

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Summary Report of 12 November 2019 meeting

The Committee considered the following:

National Food Crime Unit

Members received an update on the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) – that it was almost fully staffed and operating as business as usual and that there was an expectation that there would soon be an agreement with Crown Prosecution Service enabling the FSA to bring prosecutions. Members were informed that the FSA had input into cases involving food contamination arising from people trafficking and that action was already taking place regarding potential cross border criminal activity following EU Exit.

Information Security Report

Members were informed of the FSA's main information security risks and how these may change over the coming months, for example with online food business registration and increased NFCU activity. External audit and assurance provided over FSA information and data security systems was outlined, including the use of ethical hackers and that the met requirements of the Public Sector Network.

External Audit Planning

The National Audit Office and Mazars outlined the external audit plan, key risks identified and new accounting standards that may impact the FSA's accounts – IFRS16 Leases. The aim is to meet the HM Treasury faster closing accounts deadline of 30 June 2020 noting that some factors such as the valuation and certification of the pension scheme were not within the control of the FSA.

Update on Risk Management

Members reviewed the latest iteration of the risk register following the recent management review. Points on specific risks were discussed.

Audit Assurance Planning Process 2020/21

The process for assembling the Audit plans for 2020/21 was outlined. Members discussed and agreed the process noting that Committee clarity on the role of Local Authority audit across the organisation was crucial especially once the balanced scorecard became fully functional.

Audit Assurance Progress Report

The number of outstanding management actions remains low. One follow up had to be deferred as implementation of policy has not yet taken place. Delivery of business audits is slightly behind schedule following long term leave earlier in the year. OFFC audits are progressing well.

AOB item Members discussed that whilst ARAC has three members and remains quorate, it remained below complement. The Chair indicated that he was confident that new Board – and ARAC – appointments were progressing and that new members would be appointed in time to avoid any quoracy issues.

Date of next meeting: 21st January 2020, 3pm. *[Subsequently changed to 20th January 2020, 11:30am.]*