



Subject:	Audit and Risk Panel Report and Minutes of Meeting of 8th March 2022
Date:	25th March 2022
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, ext. 6085
Contact Officer:	Claire O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services ext. 4643

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
<i>After Committee Decision</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>After Council Decision</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Sometime in the future</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Never</i>	<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 purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a summary of the key issues which were discussed by the Audit and Risk Panel at its meeting on 8th March 2022 and to present the minutes of that meeting for approval.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the key issues arising from the meeting of 8th March and approve the minutes of that meeting.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	Key Issues
3.1.1	<u>Internal Audit</u>
	<p>The Panel agreed the internal audit strategy and plan for 22/23 which will assist the Council in meeting statutory obligations in relation to internal control, risk management and good governance.</p>
	<p><u>Key Reports</u></p>
3.1.2	<p>The Panel noted the progress being made to deliver the annual audit plan for 21/22, with six audits / reviews finalised in the period. After considering the update on the review of the Asset Management System, the Board requested an update report from management on the progress being made to improve the project management arrangements for their next meeting. Regarding a previous audit of Property Maintenance, the Panel received an update from management on the progress being made to implement the recommendations arising.</p>
3.1.3	<p>The Panel received an update on the annual review and update of the Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment and the completion of the 20/21 National Fraud Initiative.</p>
3.1.4	<p>The Panel considered the corporate risk dashboard which provided an analysis and update on the progress being made to manage the 24 risks that are considered by management to present the greatest threat to the delivery of corporate priorities and / or compliance with key statutory requirements. The Panel agreed the wording of the three new Belfast Region City Deal risks around Belfast Stories, the Digital Strand and Programme Management / Accountable Body. The Panel also agreed to close the corporate risk on Neighbourhood Planning and agreed changes to the risk rating for the corporate risks on the council's Financial Position and the Resilience Strategy.</p>
3.1.5	<p>The Panel noted the quarterly assurances provided by members of the corporate management team regarding compliance with risk management and internal control processes. The Panel was also provided with a progress update on the review of the business continuity plans for the critical services and an update on work that is underway to improve the council's resilience to a cyber-attack.</p>
3.1.6	<p>The Panel received an update on the progress being made to implement audit recommendations, with 28% of audit recommendations implemented in the period. A further exercise will be undertaken in October / November 2022.</p>
3.1.7	<p>The Panel also received quarter 3 reports on corporate health and safety, absence management and performance improvement and a progress update on the action plan in relation to the report from Peter Coll QC of his independent investigation relating to events at Roselawn Cemetery on 30th June, 2020.</p>

<p>3.1.8</p> <p>3.1.9</p> <p>3.1.10</p>	<p><u>Audit and Risk Panel</u></p> <p>The Panel agreed its updated terms of reference, which reflects their new role in relation to considering the effectiveness of the recently established Standards and Business Committee as part of the annual governance review.</p> <p><u>Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)</u></p> <p>The Panel considered the NIAO Strategy for the audit of the financial statements for 21/22. In addition, the Panel considered the key messages in the Local Government Auditor’s Report (LGA) which summarises the results of audit work undertaken in the year to 31 March 2020 in councils across Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The Panel also considered the Audit and Assessment Reports for both 2020-21 and 2021-22 issued by the LGA which provides an unqualified opinion on the council’s performance arrangements and the discharge of performance improvement and reporting duties</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> None</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None known at this time.</p>
	<p>Document Attached</p>
	<p>Minutes of Audit and Risk Panel 8th March 2022</p>