Committee Membership and Remit
Evaluation by Chair

Additionally, the key reports prepared by the Internal and External Auditors are included as appendices.

3.2 **Audit & Risk Committee Meetings**

This section provides a summary of the items of business considered at each of the meetings of the Committee held during the year. Meetings were held electronically throughout. Additionally, the on-going impact of Covid-19 resulted in some disruption to planned timing of audit work, implementation of audit recommendations and scheduling of meetings. The IJB is provided with the minutes of each meeting as a matter of course, this also provides members with the opportunity to raise issues or question the Chair in respect of the work of the Committee at any point during the year.

3.2.1 Meeting 1 - 20 April 2021

The Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report 2020/21 was considered and approved with minor changes.

The Annual Internal Audit Report was also considered and approved.

The External Audit plan and timetable was approved, noting that the deadline for sign off had been pushed back to 30 November 2021.

Audit Scotland – NHS in Scotland 2020. The Committee considered this report which related to the way in which the NHS had managed the Covid-19 pandemic.

Audit Scotland – Tracking the implications of Covid-19 on Scotland's Public Finances. Again this report was considered in detail along with the potential implications for public finance.

The Internal Audit Plan, to be delivered by the Argyll & Bute Council Internal Audit Service was considered and approved.

Internal Audit – Charging for Non-Residential Care Services. This report by the Internal Auditor was endorsed.

3.2.2

3.2.3

This purpose of this meeting, which had been re-scheduled, was to approve the audited Annual Accounts and the Audit Report, presented by Audit Scotland. The committee welcomed the positive report by Audit Scotland and thanked the finance teams for their role in this. The Committee also welcomed the favourable outturn for the year but acknowledged that challenges in respect of financial sustainability remained.

Upon conclusion of the formal meeting, members of the committee had the opportunity to have a private discussion with the Internal and External Auditor with no members of the executive team present. This is an important aspect of the role of the committee as it ensures that members are able to discuss issues freely with the independent auditors.

3.2.4 Meeting 4 – 10 December 2021

Internal Audit Report – Care Programme Approach. The Committee considered this report in detail as it provided only limited assurance in respect of this area of activity. The management responses were accepted by the Committee, however, management were asked to accelerate their implementation if at all practicable.

Internal Audit Report – Child Protective Services. This report was noted as it related to the Argyll & Bute Council internal audit programme. The report provided a substantial level of assurance, which was welcomed by the committee.

Internal Audit Update – this report summarised progress in implementing Internal Audit Recommendations. It was requested that management updates be more comprehensive in future.

Audit Scotland – Vaccination Programme. The Committee considered the positive report by

3.2.5

3

assurance to the IJB that it has fulfilled its role effectively throughout 2021/22.

3.5

Evaluation by the Chair

3.5.1

Despite on-going challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, the committee has met regularly and has been able to operate effectively. In addition to Covid-19, there has been significant changes of management staff and a new Internal Auditor was appoi(s)-221(b)-6(e)-6pq84.85 58(o)-6(r

3.5.2

3.5.3

3.5.4

3.5.5

Low			3
VFM			1
Total	**5**	**3**	**13**

3.5.6

External Audit

The External Auditor's report has been considered previously. The report was a positive one and the auditor issued an un-qualified audit opinion in respect of the accounts for 2020/21. The report concluded that:

> The IJB has appropriate and effective financial management arrangements in place and returned an underspend of £1.089 million against a budgeted breakeven outturn.
>
> The IJB has appropriate governance arrangements in place that support the scrutiny of decisions by the Board.
>
> The IJB has put in place appropriate arrangements to demonstrate the achievement of Best Value.

The External Auditor highlighted risks in respect of financial sustainability and the turnover of senior staff. They also made recommendations in respect of performance reporting and re-iterated previous recommendations in respect of the savings programme and workforce planning.

3.5.7

Good progress has been made in respect of the Committee improvement agenda set out through the self-evaluation process, however further work is required in respect of better developing the scrutiny and assurance framework the committee operates within. Further development in respect of Best Value is also required as the HSCP moves into a period of structural change. There is also a requirement to fill the vacant member roles and ensure that members have access to the training and development they require to fulfil their roles effectively. The further development and improvement of the Committee should be considered an important priority for the coming year.

3.5.8

I am pleased to commend the work of the Committee to the IJB and provide assurance, that in my opinion, the Committee has operated effectively throughout the year and has discharged its responsibility with diligence. This opinion is formed on the basis of the totality of evidence considered by the Committee throughout the year. I would also like to acknowledge the role committee members, committee services, officers of the HSCP and auditors have played in facilitating the work of the Committee.

4. RELEVANT DATA AND INDICATORS

4.1 Minutes of Audit & Risk Committee meetings and related papers.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

for any changes agreed by the Audit & Risk Committee. The report should then be presented to the IJB.

The report concludes that the Audit & Risk Committee has performed its role effectively throughout 2021/22. It recognises the challenges faced by management as a consequence of Covid-19 and the significant change in senior staff. The Committee has operated in line with its terms of reference and has received independent assurance from Internal and External Auditors throughout the year. It has scrutinised, in detail, the reports presented to the committee and has continued to seek to contribute to the development of the governance, assurance and risk framework of the HSCP.

13. DIRECTIONS

Directions required to Council, NHS Board or both.	**Directions to:**	tick
	No Directions required	√
	Argyll & Bute Council	
	NHS Highland Health Board	
	Argyll & Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board	

REPORT AUTHOR AND CONTACT

Councillor Sandy Taylor, Chair of Audit & Risk Committee sandy.taylor@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Annual Internal Audit Report (TBC)
Appendix 2 – Annual External Audit Report