



**STOCKPORT**  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

# **Internal Audit Service**

## **Internal Audit Plan 2024-25**

**Issued by:** John Pearsall  
(Head of Internal Audit, Risk and Insurance)

**Distribution:** Audit Committee  
Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)

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## Executive Summary

1. The requirement to deliver robust, innovative, and agile independent assurance continues as the Council delivers on its priorities in 2024/25 and beyond, via the Council Plan, supported by the complementary One Stockport Borough Plan. Longer term assurance will also be required as the Council seeks to deliver on ambitious medium- and longer-term plans.
2. As in more recent years the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 has been developed through close liaison with both the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Senior Management to identify and evaluate key areas of risk. The Audit Universe has been updated and is continually risk assessed and the resultant plan has allowed for appropriate coverage of key risk services so as to ensure that an independent opinion can be given on the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes at the end of the financial year. This is delivered through the Head of Internal Audit Annual Opinion and Report.
3. The plan is deliberately designed to be fluid and agile and provides significant contingency and in-built flexibility. This allows for changes to current identified key risks through to new and emerging risks, which will need to be evaluated during the course of the financial year. Flexibility will once again be a key attribute in delivering a value-added plan to the Council's key stakeholders.
4. The approved 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan will be revised on a six-monthly basis to take account of the Council's overall continuing changing business priorities and emerging risks currently posed. The aim is to target resources quickly and efficiently to emerging risk areas via robust risk management arrangements. As in previous years, any changes to the plan will be both discussed and reported to both CLT and the Audit Committee through the 2024/25 financial year.
5. In addition, new areas have, and will continue to be considered where the scope and requirement of audit resource is not yet fully defined resulting in an additional allocation of flexible resource available for each directorate to address this. This includes, but is not solely restricted to, the MTFP Programme of Reform and the transformation projects that underpin this.

# 1. Introduction

1.1 This document summarises the results of Internal Audit's planning work. It sets out the details of the:

- Responsibilities and scope of Internal Audit.
- Internal Audit Planning Methodology.
- Characteristics of the 2024-25 Internal Audit Plan.
- Resourcing and delivery of the Council's Internal Audit service.
- Proposed programme of work for 2024-25 (the Audit Plan).

1.2 The Audit Plan for 2024-25 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The PSIAS represent mandatory best practice for all internal audit service providers in the public sector.

1.3 The Council has adopted the PSIAS definition of internal auditing:

*'Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.'*

1.4 In accordance with PSIAS, the mission of internal audit is to 'enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight'. The work of internal audit is a key element in delivering the Council's strategic priority of reform and governance, but also supports the Council in achieving all the aims and objectives set out in the Stockport Council Plan 2024-25 and the One Stockport Borough Plan.

1.5 The PSIAS require that the Internal Audit Service is delivered and developed in accordance with the Internal Audit Charter. The Internal Audit Charter provides the functional and organisational framework in which Internal Audit operates to best serve Stockport Council and to meet its professional obligations under the PSIAS. In addition, the PSIAS require the Head of Internal Audit, Risk and Insurance to prepare an annual risk-based internal audit plan, which takes into account the requirement to produce an annual internal audit opinion. This opinion statement is a key contributor to the Annual Governance Statement, which the Chief Executive and the Leader of The Council are required to sign off alongside the final accounts each year.

- 1.6 The work of internal audit is a key element in delivering the Council's strategic priority of reform and governance, but also supports the Council in achieving all the aims and objectives set out in the One Stockport Plan and the Stockport Council Plan 2024-25. The PSIAS require that the Head of Internal Audit, Risk and Insurance must "establish risk-based plans to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the organisation's goals". They refer to the need for the plan to reflect the assurance framework, risk management arrangements and input from management and "the Board".

## 2. Responsibilities and Scope

### Responsibilities of internal audit

2.1 The internal audit function is responsible for:

- Reviewing and developing the Council's governance processes. Specifically, this includes:
  - Promoting appropriate ethics and values within the Council.
  - Supporting effective organisational performance management and accountability.
  - Communicating risk and control information to appropriate areas of the organisation.
  - Coordinating the activities of, and communicating information among, the Audit Committee, external audit, internal audit and management.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the Council's risk management processes and contributing to their improvement.
- Assisting in the maintenance and development of an effective control environment by providing robust independent assurance over its operation.

2.2 In order to fulfil this requirement, Internal Audit is independent of all the activities of the Council. Internal Audit has the right of access to all information and records held by the Council and may seek explanations on any matters from any officer or Member of the Authority.

### Responsibilities of management

2.3 The establishment and maintenance of adequate control systems is the responsibility of management. Recommendations made by internal audit can reduce risk and improve systems of control. However, the implementation of audit recommendations cannot eliminate risk entirely.

## **Responsibilities of the Audit Committee**

2.4 In regard to internal audit, the Audit Committee is responsible for:

- Approving, but not directing, internal audit's strategy, plan and monitoring performance.
- Reviewing summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising and seeking assurance that action has been taken where necessary.
- Receiving and considering the Head of Internal Audit's annual report.

## **Responsibilities for fraud prevention and detection**

2.5 The primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with management. Management's responsibilities include creating an environment where fraud is not tolerated, identifying fraud risks, and taking appropriate actions to ensure that controls are in place to prevent and detect fraud.

2.6 It is not the role or responsibility of internal audit to detect fraud. However, internal audit will evaluate the potential for the occurrence of fraud in each assignment and how the Council manages the risk of fraud.

## **Scope of internal audit activities**

2.7 The scope of internal audit work includes:

- The entire control environment of the Council, comprising financial and non-financial systems.
- Reviewing controls that protect the interests of the Council in its dealings with partnerships in which the Council has an involvement.

2.8 Internal audit may also provide assurance services to parties outside the Council with the prior agreement of Audit Committee.

### 3. Internal Audit Planning Methodology

3.1 The approach to audit planning for 2024/25 has been conducted on a risk-based approach in line with the requirements of the PSIAS and has been prepared following consultation with key stakeholders including senior management and Heads of Service to establish the key current and emerging risk areas faced across the Council. Further consideration has been given to:

- priority areas suggested by CLT, Senior and Middle Management.
- a review of the 2024/25 Council Plan and the One Stockport Borough Plan.
- a review of current strategic, portfolio, project and operational risks, in particular the areas identified within the Corporate Risk Register.
- other existing sources of assurance (for example, external audit, external regulators like Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission and other “second line of defence” assurance like risk management and compliance functions).
- results of previous internal audit work and cumulative audit knowledge and experience.
- known changes to the Council’s business, operations, programs, systems and controls.
- the requirement to ensure sufficient and wide-ranging coverage in order to provide a robust annual audit opinion.
- planned work from the 2023-24 Audit Plan that is still considered a priority.

### 4. Characteristics of the 2024-25 Internal Audit Plan

#### **Alignment of the Audit Plan to the Council’s Corporate Priorities and Corporate Risks**

4.1 The Audit Plan is presented in a way that shows how each planned review aligns with the current Council’s Corporate Priorities and corporate risks. Clearly a number of reviews will contribute to more than one priority/corporate risk. For presentational purposes the reviews have been listed under the priority/risk that is considered most clearly linked to that review area.

#### **Budgeted time allocations**

4.2 A budgeted time allocation has been set for each assignment included in the Audit Plan. It is accepted that the exact resource requirement for each assignment cannot be forecast with certainty. The plan therefore represents the best estimate of the way in which the Council’s internal audit resources will be deployed. The overall objective is to deliver the plan in line with approved Key Performance Indicators and to provide sufficient overall assurance to support the Annual Head of Internal Audit Opinion Report. CIPFA have provided recent guidance on this aspect and will be considered as part of this Annual Report.

### **Flexibility to incorporate emerging risks**

- 4.3 **The Audit Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis taking into account the current and expected future changes to the overall risk appetite of the Council and this will help to support the future direction of the Audit Plan by identifying high risk areas that require more immediate independent assurance. All changes and updates will be reported to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Audit Committee on a regular basis to allow for discussion and challenge on any proposed changes to the plan.**

## **5 Resourcing and Delivery of Internal Audit Plan**

### **Resource requirements**

- 5.1 The level of resource required to deliver an effective internal audit service to the Council has been assessed based on the need to provide adequate audit coverage of the Council's:
- Risk management and governance arrangements.
  - Front line services.
  - Support services.
  - Procurement and contract management activity.
  - Information management and data arrangements.
  - Key financial systems.
  - Anti-fraud and corruption arrangements.
  - Schools.
- 5.2 Account has also been taken of the need to be able to resource:
- Unplanned work which may arise during the year.
  - Follow up work to provide assurance that previously agreed recommendations are implemented.
  - Provision of advice and consultancy to internal customers.

- 5.3 The 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan will be managed with a strategic lead and overview from the Head of Internal Audit, Risk and Insurance, complemented by an experienced and suitably qualified in-house team of five full-time auditors, one part-time auditor. Further resource around risk management, counter fraud, insurance, claims handling and highways inspections is now fully embedded within the wider Internal Audit, Risk Management and Insurance service. This helps to deliver opportunities of cross utilisation and flexible use of skills between the teams, as well as providing a source of flexible resource to assist in the delivery of the Audit Plan. Further work is currently ongoing with regards to supporting the team to deliver counter fraud reviews.
- 5.4 A resource calculation has determined the net number of days available to undertake audit work in the year 2024/25 as 705 days. This is based on:
- 30% of Head of Audit, Risk and Insurance resources representing the time spent on strategic audit management.
  - A current internal audit structure of one CSS Audit Manager (60% of available time, 20% management time and 20% training time), one CSS Audit and Risk Manager (40% of available time, 40% of risk management time and 20% of management time) supported by two full time CSS Senior Officers, one full time CSS Officer, and one part-time CSS Officer (80% available time).
- 5.5 The actual days required in the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 is 820 days. The total net resource (725 days) was deducted from actual days required in the Plan and a difference of (95) days is evident. The difference (shortfall) will be made up by a combination of the following innovative approaches: -
- Development of data analytics as part of the continuous auditing approach and new Data Academy training.
  - Less days allocated to specific individual audit reviews (where specific risk environments are assessed as lower).
  - Further opportunities for joint working with Mersey Internal Audit Agency on integrated health and social care assurance work.
  - Carry forward uncompleted work to the 2024/25 Audit Plan.

5.6 The resource calculations have been re-assessed in line with the changing work programme and these are set out in the table below.

2024/25	
<b>Resources available</b>	
Total available days <sup>1</sup>	1170
Less: Non-Chargeable time <sup>2</sup>	(190)
Less: Consultancy & Assurance work ( <i>Appendix B</i> )	(265)
Plus: Days purchased from Salford Computer Audit Services	10
<b>Net Days available for SMBC Internal Audit</b>	<b>725</b>
<b>Resources required</b>	
<b>Total planned days in the Internal Audit Plan</b>	<b>820</b>
<b>Difference of Resource Available to Resource Required</b>	<b>95</b>

*Note 1: After deduction of annual leave, bank holidays and sickness provision*

*Note 2: Staff training, administration, team & SMT meetings, external meetings.*

*Note 3: Difference of Resource Available to Resource Required (previous years) – (67) 20/21, (45) 21/22, (115) 22/23 and (70) 23/24.*

## 6 Work Programme for 2024-25

6.1 The table below shows the revised planned days against each corporate outcome. Details are set out in Appendix A.

Area of review	2024/25 Planned Days
<b>Council Plan key priorities</b>	
Investment, regeneration and creating jobs	40
Education, Work and Skills	140
Wellbeing, prevention and neighbourhoods	55
Supporting those who need it most	145
Enabling programmes	50
In support of key priorities	
Other work in support of ALL priorities	345
<b>Other</b>	
Follow-ups	20
Completion of 2023-24 work	25
<b>Total Planned Days</b>	<b>820</b>

6.2 The Council continues to face significant current and emerging risks to the achievement of its overall objectives as highlighted in the Council Plan 2024/25. The inbuilt flexibility in the plan will allow for audit resources to be reallocated quickly and effectively to support work programmes and projects at the request of Corporate Leadership Team. These key risks include:-

- Financial resilience (MTFP)/Section 114.
- Homelessness/temporary accommodation.
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) backlogs.
- SEND Transport costs.
- Management of Council buildings/estate and RAAC.
- Academisation/traded services.
- Integrated Care System (ICS), (Health& Social Care Bill).

## 1. Investment, regeneration and creating jobs

Audit Review	Days	Risks context	Planned coverage	Priority/ Corporate Risk
Stockport Exchange Development & Regeneration	10	<p>Stockport Exchange is a major regeneration scheme and represents substantial investment by the Council to help encourage economic growth. Phase 4 is completed, and planning is underway for phase 5-7.</p> <p>The project due to its speculative nature and significant borrowings comes with high risks.</p>	We will continue to attend the established Project Board meetings to ensure key risks are discussed and managed.	High <b>CR11</b>
Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation	10	The MDC is an entity that is required by statute to complete a range of annual returns that are subject to external audit review and need to be filed by a deadline.	Completion of Internal Control and Annual Governance Arrangements reports.	Medium <b>CR11</b>
Markets & Underbanks Development & Regeneration	10	Ongoing regeneration scheme covering landmark area of the Borough.	Review of Heritage Fund arrangements and risk support as required.	Medium <b>CR11</b>
A34 Major Road Network (MRN) scheme	10	The A34 is a major road network within the borough of Stockport and a business case was developed to create a series of improvement works to increase capacity at key locations. The Government has approved funding for this scheme and there are strict requirements to comply with to ensure funding is received.	A review of the arrangements to comply with the DfT requirements and key business case criteria for the delivery of the A34 MRN scheme.	Medium <b>CR11</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>			

## 2. Education, Work and Skills

Audit Review	Days	Risks context	Planned coverage	Priority/ Corporate Risk
Schools	90	<p>The Council has nearly 100 schools that are responsible for setting their own budgets and managing their finances. The frequency of school audit visits is determined by a risk assessment based on audit assurance ratings, change in Head teacher and business manager, financial position and any known governance issues.</p>	<p>A standard audit programme has been developed for school audits, which is tailored to each school as required.</p> <p>15 establishments will be audited this year.</p> <p>This will also include time for following up agreed action plans.</p>	n/a
School absence management & exclusions	20	<p>We previously audited this area and issued a limited assurance opinion. Significant progress was made to improve the framework, restructuring of services and arrangements around improving school attendance.</p> <p>However, since then the pandemic has had an impact on school attendance and nationally school attendance is 87%. New guidance has been issued by the DfE on School Attendance and this remains a priority for the Council.</p>	<p>We will review the management and operational arrangements to ensure risks are appropriately managed.</p>	High <b>CR8</b>
Expanded Childcare Policy <i>(This is also priority 4)</i>	15	<p>A new programme of work is underway to support the introduction of the new expanded funding entitlements for working parents of children aged 9 months to 3 years. Also, for parents to have access to wrap around childcare for all school aged children commencing from September 2024.</p> <p>There are risks and challenges associated with this work programme.</p>	TBC.	Medium <b>CR8</b>
EHCP Governance <i>(This is also priority 4)</i>	15	<p>High demand, service under pressure, significant changes to systems and processes, financial issues.</p>	<p>We will review the governance and financial arrangements to minimise business risk around demand pressures and the costs associated with EHCPs.</p>	High <b>CR8</b>

### 3. Wellbeing, prevention and neighbourhoods

Audit Review	Days	Risks context	Planned coverage	Priority/ Corporate Risk
IT/ Technology in Libraries	15	If not effectively deployed, IT can be a potentially costly and sub-optimal customer experience.	A review looking at the use of technology within the library service in terms of both management of risks and development opportunities.	Low <b>CR1</b>
Arboriculture services (tree management)	15	Trees pose a risk to property and residents if not properly managed, especially if disease is widespread within the borough.	This review will look at how trees in the borough are surveyed for damage and disease and remedial action is managed.	High <b>CR12</b>
Community programmes (neighbourhood initiatives, warm spaces, refuge & migrant programmes) <i>(This also supports priority 4)</i>	15	A number of central government initiatives were launched with the Council being central to delivering this across the borough.	A review of how the Council has dealt with key government initiatives, ensured service users benefited from this and any risks appropriately mitigated.	Medium <b>CR4</b>
Cemeteries and Crematorium Operations	10	New in-house provision and transfer of contract from external supplier.	We will review the financial and operational arrangements over the management of the in-house service.  The Stockport Crematorium is returning under full Council control in February 2024. This review will look at how the service is administered now fully operated by the Council.	High <b>CR4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>			

## 4. Supporting those who need it most

Audit Review	Days	Risks context	Planned Coverage	Priority/ Corporate Risk
<b>Adults</b>				
VFM commissioning	15	Robust commissioning is essential for ensuring effective and efficient provision of care.	Looking at arrangements for effective and efficient commissioning and market management.	High <b>CR5</b>
Care Act compliance – Case recording	15	Will be key to demonstrate to CQC we have addressed any shortfalls in regard to CA duties around communicating with clients.	This will focus on end-to-end client journeys and ensuring the person’s “voice” is captured in various key documents on the case file and our work is communicated effectively with the client.	High <b>CR7</b>
Direct Payments	15	Identified by management as an area that needs a full understanding of how DPs are operating in practice following the new Policy from 2023.	Looking at the extent to which we have an effective strategy for delivery of Direct Payments to clients and operational arrangements in social work teams and Brokerage to deliver.	Medium <b>CR7</b>
DOLS –process for undertaking assessments on LAS	15	If not properly documented and managed DOLS can be an area of reputational and financial loss for the Council and have significant impact on affected residents.	Reviewing the effective implementation of new DOLS processes on LAS.	High <b>CR10</b>
Hospital Discharge Data	15	Accurate and timely data agreed by all parties is key to effective management of the discharge process.	Looking at the processes for preparing, reporting and actioning discharge data and interactions between NHS and SMBC staff and systems.	Medium <b>CR10</b>
Post hospital short term pathways	15	If improperly managed this can be a very expensive area for Adult Social Care.	The review will focus on the effective management and financial monitoring of short-term placements post hospital	Medium <b>CR10</b>

Audit Review	Days	Risks context	Planned Coverage	Priority/ Corporate Risk
			discharge ensuring it is a transparent process.	
<b>Children and Young People</b>				
Complex needs pathways for funding	15	High demand, more children presenting with complex needs, complexity of systems, processes and funding streams.	Provide independent assurance on effectiveness of new panel arrangements and decision-making processes.	High <b>CR8</b>
Complex safeguarding including Missing Children	15	Complex Safeguarding is an approach and term to describe a different way of working with children and families to address non-traditional safeguarding issues such as Serious Organised Crime and Child Criminal Exploitation, County Lines, Prevent, Modern Slavery including Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation.  There is a significant link between Sexual and Criminal Exploitation and children who go missing from home, care and education so this is a key risk.	A review of the operational and partnership working arrangements to ensure risks to children are properly mitigated.	High <b>CR10</b>
<b>All Ages</b>				
Homelessness	15	Costs of meeting our homelessness duty have increased from £150k in 2022/23 to over £800k in 2023/24 with demand forecast to increase further.	A review looking at the plans/strategies to meet or prevent the escalating demand and a a review of the controls in place to ensure any funding is appropriately validated.	High <b>CR4</b>
Supporting Families Programme	10	The Supporting Families Programme is a nationwide programme designed to assist troubled families who meet key criteria for support. A standards framework is in place which sets out how local authorities should identify and manage cases which attracts grant funding. Greater Manchester Combined Authority co-ordinates the grant funding and the assurance returns to DLUHC.	We will focus on the verification of the quality assurance and decision-making processes around case management.	Medium <b>CR4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>			

## 5. Enabling programmes

Area of Review	Days	Risks context	Planned Coverage	Priority/ Corporate Risk
Digital Strategy (incl Automation and Self Service)	20	<p>The Council has launched its Digital Strategy which is framed around three interdependent pillars – Digital Communities, Digital Place and Digital Council. This seeks to bring together the work undertaken across the organisation and borough around digital skills, economy, inclusion, tele-care and independence, data, robust technical architecture and 21<sup>st</sup> century customer expectations.</p> <p>This is an ambitious project and thus carries many risks to achieving the plans set out in the strategy.</p>	A review of the Council's arrangements to ensure the risks of not achieving the strategy are fully mitigated.	High <b>CR1</b>
STAR Procurement – Real Living Wage Arrangements	15	<p>The Council has recently been accepted as a member of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter. The Good Employment Charter recognises organisations who are committed to the wellbeing of their colleagues, by pledging to pay the real living wage, engaging staff in key decisions and endorsing fair and flexible working conditions. Membership of the Charter places a broad range of corporate responsibilities on the Council as an employer including RLWA and equal pay arrangements.</p>	<p>As agreed at recent STAR HoIA meeting.</p> <p>To review how key current and emerging risks are being managed. For example, the obligation for the Council to meet the increasing costs as a result of the RLW continues to increase MTFP forecast expenditure pressure. Furthermore, the Council also needs to consider the implication of the RLW increases on its own workforce and potential costs of this and ensuring existing spinal pay point differentials between different pay grades are maintained.</p>	Low <b>CR14</b>
Development planning services	15	<p>The Council has statutory duties regarding development planning including planning applications. Significant changes in structure and processes have taken place and procurement of a new ICT system will be considered in approximately 12 months' time.</p>	A review of key processes and systems with the view to providing support for the project to procure the new ICT system.	Medium <b>CR1</b>

## 6. In support of ALL priorities

Audit Review	Days	Risks context	Planned Coverage	Priority/ Corporate Risk
National Fraud Initiative	20	NFI matches data across organisations and systems to help public bodies identify anomalies which may signify fraudulent claims and transactions. The Council is required by law to participate in NFI.	Co-ordination and investigation of the data matches identified from the exercise.	High <b>CR2</b>
Counter fraud audit of Blue Badges	5	<p>The Blue Badge scheme is a national initiative to help disabled people to park close to their destination, either as a passenger or driver. It is a criminal offence to misuse the badge and doing so can lead to a £1,000 fine.</p> <p>Fraudulent use of Blue Badges prevents people in genuine need from accessing on-street parking where they need it most.</p>	Counter fraud of arrangements to detect and prosecute misuse of blue badges.	Medium <b>CR2</b>
Venue management	10	Stockport Events manages a number of properties across the borough and has been tasked with increasing income generation as part of the MTFP.	The audit will review the financial and operational arrangements over booking systems, collection of income, rota systems and payment of staff.	Medium <b>CR2</b>
Rental collection (I & D Key Properties)	10	The I & D Account is a ring-fenced account of the Council's significant investment properties and the Single Property Budget investment properties. It is designed to be self-financing. Since the pandemic, there has been a significant drop in income with some schemes making losses. The MTFP now includes an allocation per year to make up anticipated shortfalls on the I & E Account.	A review of the financial and operational management arrangements for the key properties within the I & E account including any recovery plans.	High <b>CR2</b>
Commercial rental income collection	10	The Council maintains an extensive list of properties that it lets out. This brings in approximately £15million income a year. There are risks associated with the	A follow up review and focus on financial and operational arrangements.	High <b>CR2</b>

<b>Audit Review</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Risks context</b>	<b>Planned Coverage</b>	<b>Priority/ Corporate Risk</b>
		existing systems used for collecting income and the service is currently looking for replacement systems.		
Performance Management	20	Revised business planning processes need to be aligned to objectives for services and individuals.	A review of performance management arrangements within Directorates.	High <b>CR1</b>
Financial Resilience	20	Key risk area linking in with MTFP requirements.	Measuring performance against the Cipfa Resilience Index tool.	High <b>CR2</b>
Management of Council buildings	20	Key emerging risk relating to the ongoing quality of Council owned buildings. Issues around RAAC have raised profile of this area as a risk.	Review of processes and controls around the management of Council buildings.	High <b>CR9B</b>
SEND Transport	20	Increased costs of provision affecting MTFP forecasts.	Support, advice and challenge to Change Programme regarding SEND Transport.	High <b>CR2</b>
Charging and Debt in Adult Social Care	20	Plans are underway to implement the billing module in the Controcc system early 2024/25.	This will be reviewed in two phases:- 1. Advisory, support and challenge during the implementation process. 2. Post implementation review of the system to provide assurance the new billing module has addressed the risks.	Low <b>CR7</b>
Continuing health care data matching	15	Poor data quality in LAS/Controcc with respect to continuing health care, some issues already found in first stage of data matching exercise.	The data matching exercise will continue for residential and nursing homes and into other areas such as learning disabled tenancies and home care.	Medium <b>CR7</b>
Car parking income	10	Key source of income which had been impacted by the pandemic and subject to further income generation as part of the MTFP.	Review to provide assurance that arrangements are in place for the review of	Medium <b>CR2</b>

Audit Review	Days	Risks context	Planned Coverage	Priority/ Corporate Risk
			parking charges, financial and operational arrangements for the collection of income.	
Communication and Engagement Plan with respect to information / cyber security	10	No matter how effective the IT infrastructure security arrangements may be, the biggest risk to data security is staff. Training and staff awareness on the risks is necessary to strengthen these arrangements.	A review of the governance arrangements across the Council to ensure the roll out of the IT's Communication and Engagement Plan is effective.	High <b>CR3</b>
Recovery and Restoration of information systems	10	The Council is highly dependent on its IT infrastructure to access information and provide services. A loss of IT is critical to the Council.	A review to provide assurance that robust arrangements are in place to recover and restore information systems following a disaster incident.	High <b>CR3</b>
Mobile device management	10	With increase in flexible working, there have been growth in mobile devices such as laptops, tablets, smartphones. There are risks and challenges to ensure these are secure.	Review of operational, financial and security arrangements over mobile devices.	Medium <b>CR6</b>
Cybersecurity readiness review	10	ICT will be going for Cyber Essentials re-certification during 2024 and will seek to go for Cyber Essentials Plus certification.	Salford computer audit review.	High <b>CR3</b>
Artificial Intelligence	15	There has been an explosion of Artificial intelligence (AI) in the past two years, and this poses a risk to security of data held by the Council. It is a new innovation, and the risks are largely unknown by staff across the Council.	A review of governance, operational and risk management arrangements to mitigate the risks posed by AI.	High <b>CR1</b>
Contract management arrangements	15	New requirements as per Procurement Act (Oct 2024).	A review of current arrangements to identify compliance with new legislative changes.	Medium <b>CR5</b>
Bailiff's contract	10	The Council has a contract with Jacobs, an enforcement agency responsible for collecting debt on behalf of the Council.	A review of the processes employed by Jacobs to provide assurance that their procedures are	Low <b>CR5</b>

<b>Audit Review</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Risks context</b>	<b>Planned Coverage</b>	<b>Priority/ Corporate Risk</b>
			robust and to identify any risks where processes could be improved.	
Terrorism Management	10	High risk due to changes required by introduction of Martyn's Law.	A review of processes to identify compliance with new legislative changes.	Low <b>CR1</b>
Health and Safety (compliance/corporate responsibilities)	10	Health and safety requirements carry specific corporate responsibilities (both individually and collectively).	To review compliance with legislation and best practice in the event of a health and safety breach/incident.	Medium n/a
Core financial systems	30	Core financial systems are fundamental systems which provide material figures for the Council's financial statements.	We will continue to review at least two financial systems each year.	Medium <b>CR2</b>
External grants	10	New procedures for controlling the use and accounting of external grants have been brought in.	Review of governance, operational and financial processes around grants.	Low <b>CR2</b>
Annual Governance Statement (AGS)	5	Statutory requirement to produce an AGS and communicate with Annual Statements of Accounts.	Productions of AGS and subsequent Action Plan updates on a quarterly basis.	n/a
Certification work (Ongoing)	10	Every year the Council receives grant funding for specific initiatives.  It is a requirement that the Head of Internal Audit signs a declaration to confirm that the conditions of funding have been complied with.	Annual review of key grants received to confirm expenditure is in line with grant terms and conditions.  This will also involve the annual review of charitable accounts to confirm income and expenditure presents a true & fair view.	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>			

**CONSULTANCY AND ASSURANCE WORK FOR INCLUSION IN 2024/25 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN**

**APPENDIX B**

Review	Description	Days
Continuous auditing / monitoring	General resource element dedicated to continuous auditing and monitoring arrangements.	15
Elections (x3) – Local, Mayoral and General	A general and flexible contingency element in response to management requests for assistance in the Elections process (including risk review, support on Elections Project Group, pre-election checking and the management of postal votes).	45
Consultancy / advisory	Consultancy resulting from requests for ad hoc advice on risk and control matters.	20
Project Development	A general and flexible contingency element equating to 15 days per Directorate. Advisory work in response to management requests for risk and control advice during key project implementation or system redesign.	45
Management reviews / investigations	Undertaking unplanned reviews or investigations as matters arise during the year or as directed by the Fraud & Irregularities Panel.	50
Specific projects	<p>This will involve risk consultancy support for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEND Transport Project.</li> <li>• Attendance at the Capital Board.</li> <li>• Attendance at the Workforce Development Group.</li> <li>• Academisation Programme and Traded Services.</li> <li>• MTFP Transformation Group.</li> <li>• Integrated Care System (Health &amp; Social Care Bill).</li> <li>• RAAC Project Group.</li> <li>• Socitm Enterprise Resource Project (SAP)/Financial Systems Review Programme.</li> </ul>	50

Review	Description	Days
External Work – Academies x 2	<p>Academy trusts must have a programme of internal scrutiny to provide independent assurance to the board that its financial and non-financial controls and risk management procedures are operating effectively.</p> <p>Two academies have sourced Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) Internal Audit to provide assurance, advice, and support to help improve governance, risk, and control arrangements and to ensure compliance with the Academies Trust Handbook.</p> <p>The service receives an income stream from this activity.</p>	30
Operation of Schools Sickness Management Scheme	Monthly independent checks on accuracy of claims from schools around sickness absence cover for teaching staff. The service receives an income stream from this activity.	10
<b>Total consultancy and assurance work</b>		<b>265</b>