



Internal Audit Half Year Report 2024-25

Plymouth City Council Audit & Governance Committee

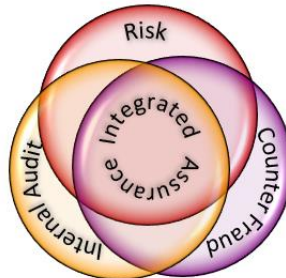
November 2024

Official

Tony Rose
Head of Devon Assurance Partnership

Jo McCormick
Deputy Head of Devon Assurance Partnership

Louise Clapton
Audit Manager



Introduction

This report provides a summary of the performance against the internal audit plan to date for the 2024/25 financial year, summarising our main findings and recommendations aimed at improving controls where our work has been finalised.

The key objective of the Devon Assurance Partnership (DAP) is to support the Council and provide assurance on the adequacy, security and effectiveness of the systems and controls operating across the organisation.

The Internal Audit plan for 2024/25 was presented to, and approved by, the Audit and Governance Committee in March 2024. However, with the rapid pace of change in local government, we continue to liaise with the management to “flex” the plan as appropriate to ensure that our work focusses on those areas which add most value to the Council in these challenging times.

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require the Head of Internal Audit to prepare an annual report providing an opinion that can be used by the organisation to inform its governance statement. This report provides a position statement on the progress towards that opinion.

Expectations of the Audit and Governance Committee from this half year report

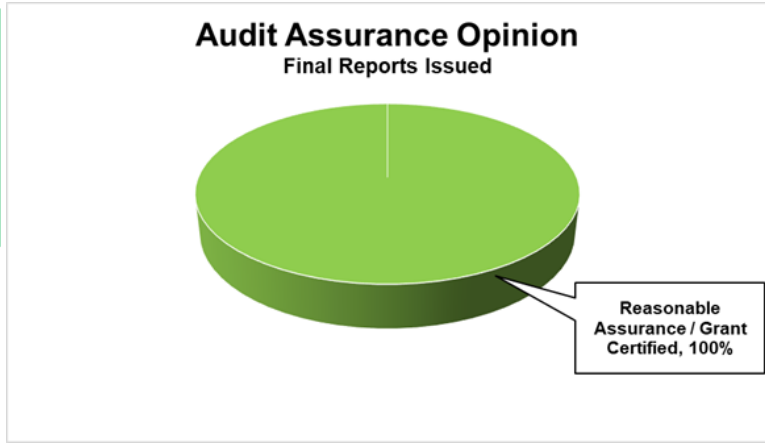
Members are requested to consider:

- the assurance statement within this report,
- the completion of audit work against the plan,
- the scope and ability of audit to complete the audit work,
- any audit findings provided,
- the overall performance and customer satisfaction on audit delivery, and
- review and approve the in-year changes to the audit plan.

In review of the above the Audit Committee are required to consider the assurance provided alongside that of the Executive, Corporate Risk Management and external assurance including that of the External Auditor as part of the Governance Framework and satisfy themselves from this assurance that the internal control framework continues to be maintained at an adequate level to mitigate risks and inform the Executive for governance requirements.

Opinion Statement

Overall, based on work performed to date during 2024/25 and our experience from the current year progress and previous years' audit, the Head of Internal Audit's mid-year assurance opinion is "Reasonable Assurance" on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's internal control framework.



Work included in the 2024/25 audit plan includes assurance, risk, governance and advisory engagements which, together with prior years audit work, provide a framework and background within which we assess the Authority's control environment. Should any significant weaknesses be identified in specific areas, these would need to be considered by the Authority when preparing its Annual Governance Statement later in the year.

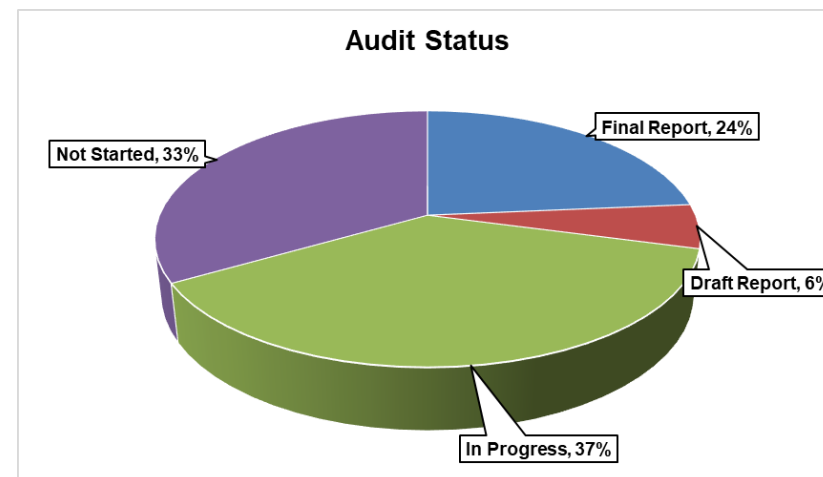
When undertaking reviews, we assess whether key, and other, controls are operating satisfactorily and that exposure to risk is minimised. An opinion on the adequacy of the control environment is provided to management as part of the audit report. All audit reports include an action plan detailing the management responses to be taken to address any risk and control issues identified during a review. Progress with the implementation of 'Limited Assurance' audit action plans are tracked by Internal Audit, the outcomes of the implementation of management actions at the end of Quarter two are presented to this Audit and Governance Committee in an accompanying report.

Substantial Assurance	A sound system of governance, risk management and control exists across the organisation, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of strategic and operational objectives.	Limited Assurance	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified across the organisation. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks and ensure that strategic and operational objectives can be achieved.
Reasonable Assurance	There are generally sound systems of governance, risk management and control in place across the organisation. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of some of the strategic and operational objectives.	No Assurance	Immediate action is required to address fundamental control gaps, weaknesses or issues of non-compliance identified across the organisation. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of strategic and operational objectives.

Review of Audit Progress

Reasonable progress continues to be made in delivering the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan. Of the work in the current audit plan 67% is in progress or has been completed, with 100% of final reports providing Reasonable Assurance (this includes grants certified). There have been a few changes to the original Internal Audit Plan agreed in March 2024, these are detailed in Appendix 1 and include:

- New additions to the plan of ASC Client Contribution Income and the LGA Improvement and Assurance Framework.
- A change to the planned audit of Budget Management to include evaluation against CIPFA's Financial Management Code.
- Deferral of Homelessness to enable inclusion of ASC Client Contribution Income.
- Performance Management replaced with Plymouth Local Authority Companies Governance Review.



Assurance work has been completed and draft audit reports issued in relation to Capital Programme and Plymouth Local Authority Companies (Destination Plymouth, Plymouth City Centre Company and Plymouth Waterfront Partnership), both of which were found to have suitable governance and financial control in place, suggestions have been made to strengthen current arrangements where appropriate. We have also completed audits and issued draft audit reports for ASC Service Provider Viability and Fuel Cards, weaknesses in internal control arrangements were identified in these areas and improvements to internal controls recommended.

Our audit of Key Financial Systems, that commenced in quarter two, has a focus this year on Cyber Security and will include evaluation of system security, user training, cyber threat awareness and system data protection. In collaboration with PCC's Digital Systems Teams, as part of the annual user access management exercise, we have undertaken surveys of all Key Financial System users, the results of which are currently being analysed and will be used to inform our audit opinion.

The number of grants received by the Council that require our certification remains high. All 14 grants audited in the year to date have been certified as being in accordance with the requirements of the relevant grant determination. We continue to provide advice to those responsible for delivery of grant funded projects to ensure compliance with grant funding conditions. DAP will soon be undertaking work to identify if there are grant opportunities being taken in one Partner that may be relevant to others. Once complete the findings will be shared. In addition, we have audited five Families with a Future (Payment by Results) monthly claims.

We continue to work with management to ensure audit work is prioritised and completed in accordance with the risk and audit need requirements that best reflects the rapidly changing environment that the Council is operating in. This may result in further changes to audit coverage. A table showing the current status of audits planned for 2024/25 and their associated reported assurance opinions is contained at Appendix 1.

Fraud Prevention and Detection

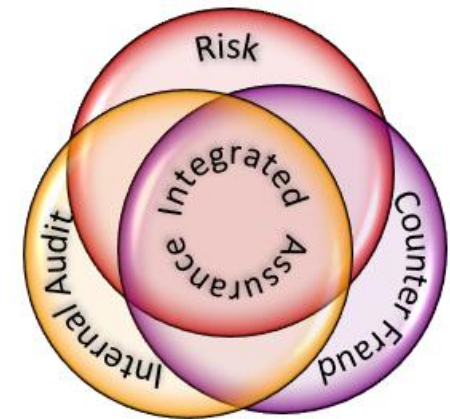
Counter-fraud arrangements are a high priority for the Council and assist in the protection of public funds and accountability. The Cabinet Office runs a national data matching exercise, The National Fraud Initiative (NFI), every two years. The latest national data matching exercise is currently in progress and Devon Assurance Partnership continue to be the point of contact between the Cabinet Office and the Council for this mandatory biannual exercise in fraud prevention and detection. Once data matches from this latest data matching exercise are received actioned will be taken by both PCC and DAP staff to provide maximum assurance and minimise potential fraud losses. Details of this and other fraud prevention and detection work undertaken in 2024/25 are reported in the Counter Fraud 2024/25 Half Year Report and Update.

Integrated Assurance

Collaboration between the Audit Team and the Counter Fraud Team continues to evolve and strengthen with auditors becoming more aware of fraud risks and fraud investigators having a greater understanding of systems and controls. Furthermore, we work closely with the Councils Risk Management lead.

This joined up approach help to continue to provide the highest level of assurance possible and, for the Council to minimise fraud loss to the lowest level possible.

The Counter Fraud Team Manager has prepared a separate report for this Committee where more information can be found on the work being undertaken.



Partnership working with other auditors

We will continue to develop and maintain effective partnership working arrangements between ourselves and other audit agencies where appropriate and beneficial. We participate in a range of internal audit networks, both locally and nationally which provide for a beneficial exchange of information and practices with the aim of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the audit process, through avoidance of instances of “re-inventing the wheel” in new areas of work.

Internal Audit Progress 2024/25 - Audit Status and Assurance Opinion

Appendix 1

Audit Area	Status	Opinion	Audit Summary / Comment	Total Agreed Actions	Management Actions			
					H	M	L	O
Main Accounting System 2023/24	Final	Reasonable	The Main Accounting System internal control framework continues to operate effectively with processes operating as expected and in accordance with Financial Regulations. A balanced budget was set, approved, accurately input to the MAS and regular routine reconciliation, monitoring and reporting ensure the accuracy and completeness of financial information.	5	0	3	2	0
Treasury Management 2023/24	Final	Reasonable	Plymouth City Councils (PCC) Treasury Management system is effective with strong governance arrangements and operational processes in place. 2023/24 has been a very difficult year due to uncertainty around a money market that has been difficult to predict with fluctuating interest rates. However, despite these challenges, the robust Treasury Management arrangements have enabled ongoing effective financial management.	4	1	2	1	0
Risk Management 2023/24	Final	Reasonable	Plymouth City Councils overall Risk Management Framework continues to provide Reasonable Assurance that risks to the achievement of its corporate and service plan objectives are identified, evaluated, monitored and appropriately managed. The Council have a robust Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy that continues to be updated and approved by Audit and Governance Committee to ensure it remains fit for purpose.	4	0	3	0	1
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Eclipse Module	Final	Reasonable	<p>Migration of DoLS data to Eclipse was completed in August 2023. Migration spreadsheets were made available to audit and demonstrated testing had been carried out after the migration to ensure the accuracy and completeness of DoLS data in Eclipse. Further random cases were also selected, checked and the accuracy and completeness of DoLS information verified on Eclipse to source documentation.</p> <p>Input of new DoLS referrals to Eclipse was successfully implemented in July 2023, however, some functionality issues have been highlighted that need to be resolved or</p>	4	0	4	0	0

			<p>there is a risk that reliance will continue to be placed on inefficient manual systems and the full benefits of implementing Eclipse not realised.</p> <p>Devon Assurance Partnership were unable to provide assurance in relation to the automated DoLS statutory return as the 2023/24 return has been compiled manually from data in the DoLS spreadsheet, rather than run from Eclipse. This is likely to continue for the 2024/25 return with further tests required on the DoLS statutory return tool.</p>					
Fully Catered	Final	Reasonable	<p>Reasonable assurance is provided that Fully Catered LTD accounts for 2022/23 and 2023/24 are accurate and complete. This is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping appropriate financial records throughout the year. • Keeping appropriate expenditure records and maintaining VAT records. • Expected income is fully received, properly recorded and promptly banked. • Year end and periodic bank reconciliations are undertaken promptly. • Fixed assets valuations are supported by accurate, complete and timely supporting Fixed Asset Registers and Inventories. • Accruals and prepayments are correctly identified, accounted for and stated at year end. 	5	0	3	1	1
Supporting Families PBR Claim Quarter 1 (April - June 2024)	Final	Certified	<p>In accordance with MHCLG programme guidance three monthly payment by results claims have been checked and verified prior to submission and we certified the first quarterly claim by the 26th June 2024 deadline. The Council target for 2024/25 is to achieve successful outcomes for 609 families, PBR's were claimed for 80 (13%) families, resulting in £64,000 of funding to the Council.</p>	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
SWLEP Growth Deal, Charles Cross	Final	Certified	<p>In accordance with South West LEP Growth Deal grant conditions we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Growth Deal funding of £2.1m was awarded to this project.</p>	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
SWLEP Growth Deal Northern Corridor Traffic Signals	Final	Certified	<p>In accordance with Growth Deal grant conditions, we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Growth Deal funding of £2.1m was awarded to this project, the project is now complete, and this was the final audit.</p>	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				

SWLEP Growth Deal Eastern Corridor Strategic Cycle Network	Final	Certified	In accordance with Growth Deal grant conditions, we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Growth Deal funding of £3.4m was awarded to this project.	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
SWLEP Growth Deal Plymouth Railway Station	Final	Certified	In accordance with Growth Deal grant conditions, we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Growth Deal funding of £4.7m was awarded to this project.	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
SWLEP Get Building Fund Plymouth Business Parks	Final	Certified	In accordance with Get Building funding grant conditions we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Get Building funding of £1.9m was awarded to this project.	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
SWLEP Growth Deal Oceansgate Phase 1	Final	Certified	In accordance with Growth Deal grant conditions, we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Growth Deal funding of £1.5m was awarded to this project.	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
Plymouth Active Leisure (PAL) Financial Reconciliations 2024/25	Final	Reasonable	<p>Financial reconciliation procedures provide 'Reasonable Assurance' that Plymouth Active Leisure's income and payments are accurately and completely stated in Civica General Ledger from which Financial Statements are produced. This was demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined roles and responsibilities of PCC Accountants and Plymouth Active Leisure in processing, recording and reconciling income and payments. • Comprehensive procedures in place for the reconciliation of income and payments. • Reconciliation of income and payments undertaken regularly, promptly and subject to review. • Retention of supporting financial information. • Discrepancies identified, investigated and action taken. <p>At the time of the audit the Gladstone Control Account never fully reconciled, action is being taken with the support of Corporate Service Accountants to resolve this. In addition, there is a £3bn balance on Plymouth Active Leisure suspense, this is due to a known system error where the Gladstone system is recognising the member id/sales id number as the value of a session. Action is being taken to resolve this with software supplier Gladstone.</p>	3	1	1	1	0
On Course South West 2024/25	Final	Reasonable	On Course South West's overall governance, risk and financial management arrangements provide reasonable assurance that risks to the achievement of its objectives are mitigated, supporting its ongoing viability, sustainability and	4	0	3	0	1

			<p>effectiveness in the medium to long term. This was demonstrated through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined governance structures, accountability and roles and responsibilities. • Clear strategy, policy and plans, linking to Plymouth City Councils Corporate Priorities, Strategy 4 Skills and the City’s wider growth agenda. • Risk management arrangements that identify, assess, mitigate, manage, monitor and report risks and opportunities associated with adult education activities including potential threats and uncertainties. • Adult Education Service delivery provided internally or subcontracted in accordance with AEB, (ASF from 01/08/2024) and ESFA funding requirements. • Subcontracted service delivery procured in accordance with ESFA requirements and contract standing orders, with procurement regulations, procedures and processes adhered to in the selection of education providers. • Robust contracts awarded following appropriate due diligence and effective contract management arrangements in place to monitor performance and compliance. • Payment for subcontracted service delivery subject to control and agreement, and in accordance with accordance with Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and financial system requirements. • Financial management arrangements compliance with financial regulations and grant funding terms and conditions. <p>Our opinion is based on revised governance arrangements which are still in their infancy, however once embedded and integrated this should provide substantial assurance that governance and operational delivery is effective and efficient.</p> <p>Opportunities should be taken to ensure appropriate and consistent oversight at DMT and elected member level, and to develop robust performance reporting that includes KPI metrics aligned with the wider skills and growth agenda that</p>					
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			can be used to support strategic decisions and inform future delivery plans.					
Supporting Families PBR Claim Quarter 2 (July - September 2024)	Final	Grant Certified	In accordance with MHCLG programme guidance two monthly payment by results claims have been checked and verified prior to submission and we certified the second quarterly claim by the 25th September 2024 deadline. The Council target for 2024/25 is to achieve successful outcomes for 609 families, PBR's were claimed for 92, resulting in an overall claim to date of 172 families (28% against target) families, resulting in £137,600 of funding to the Council.	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
DFT LCTB Integrated Transport 2024-25	Final	Grant Certified	In accordance with DFT Integrated Transport Block 2023/24 grant conditions we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Grant funding of £1.959m was awarded to Plymouth City Council for 2023/24.	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
DFT Highways Maintenance Needs Element 2024-25	Final	Grant Certified	In accordance with DFT Highways Maintenance Needs Element 2023/24 grant conditions we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Grant funding of £1.290m was awarded to Plymouth City Council for 2023/24.	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
DFT Highways Maintenance Incentive Element 2024-25	Final	Grant Certified	In accordance with DFT Highways Maintenance Incentive Element 2023/24 grant conditions we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Grant funding of £323k was awarded to Plymouth City Council for 2023/24.	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
DFT Highways Maintenance Additional Element 2024-25	Final	Grant Certified	In accordance with DFT Highways Maintenance Additional Element 2023/24 grant conditions we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Grant funding of £366k was awarded to Plymouth City Council for 2023/24.	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
DFT Pothole Fund 2024-25	Final	Grant Certified	In accordance with DFT Pothole Action Fund 2023/24 grant conditions we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Grant funding of £1.290m was awarded to Plymouth City Council for 2023/24.	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
DFT Traffic Signal Obsolescence 2024-25	Final	Grant Certified	In accordance with DFT Traffic Signal Obsolescence Fund 2023/24 grant conditions we undertook the annual audit of the statement of grant usage. Grant funding of £75k was awarded to Plymouth City Council for 2023/24.	N/A Mandatory Grant Certification				
Fuel Cards 2024/25	Draft	Limited	Fuel card expenditure is not subject to review and agreement to ensure legitimate council expense. Immediate action has been taken by Internal Audit to track down all 193 fuel cards preventing the need to issue a 'No Assurance' audit opinion. Through enquiries it has been determined that 111 fuel cards are no longer needed and	15	12	3	0	0

			<p>should be cancelled. Action is also being taken by Children’s Services and Street Services to strengthen service operational controls.</p> <p>Without robust corporate controls and monitoring systems in place, Plymouth City Council could incur significant losses. Fuel cards can be susceptible to fraudulent activity, including unauthorised purchases or misuse by employees, leading to inflated fuel expenses and potential misuse of public funds. Lack of oversight and accountability mechanisms can further exacerbate this risk.</p> <p>A lack of business rationale in relation to Council wide fuel usage including fuel card usage can contribute to environmental pollution and carbon emissions. Local authorities need to balance the convenience of fuel cards with their environmental impact and consider strategies for reducing emissions. Managing fuel cards also requires administrative effort, including tracking transactions, reconciling accounts, and overseeing compliance with usage policies, without sufficient processes the Council will not efficiently manage this administrative burden.</p> <p>The Council should undertake a review to understand the Councils future need requirements, including whether fuel cards provide value for money, align with the Councils net zero plan and if there are better alternative options available to PCC through fleet services, including electronic fleet and hire vehicles.</p>					
ASC Service Provider Viability 2024/25	Draft	Limited	<p>The action taken by the Council with regard the closure of a Care Home in respect of requests for advance payments and the subsequent closure of the home should be acknowledged. Many of the residents were very elderly and The Council has a duty of care to them to ensure the closure was dealt with as sensitively as possible, and to find homes for all of them before the home closed for good. All residents were found alternative accommodation prior to closure.</p> <p>The chronology which was kept of the developing situation was comprehensive and all decisions were taken collectively by managers. However, the lack of documented processes and the ad-hoc monitoring of ASC</p>	4	3	1	0	0

			<p>providers provides only 'Limited Assurance' that identification and management of the risk of the potential failure of adult social care providers is mitigated.</p> <p>With residential care home contracts due to be recommissioned next year, there is an opportunity for commissioners to strengthen contracts and contract management arrangements to enable the ongoing viability of providers to be monitored and early intervention taken.</p>					
Capital Programme 2024/25	Draft	Reasonable	<p>The Capital Programme is considered to be subject to adequate governance arrangements. The Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation and draft Capital Handbook are considered to provide a suitable control framework (policy, procedures and guidelines, including structures, roles and responsibilities, are in place/or awaiting agreement) to effectively govern the Capital Programme.</p> <p>Based on the composition of the Capital Officer Programme Group (CPOG) and the Capital Programme Board (CPB), and the key roles of the Section 151 Officer, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leader, and the role of the "Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee", oversight is considered to be suitably independent. We have found the Capital Programme to be monitored and reported extensively.</p> <p>Established approval and reporting demonstrate the level of stakeholder involvement throughout the lifecycle of the Capital Programme to be adequate.</p> <p>However, there are areas where the control framework could be further strengthened. A focus on Risk Management, enhanced standards reporting and increased visibility across projects/programmes is essential to continued effective management of the Capital Programme.</p>	6	1	2	2	1
Plymouth Local Authority Companies - Governance Review 24-25	Draft	Reasonable	<p>We have found there to be adequate governance and financial controls in place regarding Destination Plymouth, Plymouth City Centre Company and Plymouth Waterfront Partnership on which this audit focussed.</p> <p>There are areas where the control framework can be improved.</p>	23	4	11	4	4

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting company performance/activity to appropriate committees to provide wider more transparent oversight. • Strengthening risk management arrangements. • Implementing routine bank account reconciliations and strengthening bank account access arrangements. • Implementing comprehensive documented governance and finance policies and procedures. • Implementing segregation of duties within finance/payments system. <p>The Companies Governance Framework paper to cabinet of the 9th September 2024, if agreed and put in place, should provide a greater level of oversight and scrutiny from Members. These proposed changes, and actions to address our observations would result in an improved, more robust, governance and internal control framework.</p>					
Purchasing Cards 2023/24	In Progress	-	<p>To provide assurance on effectiveness of the control framework to manage fuel cards used by the council and mitigate the following risk areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central oversight and direction on the use of fuel cards is not sufficient resulting in additional costs or failure to achieve savings. • Procedures to use fuel cards are not comprehensive or clearly defined or are not followed increasing risk related to misuse or incorrect use. • Line Management checks and counter Fraud reviews are not undertaken increasing risk related to fraud and error. 	Currently In Progress				
ASC Debt Management 2024/25	In Progress	-	<p>To provide the Council with an opinion on the internal control arrangements to mitigate the risk of accumulating ASC debt leading to budget deficits, affecting the ability to provide essential services and meet other financial obligations. This will consider processes in place to pursue debts within Adult Social Care (ASC) to maximise income for the Council whilst supporting vulnerable service users who struggle to pay and addressing those who "won't pay".</p>	Currently In Progress				
Freeport (Plymouth & South Devon) - Governance and Decision Making 2024/25	In Progress	-	<p>To provide assurance that the processes and procedures for managing the governance structures and meetings established by the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport (PSDF) are in place, operating effectively and that the risk</p>	Currently In Progress				

			of weak governance structure leading to ineffective decision making and organisational outcomes not being achieved as intended is sufficiently mitigated.	
Income Collection 2024/25	In Progress	-	To assess the adequacy of income collection arrangements in ensuring that all income due is received accurately, completely, and on time and to provide assurance that the internal control framework mitigates the risk of failing to maximise income collection, increasing the pressure on budgets, the uncertainty over financial sustainability and impacting the Council's ability to deliver its services.	Currently In Progress
Business Rates System 2024/25	In Progress	-	To assess and evaluate the internal control frameworks in place to mitigate the risk of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to maximise Business Rates collection, increasing the pressure on budgets, the uncertainty over financial sustainability and impacting the Council's ability to deliver its services. • Successful cyber-attack, system is not technically secure, users are insufficiently trained, unaware of the threats they face or how to protect themselves and system data. 	Currently In Progress
Council Tax System 2024/25	In Progress	-	To assess and evaluate the internal control frameworks in place to mitigate the risk of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to maximise Council Tax collection, increasing the pressure on budgets, the uncertainty over financial sustainability and impacting the Council's ability to deliver its services. • Successful cyber-attack, system is not technically secure, users are insufficiently trained, unaware of the threats they face or how to protect themselves and system data. 	Currently In Progress
Creditors System 2024/25	In Progress	-	To assess and evaluate the internal control frameworks in place to mitigate the risk of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate, inaccurate, untimely or unauthorised payments, fraud or unreliable financial data, leading to an increase in budget pressures, expenditure exceeds resources in the Medium-Term Financial Plan, inability to deliver Council Service and non-compliance with procurement and payment legislation. • Successful cyber-attack, system is not technically secure, users are insufficiently trained, unaware of the threats they face or how to protect themselves and system data. 	Currently In Progress

Debtors System 2024/25	In Progress	-	<p>To assess and evaluate the internal control frameworks in place to mitigate the risk of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failing to ensure all sundry debt due to the Council is recovered, increasing the pressure on budgets, the uncertainty over financial sustainability and impacting the Council's ability to deliver its services. Successful cyber-attack, system is not technically secure, users are insufficiently trained, unaware of the threats they face or how to protect themselves and system data. 	Currently In Progress
Housing Benefits 2024/25	In Progress	-	<p>To assess and evaluate the internal control frameworks in place to mitigate the risks of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support paid inappropriately and, in an untimely manner. Successful cyber-attack, system is not technically secure, users are insufficiently trained, unaware of the threats they face or how to protect themselves and system data. 	Currently In Progress
Main Accounting System 2024/25	In Progress	-	<p>To evaluate and report on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control framework of the Main Accounting System (MAS) to mitigate the risk if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ineffective financial management, failing to ensure PCC remains viable, stable and effective in the medium to long term. Successful cyber-attack, system is not technically secure, users are insufficiently trained, unaware of the threats they face or how to protect themselves and system data. 	Currently In Progress
Cyber Assessment Framework 2024/25	In Progress	-	<p>To provide assurance on the effectiveness of arrangements to mitigate the risk of a successful Cyber-attack, including the Councils cyber security and resilience arrangements not being aligned with industry good practice to minimise the impacts of adverse cyber events.</p>	Currently In Progress
The Plymouth Alliance	In Progress	-	<p>To provide assurance on the effectiveness of governance, risk and contract management arrangements in place to mitigate the risk of inadequate service delivery can lead to compromised support for individuals with complex needs, including the risk of homelessness, substance abuse relapse, and worsening mental health conditions. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial management including budgetary controls and financial reporting. 	Currently In Progress

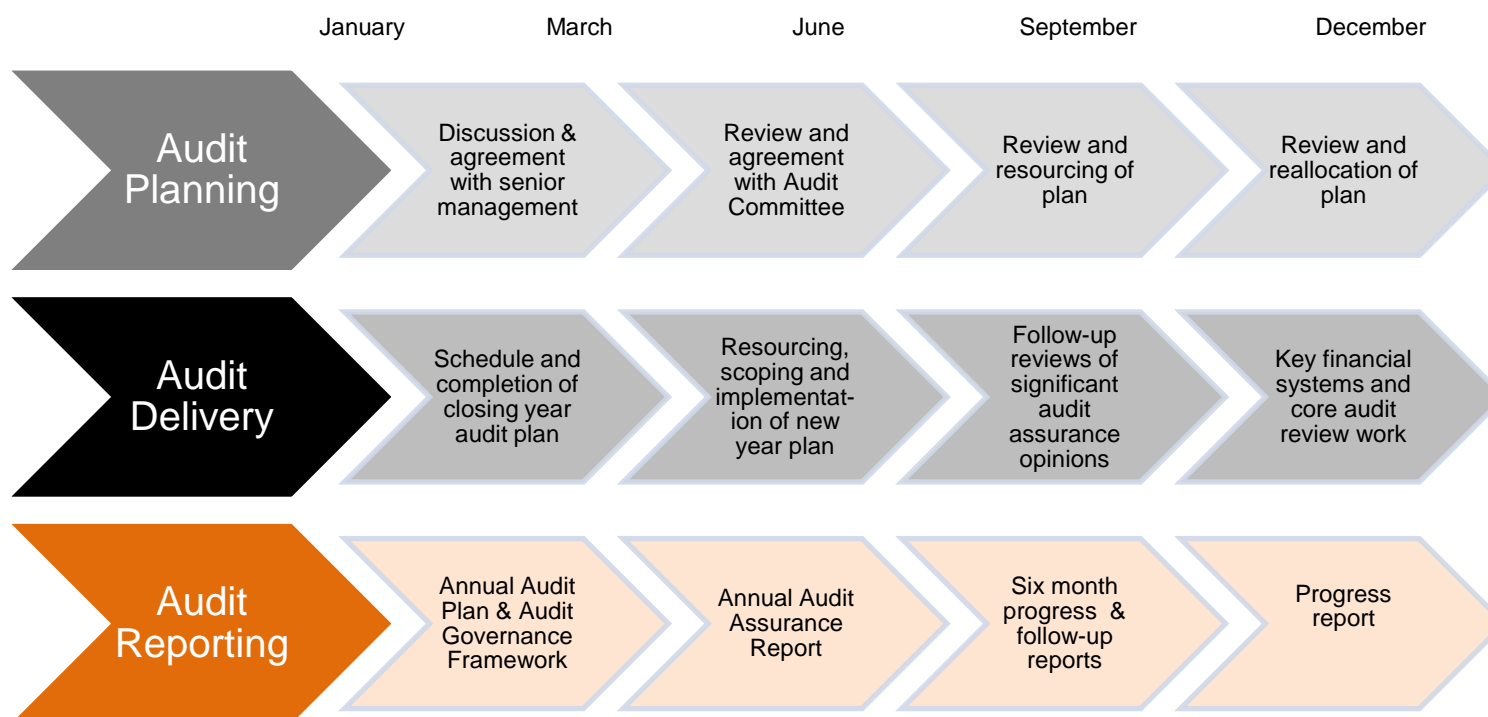
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance including documentation of policies, governance of sub-contracts and adherence to relevant legislation. • Operational management including performance reports, risk management and communication with stakeholders. • Reputational control including collating feedback and engagement strategies. 	
ASC Client Contribution Income 2024-25	In Progress	-	NEW addition , at the request of the Strategic Director of Adults Health and Communities the objective of this audit is to provide assurance to Plymouth City Council that all ASC client contribution income due is correctly calculated and charged accurately, completely, and on time.	Currently In Progress
Procurement / Purchasing Systems 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
Risk Management 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 4	Not Yet Started
Supporting Families PBR Claim Quarter 3 (October - December 2024)	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
Supporting Families PBR Claim Quarter 4 January - March 2025)	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 4	Not Yet Started
Children's Independent Placements 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 4	Not Yet Started
SEND 2024/25 Follow Ups	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 4	Not Yet Started
Emergency Accommodation Payments 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
Disabled Facilities Grant 2023-24	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
Business Support Provision 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
ASC Income - Joint Funded Care Packages 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
CSC to ASC Transitions 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
Tree Management Policy and Procedures 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 4	Not Yet Started
Public Health Audit Plan 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 4	Not Yet Started

Payroll System 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
Treasury Management System 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
Management of Grant Funding 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 4	Not Yet Started
Financial Management Code Budget Management 2024/25	Not Started	-	CHANGE , at the request of the Service Director for Finance and S151 Officer the scope and objective of this audit has been extended to include evaluation against CIPFA's Financial Management Code.	Not Yet Started
Declarations of Interest 2024/25 (Follow Up)	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
IR35 (Follow Up) 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
DBS and Independent Safeguarding (Follow Up) 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
ICT User Access Management 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 3	Not Yet Started
ICT Asset Management 2024/25	Not Started	-	Planned quarter 4	Not Yet Started
Constitutional Review 2024/25 - Financial Regulations & Standing Orders	Ongoing	Advisory	Advise on the revision of Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders.	N/A Advisory
Chief Executive Advice 2024/25	Ongoing	Advisory	Provision of ad hoc real time advice throughout 2024/25 to support mitigate risk and /or transformational change, this has included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed changes to the Whistleblowing Policy. 	N/A Advisory
Children's Improvement Plan 2024/25	Ongoing	Advisory	To identify areas for audit assurance in consultation with management and independently as appropriate and inform overall assurance opinion for Children's Services. Manage audit plan to align with CQC Improvement Plan in real time to accommodate highest priority work.	N/A Advisory
Eclipse Project Board - Phase 3 2024/25	Ongoing	Advisory	To attend Eclipse Project Board, to provide advice and assurance as appropriate as the Eclipse Finance module is implemented.	N/A Advisory
CQC Improvement Plan 2024/25	Ongoing	Advisory	To identify areas for audit assurance in consultation with management and independently as appropriate and inform overall assurance opinion for Adults, Health and Communities. Manage audit plan to align with CQC	N/A Advisory

			Improvement Plan in real time to accommodate highest priority work.	
Place Advice 2024/25	Ongoing	Advisory	Provision of ad hoc real time advice throughout 2024/25 to support mitigate risk and /or transformational change, this has included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed changes to PEC / PCC Strategic Partnership Agreement. Capital Programme Board Terms of Reference. 	N/A Advisory
PCC South West Devon Waste Partnership 2024-25	Ongoing	Advisory	DAP continue its participation with the Partnership, attending Project Executive meetings.	N/A Advisory
Resources Advice 2024/25	Ongoing	Advisory	Provision of ad hoc real time advice throughout 2024/25 to support mitigate risk and /or transformational change, this has included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of information to CIPFA Review 	N/A Advisory
Grants Advice, Planning, Monitoring 2024/25	Ongoing	Advisory	Provision of ad hoc real time advice throughout 2024/25 to support grant funding, management and assurance.	N/A Advisory
Payroll System (iTrent) Implementation 2024/25	Ongoing	Advisory	To attend appropriate project board meetings/working groups, to provide advice and assurance as appropriate as the iTrent Payroll System is implemented.	N/A Advisory
Corporate Information Management 2024/25	Ongoing	Advisory	Participation with the Partnership, attending Project Executive meetings.	N/A Advisory
LGA Improvement and Assurance Framework	Not Started	Advisory	NEW addition , at the request of the Chief Executive and Section 151 this work will consider, input and support Plymouth City Council in its self-assessment against the LGA's Improvement and Assurance Framework.	N/A Advisory
Homelessness	Deferred	N/A	The inclusion of ASC Client Contribution Income at the request of the Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities has deferred this work. We will continue to work with management to ensure this work is completed in accordance with risk and audit need requirements.	N/A Deferred
Performance Management 24/25	Removed	N/A	In consultation with the Head of Governance, Performance and Risk it was agreed to remove this audit from the plan. This has been replaced with the PCC Companies Governance audit for which a higher audit need assessment was identified with the Head of Finance.	N/A Removed from plan

<h2>Devon Assurance Partnership</h2>	<h2>Confidentiality and Disclosure Clause</h2>
<p>The Devon Assurance Partnership has been formed under a joint committee arrangement comprising of Plymouth, Torbay, Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon, Torridge, South Hams, West Devon councils and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue. We aim to be recognised as a high-quality assurance service provider in the public sector. We work with our partners by providing a professional internal audit service that will assist them in meeting their challenges, managing their risks and achieving their goals. In carrying out our work we are required to comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards along with other best practice and professional standards.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to providing high quality, professional customer services to all; if you have any comments or suggestions on our service, processes or standards, the Head of Partnership would be pleased to receive them at tony.d.rose@devon.gov.uk .</p>	<p>This report is protectively marked in accordance with the Government Security Classifications. It is accepted that issues raised may well need to be discussed with other officers within the Council, the report itself should only be copied/circulated/disclosed to anyone outside of the organisation in line with the organisation's disclosure policies.</p> <p>This report is prepared for the organisation's use. We can take no responsibility to any third party for any reliance they might place upon it.</p>

Audit Delivery Cycle



PSIAS Conformance - Devon Assurance Partnership conforms to the requirements of the PSIAS for its internal audit activity. The purpose, authority and responsibility of the Internal Audit activity is defined in our Internal Audit Charter, consistent with the *Definition of Internal Auditing*, the *Code of Ethics* and the *Standards*. Our Internal Audit Charter was approved by senior management and the Audit Committee in 2024. This is supported through DAP self-assessment of conformance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards & Local Government Application note.

The Institute of Internal Audit (IIA) are the key body involved in setting out the global standards for the profession which form the basis for the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and are undergoing review and revision. The proposed new standards which are likely to take effect in 2025 and this document helps clarity and raise awareness of the audit committee's governance roles and responsibilities in respect of this. [IIA Document – Draft Standards](#).