



Subject:	Annual Report and Review of the Audit and Risk Panel
Date:	23 June 2017
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources and Deputy Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Andrew Harrison, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS)

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The Audit and Risk Panel is constituted as a working group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. The purpose of the Panel is to provide an independent assurance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework and associated control environment. The Panel also oversees the Council's financial reporting process.
1.2	The purpose of this report is to provide a summary to Committee of the key issues that have been considered and discussed by the Panel during the 2016/17 financial year, the assurances received and the areas requiring attention and present minutes of the last meeting of the Panel for approval.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the summary of the work of the Panel during 2016/17 as set out at Section 3 below. • Approve the minutes of the Audit & Risk Panel of 13 June 2017.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Summary of the work of the Audit and Risk Panel in 2016/2017</p> <p>During 2016/17 the Panel met 5 times (including a training session at Belfast Castle).</p>
3.2	<p>The Panel has considered audit plans and issues arising from audit activity, such as the findings, assurance levels and recommendations arising from audit work and the progress being made to implement audit recommendations. It also received regular updates on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council's financial position, as set out in its financial statements • reports from the Council's external auditors • risk management • business continuity • fraud, financial irregularity and whistleblowing investigations • governance related matters • financial control • health and safety • staff attendance.
3.3	<p>The key assurances that the Panel has received on are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council's financial statements and annual governance statement, as prepared by the Director of Finance and Resources and his team; this provided a management assurance on the Council's financial position • the audited accounts and the associated external audit annual letters for 2015/16 (providing an opinion on the accounts) and report to those charged with governance (setting out control issues arising from the annual external audit), as prepared and presented by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. This provided an external assurance on the Council's financial position for 2015/16. (The accounts for 2016/17 are in the process of being audited).

<p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Service’s annual assurance statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s risk management, control and governance arrangements, based on the findings of audit work completed throughout the year. <p>Where areas for improvement have been identified these have been reported and implementation of agreed recommendations is actively monitored and reported back to the Panel. The Panel has, on occasions, raised issues where either audit reports have identified significant issues or progress against recommendations has not been satisfactory, with Directors asked, where necessary, to attend the Panel and provide further explanation. The key areas considered during 2016/17 have included planning, waste management and procurement, where relevant Directors and senior managers have attended Panel meetings and provided information on current arrangements and improvement plans.</p> <p>The Audit and Risk Panel have also received updates during the year on the Council’s risk management arrangements, including reports on the management of the Council’s key corporate risks. This process has been supplemented by direct reporting to Committees on their key risks.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Minutes of Audit & Risk Panel 13 June 2017</p>