

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 5 October 2022

Minute Extract

36/22 Internal Audit Report - SEND

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources on Internal Audit Report - SEND. This report was presented by the Head of Internal Audit.

It was noted that the Committee considered this issue at its meeting on 3rd November 2021, where it resolved that it would recommend that this was included in Internal Audit's quarter 4 SEND audit.

It was noted that the full internal audit report was attached at Appendix 1. It was reported that the audit had provided an overall assurance rating of "Limited". The key findings were:

- Low risk weaknesses in governance arrangements around SEND decision-making processes (framework in place)
- No overall alignment of EHCP and school transport arrangements
- Weaknesses in monitoring and management of SEND contract arrangements – Commissioning and SEND team liaison

It was noted that Internal Audit's opinion was that the direction of travel was improving. There was a lot of work being done around linkages between Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) and Home to School Transport, particularly around the sharing of a centralised record. It was noted that the audit also highlighted the benefits being generated by the input into the function by the SEND Manager.

A councillor asked how many late applications there had been for home school transport. The Strategic Director of Corporate Resources agreed to ask officers for this information.

It was noted that the Council was seeing 50-60 EHCP requests per month. A councillor commented that demand was expected to increase after the Covid-19 pandemic and that there didn't appear to be enough resources. It was noted that during the pandemic the Council had invested in capacity and in school transport. It was noted that a SEND Manager and additional resources had been added to the EHCP Team 18 months previously.

The Committee thanked Internal Audit and the EHCP Team for their work.

Resolved:

- 1. to receive and consider the findings of the internal audit report on SEND.**
- 2. to request that the minute extract on the consideration of the audit findings is sent to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board.**
- 3. To recommend that SEND is audited again in autumn 2023.**