

Audit Committee
26th September 2025
Public Questions and Responses

From: Mr John Palmer

re "Internal Audit Performance 2025/26", agenda item 11, Appendix B

Given the Financial Emergency declared by Cabinet on 10 September, is Audit and Governance Committee alarmed to see that internal audit work on Behaviour-Based Safety on "Budget management" and "Debt recovery" has yet to be completed?

Surely these were ultimate priorities from May onwards?

Response:

Thank you for your question regarding the internal audit work, specifically in the areas of Budget Management and Debt Recovery, and its alignment with the Council's declared Financial Emergency on 10th September.

The Audit and Governance Committee recognises the critical importance of these areas, particularly in the context of the Council's financial position. The internal audit plan for 2025/26 was developed using a risk-based approach, which included full engagement with the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, and the Section 151 Officer. The timing of individual audits is agreed between the Internal Audit team and Service Area and whilst both of these audits are currently in progress it would not have been possible to start them earlier in the financial year due to the availability of key staff during the closure of the 2024/25 accounts. These are not the only audits that will contribute to the Committee's oversight of the Council's financial arrangements, reliance is placed on audits complete in the previous year and other audits already completed and in progress in the 2025/26 plan year.

Whilst Internal Audit play a vital role in providing independent assurance on the effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control, they are one part of the much broader assurance framework of the Council. Operational management are responsible for delivering services and own and manage the process and risks in their service area. Oversight functions such as Risk Management, Scrutiny and Legal Services provide support and another form of assurance. In addition to all those listed, External Audit provide independent assurance through the audit of the financial statements and their value for money assessment.

The Committee is not complacent and continues to monitor the delivery of the audit plan closely. Updates on progress, including any delays or rescheduling, are regularly reviewed to ensure that the internal control environment remains robust and responsive to the Council's financial challenges.