

Report for: Strategic Planning Committee 24 February 2025

Title: Internal Audit - Planning

Report authorised by: Rob Krzyszowski, Assistant Director, Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability

Lead Officer: Bryce Tudball, Head of Spatial Planning

Catherine Smyth, Head of Development Management & Enforcement

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report for Key/
Non Key Decision: For information

- 1. Describe the issue under consideration**
A report on the internal audit of the Planning Service.
- 2. Recommendations**
That this report be noted.
- 3. Reasons for decision**
Not applicable.
- 4. Alternative options considered**
This report is for noting and as such no alternative options were considered.
- 5. Internal Audit - Planning**

Background
 - 5.1 In September 2024 an internal audit was undertaken of the Planning service as part of the Council's routine audit plan.
 - 5.2 A final audit report was completed in October 2024, provided as Appendix 1.
 - 5.3 The headlines of the audit report were provided to Audit Committee in December 2024.
 - 5.4 The audit report is being provided in full to Strategic Planning Committee for information.
 - 5.5 The internal audit was undertaken by Forvis Mazars, contracted by the Council.

Findings and recommendations

- 5.6 The summary opinion of the internal audit report was of “**Adequate Assurance**”.
- 5.7 The summary action plan of the internal audit report includes recommendations as follows:

Ref	Recommendations
1. Authority Monitoring Reports (AMRs)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Publish an Authority Monitoring Report covering the period 2021 – 2024, as soon as possible.2. Implement contingencies to ensure an annual Authority Monitoring Report is produced.3. Internally flag/report on the Council not having produced an Authority Monitoring Report since July 2021 and therefore being non-compliant with legislation e.g., at Director / Committee level.4. Include comprehensive data in Authority Monitoring Reports on completion of major schemes, housing mix delivered and affordable housing completions.
2. Local Plan timetable	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Revise the timeline to prepare a New Local Plan.2. Identify resources to prepare a new Local Plan before the existing Local Plan becomes out of date.
3. Appeal information in Strategic Planning Committee reports	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Update the Strategic Planning Committee Reports to ensure they include data on the number of appeals received.
4. Statutory deadlines for planning application decisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Remind Planning Officers to regularly review the Arcus dashboard and circulate the weekly Arcus reports to them to ensure they are aware of “due this week” planning applications.2. The Council should investigate if Arcus has the functionality to generate automatic reminders for Planning Officers to alert them to applications reaching their statutory deadlines.

- 5.7 The management comments, agreed actions and timescales in response to the recommendations are provided in full in the report (Appendix 1).

6. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 6.1 The Planning and Building Control services contribute to the Corporate Delivery Plan’s focus on tackling inequality, climate justice and health across all of the various themes.

7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Appendices

