau follow up all agreed actions on a regular basis, taking account of the timescales previously agreed with management for implementation. A new escalation procedure has been introduced to formalise the reporting process in the event that agreed actions are not implemented or management fail to provide adequate information to enable an assessment to be made. At this stage in the year, there are no actions which have needed to be escalated. On the basis of the follow up work undertaken during the year to date, the Head of Internal Audit is therefore satisfied with the progress that has been made by management to implement previously agreed actions necessary to address identified control weaknesses.

¹ The processing of SARs was changed in 2016/17. Requests were previously answered by individual directorates.

4.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

4.1 Members are asked to note the progress made in delivering the 2017/18 Internal Audit programme of work and the variations agreed by the client officer.

Report prepared and presented by Max Thomas, Head of Internal Audit

Max Thomas
Head of Internal Audit
Veritau Limited
County Hall
Northallerton

7 July 2017

Background Documents: Relevant audit reports kept by Veritau at 50 South Parade, Northallerton.

PROGRESS AGAINST 2017/18 PERFORMANCE TARGETS (AS AT 31/7/2017)

Indicator	Milestone	Position at 31/7/2017
To deliver 93% of the agreed Internal Audit Plan	93% by 30/4/18	26.26%
To achieve a positive customer satisfaction rating of 95%	95% by 31/3/18	100%
To ensure 95% of Priority 1 recommendations made are agreed	95% by 31/3/18	0%
To ensure 95% of FOI requests are answered within the Statutory deadline of 20 working days	95% by 31/3/18	97.51%

FINAL 2017/18 AUDIT REPORTS ISSUED TO DATE

Audit Area	Directorate	Overall Opinion
Local Growth Fund - grant audit (chargeable)	BES	No opinion
Growth Hub – grant audit (chargeable)	BES	No opinion