

Agenda Item 12.

TITLE	Progress Report on Shared Audit & Investigation Service
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Audit Committee on 23 June 2015
WARD	None Specific
GENERAL MANAGER	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Improvement Services

OUTCOME

Internal Audit and Investigation services to Wokingham Borough Council are being delivered under a joint agreement between Wokingham Borough Council and The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, achieving economies of scale and savings for both authorities.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is asked to note the progress made by the Shared Service during its first six months of operation.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The new shared service commenced on 1 October 2014 for internal audit services with investigations joining on 1 December 2014.

The service is hosted and owned by Wokingham Borough Council and is regulated through a services agreement and Partnership Board.

The focus during the first six months has included:-

- Establishing a single management structure under the Service Manager, Shared Audit and Investigation, with 7 audit staff transferred from RBWM on 1 October 2014;
- Merging two teams to become 'One Team' and addressing cultural / process changes.
- Completing approximately 90% of the agreed WBC and RBWM Audit Plans, whilst going through the move to become a Shared Service;
- Improving, streamlining and aligning processes used to deliver the audit services through a Lean review resulting in efficiencies;
- Placing reliance, where possible, on other assurance mechanisms to inform audit work, thereby making best use of audit resource.
- Building reputation for the new Shared Service.
- Deploying audit staff across both council's to share leaner methodologies;
- Previous year's backlog of work cleared thereby ensuring a good starting position for delivery of the 2015/16 Audit Plans for both authorities;
- Ensuring sufficient audit resources were in place to complete the delivery of both Council's 2014/15 Internal Audit Plans whilst also completing planned audit work for Bracknell Forest Council;
- Transferring Corporate Investigation cases from RBWM on 1 December 2014,

- with no staff transferred to WBC from RBWM;
- Managing the secure migration of WBC and RBWM benefit fraud cases to the Department of Work & Pensions, ensuring data security and protection requirements were met;
- Preparing both RBWM and WBC Internal Audit Plans and Fraud Response Plans for 2015/16;
- Secured additional Investigations work for Oxfordshire County Council and Buckinghamshire County Council;
- Successfully recruiting to Senior Auditor, Senior Investigator and Investigator roles within the shared service. This brings the Corporate Investigation Team to full compliment.
- Achieving the 2015/16 financial savings as set out in the business case signed off by the Executive in June 2014.

The focus during the next period is as follows:-

- Greater service resilience
- Improved skills development
- Improved career development
- Improved recruitment & retention (especially compared to operating as a single authority service)
- Improved opportunity to generate additional business from other internal audit and corporate investigation contracts
- Greater economies of scale
- Reduced administrative costs
- Building a Business Case to secure further commercial opportunities.

Analysis of Issues

See above, which will be supplemented by verbal updates at the meeting from the Service Manager, Shared Audit & Investigation Service and the Head of Governance & Improvement Services.

The detailed performance of the Shared Audit and Investigation Service in respect of the 2014/15 WBC Audit and Corporate Investigation Plans during the past period is set out in a separate report on this agenda.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A
List of Background Papers
Shared Service Business Case – Executive, June 2014

Contact Andrew Moulton	Service Governance and Improvement Services
Telephone No 07747 777298	Email Andrew.Moulton@wokingham.gov.uk
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