

REPORT TO: Audit Committee	DATE 16 September 2014	CLASSIFICATION Unrestricted	REPORT NO.
REPORT OF: Corporate Director, Resources		Quarterly Assurance Report	
ORIGINATING OFFICER(S): Head of Risk Management and Audit		Ward(s) Affected: N/A	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report summarises the work of Internal Audit for the period June 2014 to August 2014.
- 1.2. The report sets out the assurance rating of each audit finalised in the period and gives an overall assurance rating. The quarterly assurance report feeds into the annual internal audit opinion which will be produced at the end of the financial year.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. The Audit Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and to take account of the assurance opinion assigned to the systems reviewed during the period.

3. Background

- 3.1. From April 2005, we have assigned each review one of four ratings, depending upon the level of our findings. The ratings we use are: -

Assurance	Definition
Full	There is a sound system of control designed to achieve the system objectives, and the controls are being consistently applied;
Substantial	While there is a basically sound system there are weaknesses which put some of the control objectives at risk or there is evidence that the level of non-compliance with some of the controls may put some of the system objectives at risk;
Limited	Weakness in the system of controls are such as to put the system objectives at risk or the level of non-compliance puts the system objectives at risk;
Nil	Control is generally weak leaving the system open to significant error or abuse, or significant non-compliance with basic controls leaves the system open to error or abuse.

- 3.2. In addition, each review is also considered in terms of its significance to the authority in line with the previously agreed methodology. The significance of each auditable area is assigned, based on the following factors: -

Significance	Definition
Extensive	High Risk, High Impact area including Fundamental Financial Systems, Major Service activity, Scale of Service in excess of £5m.
Moderate	Medium impact, key systems and / or Scale of Service £1m- £5m.
Low	Low impact service area, Scale of Service below £1m.

4. Overall Audit Opinion

- 4.1. Overall, based on work performed in the year to date, I am able to give a substantial level of assurance over the systems and controls in place within the authority.

5. Overview of finalised audits

5.1. Since the last Assurance Report that was presented to the Audit Committee in June 2014, eighteen final reports have been issued. The findings of these audits are presented as follows:

- Chart 1 below summarises the assurance rating assigned by the level of significance of each report.
- Appendix 1 provides a list of the audits organised by assurance rating and significance.
- Appendix 2 provides a brief summary of each audit.

5.2. **Members are invited to consider the following:**

- The overall level of assurance provided (para 5.3-5.5).
- The findings of individual reports. Members may wish to focus on those with a higher level of significance and those assigned Nil or Limited assurance. These are clearly set out in Appendix 1.

5.3. The chart ranks the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in place. This assurance rating will feed into Internal Audit's overall assessment of the adequacy of governance arrangements that is required as part of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2005 and the 2013 Public Sector Internal Audit Standards – Applying the IIA International Standards to the UK Public Sector.

Chart 1 Analysis of Assurance Levels

SUMMARY		Assurance				
		Full	Substantial	Limited	Nil	Total
Significance	Extensive	-	8	3	-	11
	Moderate	-	5	2	-	7
	Low	-	-	-	-	-
Total Numbers		-	13	5	-	18
Total %		-	72%	28%	-	100%

5.4. From the table above it can be seen that of the eleven finalised audits which focused on high risk or high value areas; eight were assigned Substantial Assurance and three were assigned Limited assurance. A further seven audits

were of moderate significance and of these five were assigned Substantial Assurance and two were assigned Limited Assurance.

- 5.5. Overall, 72% of audits resulted in an adequate assurance (substantial or full). The remaining 28% of audits have an inadequate assurance rating (limited or nil).

Performance Indicators

- 5.6. At the start of the year, three performance indicators were formulated to monitor the delivery of the Internal Audit service as part of the Monitoring process. The table below shows the actual and targets for each indicator for the period:-

Performance measure	Target	Actual
Percentage of Audit Plan completed up to July 2014	25%	21%
Percentage of Priority 1 Audit Recommendations implemented by Auditees at six monthly follow up audit stage	100%	93% 14 out of 15
Percentage of Priority 2 Audit Recommendations implemented by Auditees at six monthly follow up audit stage	95%	55% 6 out of 11

The table above shows that the proportion of internal audit work completed to July 2014 is below target.

- 5.7. The percentage of priority 1 recommendations implemented at the follow up stage was 93%, whereas the percentage of priority 2 recommendations was 55%. Details of all priority 1 and 2 recommendations not implemented are set out in Appendix 3. Further to the usual actions, meetings are being convened with key officers to seek assurances that agreed recommendations will be implemented promptly.

6. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer

- 6.1 Any financial implications arising from this report are contained within the body of the report.

7. Legal Comments

- 7.1. The Council is required to ensure that it has a sound system of internal control that facilitates effective exercise of the Council's functions and includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Council is also required to maintain an effective system of internal audit of its system of internal control in

accordance with proper practices. One of the functions of the Audit Committee under the Council's Constitution is to review internal audit findings. The consideration by the Audit Committee of this report is consistent with the Council's obligations and is within the Committee's functions.

8. One Tower Hamlets

- 8.1. There are no specific one Tower Hamlets considerations.
- 8.2. There are no specific Anti-Poverty issues arising from this report.

9. Risk Management Implications

- 9.1. This report highlights risks arising from weaknesses in controls that may expose the Council to unnecessary risk. The risks highlighted in this report require management responsible for the systems of control to take steps so that effective governance can be put in place to manage the authority's exposure to risk.

10. Sustainable Action for a Greener Environment (SAGE)

- 10.1. There are no specific SAGE implications.