

AUDIT COMMITTEE

NOTICE AND AGENDA

For a meeting to be held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth on Thursday, 28 September 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee:-

Councillors:

Tony Humphreys (Chair)
Lisa Hudson
Khalid Hussain
Raj Khiroya
Jonathan Solomons

Ruth Clark (Vice-Chair)
Andrea Fraser
Ciaran Reed
Rue Grewal

*Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive
Wednesday, 20 September 2023*

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public on agenda items at the Audit Committee meetings. Details of the procedure are provided below:

For those wishing to speak:

Members of the public are entitled to register and identify which item(s) they wish to speak on from the published agenda for the meeting. Those who wish to register to speak are asked to register on the night of the meeting from 7pm. Please note that contributions will be limited to one person speaking for and one against each item for not more than three minutes.

In the event of registering your interest to speak on an agenda item but not taking up that right because the item is deferred, you will be given the right to speak on that item at the next meeting of the Committee.

Those wishing to observe the meeting are requested to arrive from 7pm.

In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 any matters considered under Part I business only of the meeting may be filmed, recorded, photographed, broadcast or reported via social media by any person.

Recording and reporting the Council's meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the recording and reporting to ensure compliance. This will include the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Legislation and the laws of libel and defamation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

(Pages 5
- 10)

To confirm as a correct record of the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 27 July 2023.

3. NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

Items of other business notified under Council Procedure Rule 30 to be announced, together with the special circumstances that justify their consideration as a matter of urgency. The Chair to rule on the admission of such items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

5. UPDATE FROM THE EXTERNAL AUDITORS - EY

6. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS UPDATE

The Head of Finance to provide a verbal update.

7. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY RISKS

(Pages
11 - 16)

This report advises the Committee on the latest position in respect of the evaluation of financial risks facing the Council for discussion and any recommendations or comments they wish to make.

8. INTRODUCTION OF NEW EXTERNAL AUDITORS FROM 2023/24

9. TRDC SIAS PROGRESS REPORT AGAINST THE 2023-23 AUDIT PLAN

(Pages
17 - 54)

This report details:

- a) Progress made by the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) in delivering the Council's annual audit plan for 2023/24 as at 15 September 2023.
- b) Proposed amendments to the approved 2023/24 Annual Audit Plan.
- c) Implementation status of all previously agreed audit recommendations from 2019/20 onwards.
- d) An update on performance management information as at 15 September 2023.

Recommendation:

- Note the Internal Audit Progress Report for the period to 15 September 2023
- Approve amendments to the Audit Plan as at 15 September 2023
- Agree changes to the implementation date for 1 audit recommendation (paragraph 2.5) for the reason set out in Appendices 3 to 6
- Agree removal of implemented audit recommendations (Appendices 3

to 6)

10. AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

(Pages
55 - 58)

This report sets out the Audit Committee's latest Work Programme to enable the Committee to make updates as required.

11. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If the Committee wishes to consider the remaining item in private, it will be appropriate for a resolution to be passed in the following terms:-

“that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

(Note: If other confidential business is approved under item 3, it will also be necessary to specify the class of exempt or confidential information in the additional items.)

12. OTHER BUSINESS - if approved under item 3 above

Livestreaming details

To watch the meeting remotely please use the livestream details below:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NzhhNjgzNjktMmJkNi00ODQ3LWE3NWUtMTQ0YzBjOGMzOTEz%40thread.v2/0?context=%7B%22Tid%22%3A%2258420664-1284-4d81-9225-35da8165ae7a%22%2C%22Oid%22%3A%22e4bd9f48-5936-485c-82c1-bd8660567ae4%22%2C%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3Atrue%2C%22role%22%3A%22a%22%7D&btype=a&role=a

General Enquiries: Please contact the Committee Team at
committeeteam@threeivers.gov.uk

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Audit Committee held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Thursday, 27 July 2023 from 7.30 - 8.29 pm

Present:

Councillors
Tony Humphreys (Chair)
Councillor Ruth Clark (Vice Chair)
Andra Fraser
Ciaran Reed
Sara Bedford (In place of Raj Khiroya)

Officers in Attendance:

Hanah Doney TRDC, Darren Williams SIAS, Garry Turner, TRDC

AC6/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lisa Hudson, Jonathon Soloms, Rue Grewal, Raj Khiroya (with the substitute for Cllr Khiroya being Councillor Sara Bedford).

AC7/23 MINUTES

The Minutes for the Audit Committee meeting held on 28 March 2023 and the Special Audit Committee meeting held on 30 May 2023 and were signed by the Chair.

AC8/23 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

None received.

AC9/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

AC10/23 UPDATE FROM EY (EXTERNAL AUDITORS) ON AUDITS

The External Auditors advised that the 2019/20 audit was still ongoing and had not been completed due to NHS work in May and June. Progress had started again in July. There had been a number of complex findings and a lot of management time required to go through the adjustments. The nature of the adjustments had required additional samples and testing. The Assistant Manager was now assisting and hoped to conclude as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

Noted the update.

AC11/23 ANNUAL FRAUD REPORT 2023

The Fraud Manager presented to the Committee the annual fraud report.

For matters which fell outside the Council boundaries collaboration work had been undertaken with other agencies.

In 2022-23 the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy, the mechanism for achieving a commitment to reduce losses to fraud and corruption, was revised and approved. In addition the Council

approved a new Sanctions Policy and Anti Bribery Policy. The Sanctions Policy sets out the Councils policy towards sanctions, including criminal prosecutions, relating to offences committed by both internal (e.g. employees, members, contactors, etc.) and external offenders. The Anti Bribery Policy provides a framework to enable employees and Members to understand and implement arrangements enabling compliance. The Councils Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) policy was also revised to reflect and align with the new codes of practice.

A total of 82 cases were completed with savings identified through overpayments of circa £58,000. Of these cases 6 received a sanction. Details on the specific types of matches was provided in Paragraph 2.12.7 with 624 in total.

A Member asked a question regarding rates for debts and what our success rate was. The Fraud Manager advised that recovery was undertaken by the Revenue and Benefits Team but could provide details as a post meeting note in the minutes.

It was noted that members of the public can report anonymously any fraud through the online fraud hotline or on the website.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

AC12/23 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS UPDATE

This report set out the latest position for external audit of the Statement of Accounts for 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. It also provided an update on the transition to the new external auditors, Azets, from 2023/24 onwards. It was proposed the new auditors would attend the September meeting.

The Head of Finance reported that the 2019/20 accounts required work on the fixed asset register to be completed. The 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 accounts audit would continue in the autumn and into 2024. A draft audit plan would be presented to the Committee in December or March, and it was hoped that it would be possible to conclude the audit of the 2023/24 accounts within the Statutory timeframe of 30 September 2024. However, this timetable was dependent on the completion of the prior year audits before July 2024.

In response to a Member question on why we had ended up in this position and what was the plan going forward to get the accounts completed in the statutory timeframe, the Head of Finance advised that for the 2022/23 accounts it was hoped these would be completed by March next year although the competition may slip beyond that. EY were confident they would be able to get the work completed. On the 2019/20 accounts the fixed asset register had not been as robust as it needed to be, and revised accounting treatment had been agreed in relation to the South Oxhey Initiative and this did require changes to be made around the classification of assets. This was identified by the auditors when reviewing the 2019/20 accounts following changes to the auditing standards.

A Member asked what the backup plan was if the accounts were not completed before EY leave. The Head of Finance advised that EY would work with the Council until all the accounts were concluded. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUC) had issued a letter with regard to a backstop date for the completion of the audits but had not specified what the back stop date is. The Council were looking to get the 2019/20 accounts completed by December and the 2020/21 accounts by March 2024.

RESOLVED:

Noted the progress and latest timetable for completion of the external audit of the statement of accounts for 2019/20 onwards.

AC13/23 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

The Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2022/23.

The report met the requirements of both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

During 2022/23 the minimum reporting requirements were that the full Council should receive the following reports:

- An annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Council February 2022)
- A mid-year year review (December Audit Committee)
- An annual review following the end of the year describing activity compared to the strategy.

The regulatory environment places responsibility on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. The report provided details of the year end position for treasury activities and highlighted compliance with the Council's policies approved by Members.

This Council had complied with the requirement under the Code to give scrutiny to all treasury management reports by this Committee. Following scrutiny by the Committee, the report will be presented to Full Council in October.

The key actual prudential and treasury indicators detailing the impact of capital expenditure activities during the year were provided at Paragraph 1.2.1 and details on our investment returns and percentage rates were provided in Paragraph 2.12.4.

RESOLVED:

Noted the Treasury Management Annual Report.

AC14/23 SIAS ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

The Committee received the SIAS Annual report.

SIAS are the Council's internal auditors and provided an internal audit service for 8 authorities in Hertfordshire. Herts County Council (HCC) are the host partner and all staff are HCC employees. The Head of Finance at TRDC has a seat on the Partnership Board.

3,000 audit days were covered each year by SIAS with 17 staff employed with the use of BDO as an external audit support.

A Member asked about the number of audit days delivered but noted that the draft reports produced had not reached the target. SIAS advised that there had been vacancies in the team and it had been difficult to replace staff due to insufficient professional auditors. Days delivered was 94% of the 95% target by 31 March 2023. The remaining days were delivered by our external partner which did not cost any further funding and did not deplete resources.

With regard to draft reports 90% were completed across the partnership by the end of the year but by Period 1 95% of the draft reports had been completed in time for when the Annual Assurance statement was presented to the Committee in May. The Performance Indicator was proposed to be amended for 2023/24 with details provided in the next report.

RESOLVED:

Noted SIAS annual report.

AC15/23 TRDC SIAS PROGRESS REPORT AGAINST THE 2023/24 AUDIT PLAN

SIAS advised that this was regular progress report presented to the Committee on progress against the 2023/24 audit plan. There was one limited opinion with regard to property services which focussed on garages and the transfer of data onto a new database. Details on the recommendations and current status of the audits were provided in the appendices to the report.

Section 2.4 of the report summarised the outstanding recommendations and revised implementation dates which had been provided by officers.

Appendices 3 to 6 provided details on the current status of the outstanding recommendations.

16% of the planned audit days had been completed.

It was advised that for future years indicator 2 (planned projects) the target would change to 90% although SIAS would be ensuring that 100% of audits would be at the draft report stage by the time the Annual Assurance statement is presented to the Audit Committee at the end of May.

RESOLVED:

Note the Internal Audit Progress Report for the period to 14 July 2023

Approved amendments to the Audit Plan as at 14 July 2023

Agreed changes to the implementation dates for seven audit recommendations (paragraph 2.5) for the reasons set out in Appendices 3 to 6

Agreed removal of implemented audit recommendations (Appendices 3 to 6)

AC16/23 FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY RISK REPORT

This report advised the Committee on the latest position in respect of the evaluation of financial risks facing the Council for discussion and any recommendations or comments they wish to make.

The Head of Finance advised that while inflation remained high it would influence pay awards which would be above the level in the budget. The Council were currently preparing the first quarterly financial monitoring report and reviewing the assumptions in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The Council had reasonable reserves in place.

Members raised the following points:

On risk FIN09 they referred to some delays with a project which had resulted in increased costs due to high inflation. The Head of Finance advised that officers were mindful of this and would be ensuring project costs were clearly set out as part of the budget setting process to ensure more robust assumptions and not underestimating the costs. Officers will also be reviewing the wording around budgetary control.

On reputation risks to the Council how far in advance should the funding be requested and whether the request should be made once the project was further forward. The Head of Finance advised that there needed to be Member commitment to the funding before work could progress too far, but officers would take a look at this part of the processes.

On risk FIN08 the pay award could potentially be higher than what is included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan

On risk FIN18 the Business Rates and seen significant revaluations for 2023 which introduced additional risk of appeals which could result in a reduction to income. The Head of Finance advised that additional risks had been included following the recent revaluations undertaken by the VOA. TRDC had seen the highest increase in rateable values across the County and could face an appeal although the recent revaluations should be cost neutral. Advice was being sought from LG Futures.

RESOLVED:

Reviewed and noted the risk register and the individual risks included.

AC17/23 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received their work programme.

It was requested that the two sets of training be delivered separately, and the Head of Finance agreed to organise a virtual training session for the “role of the audit committee” ahead of the September meeting.

RESOLVED:

Noted the work programme.

Agreed to organise a separate virtual training session on the role of the audit committee.

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AUDIT COMMITTEE – 28 SEPTEMBER 2023

PART I – DELEGATED

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY RISKS (DoF)

Summary

- 1.1 This report advises the Committee on the latest position in respect of the evaluation of financial risks facing the Council for discussion and any recommendations or comments they wish to make.

Details

- 2.1 There have been no changes to the risks included on the Financial and Budgetary Risk Register or risk scores since the last report to Audit Committee. Updates to the action plan have been provided where action has been taken or planned or further information has become available.
- 2.2 Inflation is likely to remain a key risk throughout 2023/24 and the impact will continue to be closely monitored with the impact reported through the financial monitoring report and budget setting reports.
- 2.3 The inherent risk score for FIN08, FIN09 and FIN10 has been increased reflecting the increased likelihood of these risks occurring in the current economic environment. However, the residual risk score, after risk controls and mitigation has not been increased as the Council remains well placed to manage these risks.

Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The recommendations allow the Committee to review the financial risks faced by the Council and record any comments it wishes to make in respect of individual risks.

Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

Financial, Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

- 5.1 None specific.

Recommendation

- 6.1 That the Committee review the risk register and make any comments it wishes to make against individual risks.

Report prepared by: Hannah Doney, Head of Finance

Data Quality

Data sources: Budget Monitoring Reports & Budget setting report (Liberal Democrat)

Data checked by: Head of Finance.

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	
3	High	√

Background Papers

Impact of Inflation on the Council - paper to Policy & Resources Committee 18 July 2022

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 - Financial Risk Register

Date risk added to register	Risk ref	Risk owner	Category	Risk description	Comment	Likelihood score (inherent)	Impact score (inherent)	Inherent risk score	Risk controls	Risk control owners	Likelihood score (residual)	Impact score (residual)	Residual risk score	Risk direction	Action plan	Action plan owners	Action plan completion dates
Sep-15	FIN07	Director of Finance	Strategic	The Medium term financial position worsens.	In that the general fund balance falls below the minimum prudent threshold and capital funding is insufficient to meet the capital programme. This appears as item no.8 in the Council's strategic risk register.	4	4	16	The Council has a robust financial management framework which includes regular budget monitoring reports to committees; Budgetary and Financial Risk Register reviewed and updated as part of the budget monitoring process; identification of budgetary pressure when reviewing the medium term financial plan during the budget setting process; Audited Statement of Accounts, including Annual Governance Statement. Currently the 2019/20 annual accounts are awaiting sign off from the external auditors and 2020/21 annual accounts are well progressed.	Head of Finance	3	2	6	→	Regular budget monitoring reports to committees; Budgetary and Financial Risk Register reviewed and updated as part of the budget monitoring process; identification of budgetary pressure when reviewing the medium term financial plan during the budget setting process which includes a risk assessment for the prudent level of general balances and an assessment of financial resilience with reference to the CIPFA Financial resilience index.	Heads of Service/ Head of Finance	Continuous
Apr-06	FIN08	Director of Finance	Budgetary	The pay award exceeds estimates included in the MTFP resulting in unplanned and unsustainable use of reserves.	The Council's 3 year Medium term Financial Strategy includes forecast pay awards for the next three years.	4	3	12	Maintain reserves to guard against risk. Early identification of new pressures through Budget Monitoring.	Head of Finance	3	2	6	↑	The Council's 3 year Medium term Financial Strategy includes forecast pay awards for the next three years. The Council maintains reserves to guard against risk including setting a prudent minimum level for general balances. Early identification of new pressures through Budget Monitoring enable the Council to take steps to bring the budget back into balance.	Head of Finance	Continuous
Apr-06	FIN09	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Other inflationary increases exceed estimates included in the MTFP resulting in unplanned and unsustainable use of reserves.	Other than contractual agreements, budgets are cash limited where possible and budget managers are expected to manage increases within existing budgets.	3	3	9	Monitor future inflation projections. Actively manage budgets to contain inflation. Maintain reserves.	Service Heads/Head of Finance	3	2	6	↑	Monitor future inflation projections. Actively manage budgets and contracts to contain inflation. The Council maintains reserves to guard against risk including setting a prudent minimum level for general balances. Early identification of new pressures through Budget Monitoring enable the Council to take steps to bring the budget back into balance.	Head of Finance	Continuous
Jan-15	FIN10	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Interest rates increase or decrease resulting in significant variations in estimated interest income (investments) or interest expense (borrowing)	The interest rate has a significant impact on the proceeds from capital receipts and other earmarked reserves that are invested in the money market. The volatility of the global economy continues to place uncertainty on the investment strategy.	3	3	9	The Council has a Treasury Management Strategy which is reviewed annually. PIB strategy has diversified interest rate risk to provide income security.	PIB/Head of Finance	3	3	9	→	The Audit Committee receives two reports per year on Treasury Management activity and interest income and expenditure is monitored through the Budget Monitoring Report.	PIB	Continuous

Date risk added to register	Risk ref	Risk owner	Category	Risk description	Comment	Likelihood score (inherent)	Impact score (inherent)	Inherent risk score	Risk controls	Risk control owners	Likelihood score (residual)	Impact score (residual)	Residual risk score	Risk direction	Action plan	Action plan owners	Action plan completion dates
Apr-06	FIN11	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Inaccurate estimates of fees and charges income and / or estimates of cost of delivering chargeable services result in budgetary pressure.	A budget pressure is created due to income shortfalls or increased expenditure	3	2	6	Budget levels realistically set and closely scrutinised	Service Heads/Head of Finance	2	2	4	➡	Fees and charges, including and surplus or loss are monitored through budget monitoring with key income streams reported to CMT.	Service Heads	Continuous
Apr-06	FIN12	Director of Finance	Budgetary	The Council loses the ability to recover VAT as a result of exceeding the partial exemption threshold resulting in budgetary pressure.	If the council's expenditure on functions for which it receives income that is exempt for VAT purposes exceeds 5% of its total vatable expenditure, then the Council may lose its ability to recover VAT on all of its exempt inputs. This is mitigated by close monitoring of exempt supplies and prudent VAT planning. The Council elects to tax on development schemes.	2	4	8	VAT Planning and opt to tax on schemes. VAT advisers employed.	Head of Finance	1	4	4	➡	Partial Exemption Review is undertaken annually with support provided by the Council's external tax advisors, PS Tax. The Council continue to opt to tax land where appropriate.	Head of Finance	Continuous
Dec-03	FIN13	Director of Finance	Budgetary	The estimated cost reductions and additional income gains set out in the MTFP are not achieved resulting in an unplanned and unsustainable use of reserves.	Savings identified and included in the budget will be monitored as part of the budget monitoring process. See fees and charges above. MTFP agreed for next three years.	2	3	6	Service Heads to take responsibility for achieving savings. Budget monitoring to highlight any issues to allow corrective action to be taken.	Service Heads/Head of Finance	2	2	4	➡	Budget process to clearly identify savings to be achieved and ensure clarity over responsibility over delivery. Savings to be challenged.	Head of Finance	Continuous
Apr-06	FIN14	Director of Finance	Budgetary	The Council is faced with potential litigation and other employment related risks	The Council has no outstanding litigation cases.	2	3	6	Council procedures are adhered to	Solicitor to the Council	1	3	3	➡	Adherence to council procedures to be monitored and procedures maintained.	Solicitor to the Council	ongoing

Date risk added to register	Risk ref	Risk owner	Category	Risk description	Comment	Likelihood score (inherent)	Impact score (inherent)	Inherent risk score	Risk controls	Risk control owners	Likelihood score (residual)	Impact score (residual)	Residual risk score	Risk direction	Action plan	Action plan owners	Action plan completion dates
Dec-13	FIN18	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Business Rates Retention fluctuates impacting on the amount of funding received by the Council.	From April 2020 the system was due to be subject to reset and increase to 75% retention resulting in a loss of growth. This has been further postponed to 2025/26. However, the significant revaluations for 2023 introduce additional risk of appeals which could result in a reduction to income.	3	4	12	Maintain reserves against risk.	Head of Finance	3	3	9	→	Hertfordshire CFOs continue to work with LG Futures to assess the impact on individual Councils in Hertfordshire and the impact on the ability to create a business rate pool for 2024/25. The scale of appeals is still unknown but this is likely to become clearer over the next 24 months as transitional relief reduces for businesses impacted by the increases in rateable value.	Director of Finance	Continuous
Jul-16	FIN20	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Failure of ICT systems	The Council's integrated Financial Management System (FMS) is held on an ICT platform. If this were to fail then potentially there will be a loss of functionality occurring during any downtime.	3	2	6	System migrated to latest version. Payments system updated.	Head of Finance	1	2	2	→	Monitor reliability	Head of Finance	Continuous
Mar-18	FIN21	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Property Investment	The Property Investment Board manage its property portfolio in order to secure additional income to support its general fund.	2	3	6	Portfolio to be actively managed to maintain income levels. Income to be reviewed regularly when MTFP is updated.	Head of Property Services	1	3	3	→	PIB to assume responsibility for ongoing oversight.	Head of Property Services	Continuous
Sep-18	FIN23	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Commercial Investment	The Council has limited options to further improve self sustainability through commercial investment following changes to the the Prudential Code for Capital Finance and changes to PWLB borrowing regulations. Currently there is a	3	2	6	Oversight mechanisms to be put in place to ensure oversight by PIB or similar mechanism. Council to determine approach to risk and level of income dependency within budget.	Head of Finance	2	2	4	→	Monitor new developments. Investments overseen by the cross party Shareholder and Commercial Ventures Panel.	Head of Property Services	Continuous
Nov-19	FIN 24	Director of Finance	Service	Loss of Key Personnel	As the Council becomes more complex in its financial arrangements, key skills become more important.	3	4	12	Improve depth of skills and knowledge. Bring in temporary additional resources as necessary.	Head of Finance	1	3	3	→	Following a revision of job descriptions, minor amendments to the structure, and a successful recruitment campaign during 2022/23, the Finance team is currently fully staffed. All staff have an annual Personal Development Review which contains smart objectives including objectives related to career development and identification of training needs and opportunities.	Chief Executive/ Director of Finance	Continuous

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Three Rivers District Council Audit Committee Progress Report 28 September 2023

Recommendation

Members are recommended to:

- Note the Internal Audit Progress Report for the period to 15 September 2023
- Approve amendments to the Audit Plan as at 15 September 2023
- Agree changes to the implementation date for 1 audit recommendation (paragraph 2.5) for the reason set out in Appendices 3 to 6
- Agree removal of implemented audit recommendations (Appendices 3 to 6)

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 - 1.1 Purpose of Report
 - 1.2 Background

- 2 Audit Plan Update
 - 2.1 Delivery of Audit Plan and Key Findings
 - 2.3 Audit Recommendations
 - 2.6 Proposed Audit Plan Amendments
 - 2.7 Audit Plan Delivery Progress

Appendices

- 1 Progress against the 2023/24 Audit Plan
- 2 2023/24 Audit Plan Projected Start Dates
- 3-6 Progress against Outstanding Internal Audit Recommendations
- 7 Assurance and Priority Levels

1. Introduction and Background

Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report details:
- a) Progress made by the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) in delivering the Council's annual audit plan for 2023/24 as at 15 September 2023.
 - b) Proposed amendments to the approved 2023/24 Annual Audit Plan.
 - c) Implementation status of all previously agreed audit recommendations from 2019/20 onwards.
 - d) An update on performance management information as at 15 September 2023.

Background

- 1.2 The work of internal audit is required to be reported to a Member Body so that the Council has an opportunity to review and monitor an essential component of corporate governance and gain assurance that its internal audit provision is fulfilling its statutory obligations. It is considered good practice that progress reports also include proposed amendments to the agreed annual audit plan.
- 1.3 The 2023/24 Annual Audit Plan was approved by Audit Committee on 28 March 2023.
- 1.4 The Audit Committee receives periodic updates on progress against the Annual Audit Plan from SIAS, the most recent of which was brought to this Committee on 27 July 2023.

2. Audit Plan Update

Delivery of Audit Plan and Key Audit Findings

- 2.1 At 15 September 2023, 28% of the 2023/24 Audit Plan days had been delivered (calculation excludes unused 'To Be Allocated'). Appendix A provides a status update on each individual deliverable within the audit plan.
- 2.2 The following 2022/23 final reports have been issued since the July 2023 Audit Committee.

Audit Title	Date of Issue	Assurance Level	Number and Priority of Recommendations
Payroll	Jul '23	Reasonable	One medium Three low
BCP	Jul '23	Reasonable	Three medium One low

Audit Title	Date of Issue	Assurance Level	Number and Priority of Recommendations
Fixed Asset Register	Sept '23	Reasonable	Two low

No 2023/24 audits have yet been finalised. The Revenues and Benefits system parameter testing review and the Taxi Licensing audit are both currently at draft report stage.

All Priority Audit Recommendations

- 2.3 Members will be aware that a Final Audit Report is issued when agreed by Management. This includes an agreement to implement the recommendations made. It is SIAS's responsibility to bring to Members' attention the implementation status of recommendations; it is the responsibility of officers to implement the recommendations by the agreed date.
- 2.4 The table below summarises progress in implementation of all outstanding internal audit recommendations as at 15 September 2023, with full details given in appendices 3 to 6:

Year	Number of Recommendations	Implemented	Not yet due	Outstanding & request made for extended time or no update provided	% implemented
2019/20	37	36	1	0	97%
2020/21	25	24	1	0	96%
2021/22	36	33	2	1	92%
2022/23	48	39	9	0	81%
2023/24	0	-	-	-	-

- 2.5 Since 27 July 2023 Audit Committee, extension to implementation dates have been requested by action owners for 1 recommendation as follows:
- One from the 2021/22 Complaints Handling audit, with a revised target date of 31 October 2023 (was 31 May 2023).

Proposed 2023/24 Audit Plan Amendments

- 2.6 In consultation with the Head of Finance and Chief Accountant, the scope of the Main Accounting – Assurance Mapping review has been defined and will also cover Creditors. A Control Risk Assessment approach will be adopted and will be delivered in conjunction with the Key Financial Controls Testing review in October.

Reporting of Audit Plan Delivery Progress

- 2.7 To help the Committee assess the current position in terms of progress against the projects in the 2023/24 Audit Plan, an analysis of agreed start dates is shown at Appendix 2. Dates have been agreed with management and resources allocated accordingly.
- 2.8 The 2023/24 Annual performance indicators and targets were approved by the SIAS Board in March 2023. Actual performance for Three Rivers District Council (including the Shared Services Plan) against the targets that are monitored in year is set out in the table below.

Performance Indicator	Annual Target	Profiled Target to 15 September 2023	Actual to 15 September 2023
1. Planned Days – percentage of actual billable days against planned chargeable days completed (excludes unused contingency)	95%	32% (71 / 220 days)	28% (60.5 / 220 days)
2. Planned Projects – percentage of actual completed projects to draft report stage against planned completed projects by 31 st March 2024	95%	30% (5 out of 17 projects to draft)	12% (2 out of 17 projects to draft)
3. Planned Projects – percentage of actual completed projects to Final report stage against planned completed projects by the production of the HoA Annual Report	100%	N/A	N/A New Indicator – first measurement will be May 2024 (Currently 0/17 delivered to final report)
4. Client Satisfaction – percentage of client satisfaction questionnaires returned at 'satisfactory overall' level (minimum of 39/65 overall)	95%	100%	100% (based on two received from thirteen issued in 2023/24)
5. Number of Critical and High Priority Audit Recommendations agreed	95%	95%	100% (based on one high priority recommendation made)

2.9 In addition, the performance targets listed below are annual in nature. Performance against these targets will be reported on in the 2023/24 Head of Assurance's Annual Report:

- **6. Annual Plan** – prepared in time to present to the March meeting of each Audit Committee. If there is no March meeting, then the plan should be prepared for the first meeting of the financial year.
- **7. Head of Assurance's Annual Report** – presented at the Audit Committee's first meeting of the civic year.

APPENDIX 1 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24 – UPDATE ON POSITION AS AT 15 SEPTEMBER 2023

2023/24 SIAS Audit Plan

AUDITABLE AREA	LEVEL OF ASSURANCE	RECS				AUDIT PLAN DAYS	LEAD AUDITOR ASSIGNED	BILLABLE DAYS COMPLETED	STATUS/COMMENT
		C	H	M	L				
Key Financial Systems									
Benefits (Shared Services Plan)						10	No	0	Not Yet Allocated
Debt Recovery (Shared Services Plan)						12	No	0	Not Yet Allocated
Key Financial Controls Testing (Shared Services Plan)						10	BDO	1	In Planning
Main Accounting / Creditors – Control Risk Assessment (Shared Services Plan)						10	SIAS	1	In Planning
Payroll (Shared Services Plan)						10	No	0	Not Yet Allocated
Parameters Testing (Shared Services Plan)						3	SIAS	3	Draft Report Issued
Operational Audits									
Agency Staffing (Shared Services Plan)						12	SIAS	1	In Planning
Emergency Planning						8	No	0	Not Yet Allocated
Performance Management / Data Quality						15	No	0	Not Yet Allocated
Property Services						10	No	0	Not Yet Allocated
Safeguarding						10	BDO	8	In Fieldwork
Taxi Licensing						9	SIAS	8.5	Draft Report Issued
Temporary Accommodation						8	No	0	Not Yet Allocated

APPENDIX 1 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24 – UPDATE ON POSITION AS AT 15 SEPTEMBER 2023

AUDITABLE AREA	LEVEL OF ASSURANCE	RECS				AUDIT PLAN DAYS	LEAD AUDITOR ASSIGNED	BILLABLE DAYS COMPLETED	STATUS/COMMENT
		C	H	M	L				
Watersmeet Theatre						8	SIAS	5	In Fieldwork
Contract Management									
Procurement of Play Areas / Small Outdoor Leisure Facilities						8	No	0	Not Yet Allocated
Grant Certifications									
Grant claims – to be determined						4	No	0	Not Yet Allocated
IT Audits									
IT Operations (Shared Services Plan)						15	BDO	8	In Fieldwork
Cyber Security (Shared Services Plan)						15	BDO	0	Allocated
To Be Allocated									
Unused Contingency (Shared Services Plan)						0	N/A	0	N/A
Follow-Up Audits									
Follow-up of outstanding audit recommendations						8	Yes	4	Through Year
Strategic Support									
2024/25 Audit Planning						5	Yes	0	Allocated
Audit Committee						8	Yes	3.5	Through Year
Head of Internal Audit Opinion						3	Yes	3	Complete

APPENDIX 1 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24 – UPDATE ON POSITION AS AT 15 SEPTEMBER 2023

AUDITABLE AREA	LEVEL OF ASSURANCE	RECS				AUDIT PLAN DAYS	LEAD AUDITOR ASSIGNED	BILLABLE DAYS COMPLETED	STATUS/COMMENT
		C	H	M	L				
2022/23									
Monitoring and Client Meetings						7	Yes	3	Through Year
SIAS Development						3	Yes	3	Complete
2022/23 Projects Requiring Completion									
2022/23 Projects Requiring Completion (5 days TRDC plan / 4 days Shared Services Plan)						9		8.5	In Progress
TRDC TOTAL						119		43	
SHARED SERVICES TOTAL						101		17.5	
COMBINED TOTAL						220		60.5	

Key to recommendation priority levels:
 C = Critical, H = High, M = Medium, L = Low

APPENDIX 2 2023/24 AUDIT PLAN PROJECTED START DATES

Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept
	Parameters Testing (Shared Services Plan) Draft Report Issued	IT Operations (Shared Services Plan) In Fieldwork	Agency Staffing (Shared Services Plan) In Planning	Watersmeet Theatre In Fieldwork	Debt Recovery (Shared Services Plan)
	Safeguarding In Fieldwork		Taxi Licensing Draft Report Issued		Performance Management / Data Quality

Page 26	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Key Financial Controls Testing (Shared Services Plan) In Planning		Benefits (Shared Services Plan)	Payroll (Shared Services Plan)	Cyber Security (Shared services plan)		
Property		Temporary Accommodation	Procurement of Play Areas / Small Outdoor Leisure Facilities	Emergency Planning		
Main Accounting / Creditors – Control Risk						

APPENDIX 2 2023/24 AUDIT PLAN PROJECTED START DATES

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Assessment (Shared Services Plan) In Planning **					

** Start date moved from August to October, see section 2.6.

APPENDIX 3 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2019/20 AUDIT PLAN

Property (Rent and Lease Administration) 2019/20							
Final report issued October 2019							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
01	We recommend that the Council review the systems used to maintain records of Council owned properties.	Medium	<p>Position (July 2022) The Trace (Bluebox) Property Management System 'Trace' was acquired on 31 March 2022. After an extensive procurement process, Trace was chosen as it best satisfied the brief and provided a system accessible for casual users (Customer Services Team) and professional users (Property Services). The test databases were uploaded to Traces' cloud-hosted servers and training on how to operate the system has commenced with a number of Officers from the wider Project Team.</p> <p>The Capita 360 Managed Direct Debit system went live on the 1 April 2022 and has successfully been collecting and processing garage rent payments since that time. This workstream is now complete.</p> <p>Our appointed Trace Project Manager has helped to determine how the data from the Capita Academy System and that held on TRDC's Uniform Idox System can be uploaded into standardised templates, which will allow basic asset information, such as address and UPRN to be established on the system very quickly. As stated previously, Officers anticipate that to fully utilise the Trace system, manual data extraction and input will take up to 18 months.</p> <p>Position (September 2022) Following the July 2022 update, progress on the implementation of the Property Management System continues at pace. Data</p>				

APPENDIX 3 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2019/20 AUDIT PLAN

Property (Rent and Lease Administration) 2019/20							
Final report issued October 2019							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
Page 29			<p>held on the Councils IDOX system has been identified and a bulk extraction & cleansing of that a data has commenced.</p> <p>Mapping data held on the Council's ArcGIS system and ownership data held by the Land Registry is being compared, so that an accurate, and up to date ownership 'layer' can be produced. Once completed, this work will significantly reduce the time taken to establish ownership of TRDC assets and respond to customers. The mapping data will be cross-referenced with the Property Management System so that changes in ownership, new lettings or lease terminations can be reflected in the mapping 'spatial' data (mapping layers).</p> <p>The priority since acquiring the Property Management System is to have the garage properties/tenant records populated and the system fully functional for garage management as soon as possible. The Project Team had set a target date of the end of October 2022 to reach that stage and we are well on track to meet that target.</p> <p>Position (November 2022) Basic data on TRDC's property assets is currently being added to the Trace 'upload' spreadsheets and this work is likely to be concluded by the end of 2022. A data extract report is being downloaded from the IDOX system and any useful information will be added to the Trace spreadsheet for uploading to the system.</p>	Head of Property Services / Property & Legal Services Teams	31 January 2024	*On target	

APPENDIX 3 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2019/20 AUDIT PLAN

Property (Rent and Lease Administration) 2019/20							
Final report issued October 2019							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
Page 30			<p>A complete ownership layer of assets and unregistered assets has been created by the Council's GIS Officer. This is a major step forward in being able to visually identify land owned or occupied by TRDC, without the need to download Land Registry Office Copies. The next stage is to correlate the data held on the GIS system with data being uploaded in the Trace system – these are likely to be linked by reference to the UPRN (Unique Property Reference Number).</p> <p>The garage management aspect of the Property Management System is now operational. This follows an intensive period of data-loading, testing and training. CSC colleagues are now getting to grips with the new system in order to manage the Council's garage estate. Minor improvements and amendments will e made in the coming weeks and months, but this stage marks a major milestone in the roll out of the Property Management System.</p> <p>Position (March 2023) The garage management data has been uploaded into the Trace system. Final data reconciliation and testing between the Property and CSC Teams is nearing completion and the official 'go live' for garage management via the Trace system will commence from 1 April 2023. This is all on target.</p> <p>The focus now switches to collating and uploading data relating to TRDC's Commercial Estate. The property and asset addresses</p>				

APPENDIX 3 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2019/20 AUDIT PLAN

Property (Rent and Lease Administration) 2019/20							
Final report issued October 2019							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
Page 31			<p>have been uploaded into the system and the next stage of work will shared between the Property & Legal Teams. Presently both Teams are recruiting key individuals who will lead on this work for the respective Services. In the intervening period, colleagues from the Property Team will continue with scoping and data collection work.</p> <p>Position (July 2023) Garage data has been loaded and reconciled and the Property Management system is being used for the management of garages – reports and processes have been provided.</p> <p>The GIS link has been applied and is currently being tested.</p> <p>Recruitment for a temporary staff member has commenced and once in place will continue with the data collection for the commercial properties.</p> <p>Position (September 2023) GIS link is working. The temporary Officer has been appointed and will start to load the commercial property data. A full procedure has been created to ensure consistency. Full training will be given. Financial data is being collated to compliment the PMS. On target for completion 31st January 2024</p>				

APPENDIX 4 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2020/21 AUDIT PLAN

Garage Income 2020/21 Final report issued October 2020							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
01	We recommend that the service should have written procedure notes for the raising of invoices to provide clarity and consistency.	Medium	<p>Position (September 2022) Currently the new Paye360 system is now in place and all garage tenants have to be signed up for Direct Debit payment. The opening year's bill is sent out in March every year to inform of any possible annual increases/changes, total amount of the full year's garage rent, and the breakdown of instalments for this amount to be taken throughout the financial year (like Council Tax).</p> <p>The system which will run alongside this to manage tenancies has now been purchased and is currently being configured by the Property Services Department in conjunction with the supplier.</p> <p>The new system is in the process of being configured so that the data transfer upload can take place from the current system. The aim is that the new system will be ready to launch within September 2022 and once the system is up and running procedure notes will be created.</p> <p>Position (November 2022) Currently the new Paye360 system is now in place and all garage tenants have to be signed up for Direct Debit payment. The opening year's bill is sent out in March every year to inform of any possible annual increases/changes, total amount of the full year's garage rent, and the breakdown of instalments for this amount to be taken throughout the financial year (like Council Tax)</p>	Customer Services Manager	31 May 2021	✓	30 Sept 2021 28 Feb 2022 31 May 2022 30 Sept 2022 31 January 2023 31 May 2023 30 Sept 2023

APPENDIX 4 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2020/21 AUDIT PLAN

Garage Income 2020/21							
Final report issued October 2020							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
Page 33			<p>The system which will run alongside this to manage tenancies has now been purchased and is currently being configured by the Property Services Department in conjunction with the supplier.</p> <p>Due to delays with the data transfer the revised timescale is for the system to be live within December 2022 and once the system is up and running procedure notes will be created.</p> <p>Position (March 2023) Training has taken place with staff to show operation and function of the new system. Old garage system has now been turned off. System data is running from April 2022 so currently working off spreadsheets to update the new system. In discussion with Property to produce working manual. Currently working on year end and the new bills for 2023/24 which have seen an increase to new 9 rental bandings.</p> <p>Position (July 2023) Property Services are now managing the garage stock with admin support from Customer Services. Responsibility now lies with the Property Estates Surveyor.</p> <p>Annual rent increase notifications have been sent to all current tenants across 9 rental bandings. New property management system is now live and operational and will now manage all aspects of the garage stock going forwards. Procedure notes are now being finalised for the 2024/25 annual rent notifications. (30th September 2023).</p>				

APPENDIX 4 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2020/21 AUDIT PLAN

Garage Income 2020/21							
Final report issued October 2020							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
			<p>Position (September 2023) The Property Management Systems Trace Solution is now up and running. User manuals and procedure notes have been created.</p>				

Debtors 2020/21							
Final report issued June 2021							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
03	Consideration should be given to an annual review of debtor accounts to identify duplicate or dormant for deletion or deactivation.	Low	<p>Position – July 2021 We will speak to Finance about the best way of doing this.</p> <p>Position – September 2021 A complete review of the entire Sundry Debtor service has recently been commenced and this will be included as part of the review.</p> <p>Position – November 2021 No update received.</p> <p>Position – February 2022 No update received.</p> <p>Position – July 2022 To date we have not been able to resource this review as we have had to prioritise Grant work and more recently the Council Tax Energy Rebates. We will pick up this project towards the end of the calendar year once the Energy rebate work is completed.</p>	Recovery Team Leader, Revenues Manager and Finance.	31 August 2021	*	<p>31 October 2021</p> <p>31 October 2022</p> <p>31 December 2022</p> <p>30 June 2023</p> <p>31 December 2023</p>

APPENDIX 4 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2020/21 AUDIT PLAN

Debtors 2020/21							
Final report issued June 2021							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
Page 35			<p>Position – August 2022 No update received – target date not yet reached.</p> <p>Update received September 2022 but after reporting deadline for September 2022 Audit Committee: Finance are going to run and extract this data from the Finance System which Revs & Bens will then check. It may be completed before 30 October 2022; it really depends on how many are on the list.</p> <p>Position – November 2022 The lists were provided by Finance mid-September, but work has not yet commenced as the entire Revs and Bens Service was delivering the Energy Fuel Rebate payments. Work will commence on the lists, week commencing 14.11.22.</p> <p>Position – February 2023 Revs and Bens have not had the capacity to carry out this work yet as resource has diverted to Energy Fuel Rebate schemes and resource has been very low due to long term staff sickness. Revs and Bens will take ownership of checking duplicate customer account and deleting those where we are certain there is no current billing rule. Finance and the individual services will need to take responsibility for deleting or de-activating old accounts. We will remind them of this requirement.</p> <p>Position – July 2023 The list has been generated and there are 2252 accounts to check. Each one must be</p>				

APPENDIX 4 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2020/21 AUDIT PLAN

Debtors 2020/21							
Final report issued June 2021							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
Page 36			<p>checked individually before it can be decided if the duplicate entry can be deleted. Work has commenced on the checking / deletion. We are allocating a little resource to this each week as BAU work is extremely high currently so it will take some time to check all 2,000 accounts.</p> <p>Position – September 2023 This recommendation is a low priority, and we continue to be under resourced, which means the focus on housekeeping projects is not as high as we would like. This is progressing slowly because it needs to be managed around BAU. Some further analysis of the reports from Finance is needed because some customers should have multiple account references, where, for example they are being billed for different services, such as Rent, Trade Waste, or for multiple units if they are a larger business.</p>				

APPENDIX 5 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Section 106 2021/22 Final report issued March 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
02	<p>We recommend that the Land and Property Team review examples of information presented to members at other similar councils and identify what information is proportionate and appropriate to share with members (if any) to benchmark the information that could be shared. We then recommend that the team ask Members if they would like information to be circulated to them and what would be useful. This is to ensure the information is relevant and pertinent to members.</p> <p>Depending on the outcome of the above, we recommend that the Land and Property Team regularly report to Members with information they request.</p> <p>Furthermore, we recommend that corporate training is made available to ensure that the Land and Property Team can update the website as required.</p>	Low	<p>Information will be sent to Council Members on a quarterly basis via Members Information Bulletin. A review of information to be given to Members will be requested from other local authorities.</p> <p>Website training will be requested again to ensure that information can be updated as required.</p> <p>Position (July 2022) We are still considering what information would be of interest to Council Members. We have approached other local authorities in this respect, with mixed results. We are investigating information held by departments and how often this information is updated, to ensure that any information given is relevant, of benefit to Members and how often it should be reported. We will require a revised target in this respect. I would suggest that this is extended to the end of this financial year.</p> <p>Position (September 2022) The outstanding recommendation regarding notification of Section 106 information to Council Members is still being considered. It is important that up-to-date and informative information is given to Members in an easy to understand format and this is proving somewhat of a challenge. However, we are endeavouring to achieve this recommendation as soon as possible and at least within this financial year.</p> <p>Position (November 2022) We are continuing to speak to colleagues to</p>	Team Leader for Land and Property	30 June 2022	✓	<p>31 March 2023</p> <p>30 Sept 2023</p>

APPENDIX 5 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Section 106 2021/22							
Final report issued March 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
Page 38			<p>ensure the information we have and share is transparent, clear and can be easily understood. We still currently hope to get something in place prior to the end of the financial year.</p> <p>Position (March 2023) We created a further draft version of the information to Members and sent it to colleagues to how easy it was to understand. Based on comments received we have created another simplified version and are currently waiting for feedback. If this version is considered better, we will be able to send it to Members. We will use any comments from Members to make future changes, if required.</p> <p>Position (July 2023) Officers are anticipating completion of the S106 spreadsheet ready for the next Members Information Bulletin (due summer 2023).</p> <p>Position (September 2023) The S106 spreadsheet has been completed and will be circulated to Members (with S106 guidance) in the next Members Information Bulletin (late September 2023). It will then initially be circulated every 6 months increasing to quarterly if changes to the report start to occur more frequently. Action completed.</p> <p>The Councils new website was launched on 8th June 2023 and can only be updated via the Digital Services Team. A 'Request a change' form is held on the Intranet and can be completed by members of the Land & Property Information Section when</p>				

APPENDIX 5 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Section 106 2021/22							
Final report issued March 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
			changes are required. Action completed.				

Cyber Security 2021/22							
Final report issued April 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
01	<p>1.1 Management should ensure that appropriate monitoring controls are in place for the password monitoring and management activities. These should include but not be limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> brute-forcing of account passwords including password spraying, login attempts from unexpected geographic areas, unexpected account lockouts password database for the deny list hashes, other unusual behaviour from users. <p>1.2 The above proposed controls, once in place, should be actively reported upon, through the periodic cyber security reports, to the senior management.</p>	Medium	<p>01 Mar 2022 the Azure AD Password Protection was implemented. Users will not be able to change passwords to weak passwords nor known passwords nor passwords from our Ban List of passwords.</p> <p>1.1 – requires a third-party tool and associated funding would be required. The implementation of the password protection for Azure AD lowers the risk.</p> <p>1.2 - this would be dependent on the ability to fund with a third-party tool – 1.1.</p> <p>Position – July 2022 Third party tools currently being reviewed and costed. Item not yet due.</p> <p>Position – August 2022 1.1 - Third party tools have been evaluated and Netwrix has been selected as the preferred tool.</p> <p>1.2 – Netwrix had demonstrated the tool in detail and a 30-day trial to test the system further is available.</p> <p>1.3 – Quotation for 1- and 3-year option has</p>	Associate Director of ICT and Shared Services	31 March 2023	*	31 March 2024

APPENDIX 5 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Cyber Security 2021/22 Final report issued April 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
Page 40			<p>been provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-year option - £7,806 • 3-year option - £16,483 <p>1.4 – Implementation of the tool will be dependent on the ability to fund the third-party tool, this will require an approval by ITSG for an additional spend. A paper to review this recommendation and request any growth in budget 2022.</p> <p>Position – November 2022</p> <p>1.1 – Due to the audit, which was performed by DLUHC, the scope of the security posture has extended. The grant to address the sections of the new recommendations within the scope has been successfully secured.</p> <p>1.2 – The evaluation of the third-party tool has been extended, due to the new requirements within the scope presented post the DLUHC audit.</p> <p>1.3 The new proposed completion dates recommended by DLUHC is end of Q4 March 2024.</p> <p>Position – February 2023</p> <p>In progress. Produce options and costs continue to be reviewed and costed against all recommendations included within the DLUHC cyber grant budget.</p> <p>Position – July 2023</p> <p>1.1 – All available options offered by a number of vendors have been evaluated. The decision has been made to utilise the DLUHC grant and to expand on the existing CSOC provision from</p>				

APPENDIX 5 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Cyber Security 2021/22 Final report issued April 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
03	Management should conduct regular monthly vulnerability scans across the entire IT estate including endpoint, to identify and mitigate vulnerabilities including software flaws, missing patches, misconfigurations and malwares.	Low	<p>Exponential-e to meet the requirements of the recommendation.</p> <p>1.2 The quotation has been provided from Exponential-e to expand the CSOC offering. This has been approved and the project is now moving to the procurement phase. The procurement should be completed by the end of October 2023.</p> <p>Position – September 2023</p> <p>1.1 The procurement to expand the CSOC offering is completed, duration of the contract is set for 24 months.</p> <p>1.2 – The on prem virtual deployment is currently in progress, deadline to implement the solution is set for end of October 2023.</p>	Associate Director of ICT and Shared Services	31 March 2023	*	<p>30 June 2023</p> <p>30 November 2023</p>
			<p>This would require additional budget and would need a growth item approved, as there are licence implications for the Qualys scanner.</p> <p>Position – July 2022 Extension of current third-party tools currently being reviewed and costed. Item not yet due.</p> <p>Position – August 2022 1.1- Third party Qualys had introduced a new module which will enable the management of remote devices through the cloud.</p> <p>1.2 – Both options are currently being evaluated and costed. Decision made will be based on cost, functionality, and management.</p> <p>Position – November 2022</p>				

APPENDIX 5 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Cyber Security 2021/22 Final report issued April 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
Page 42			1.1 – Due to the allocation of a new Account Manager at Qualys and the changes within the licensing structure, Qualys are currently reviewing the proposed quotation to align the requirements with the new licensing structure. 1.2 – Workshop with Qualys has been scheduled to discuss the new proposed licensing structure and the modules which are required to enable the management of the devices remotely through the cloud and not relaying on the VPN. Position – February 2023 Remains in progress, however Associate Director of ICT and Shared services requests an extension of 3 months. This is due to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Qualys licencing for public sector has recently changed. Awaiting updated quotations. b. In terms of funding, a recent grant award from DLUHC will cover this item. Therefore, no requirement for additional growth within the ICT service budget. Position – July 2023 1.1 The quotation from Qualys has been provided to extend the service to include the endpoint vulnerability scanning. This has been handed over to the desktop support team, who are currently reviewing the offering. Position – September 2023 1.1 The revenue budget is currently being reviewed by the Director of Partnerships in				

APPENDIX 5 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Cyber Security 2021/22							
Final report issued April 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
			absence of the Associate Director of ICT and Shared Services.				

Complaints Handling 2021/22							
Final report issued May 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
01	<p>We recommend that when a complaint is received, it is not only forwarded to the Head of Service but also to the designated complaints officer within the service.</p> <p>The officer should then immediately log the complaint on Firmstep and monitor timescales through to resolution. This would give the designated officer more context into the complaint and allow them to help adhere to the Council's prescribed timescales for dealing with complaints. Additionally, we recommend that when a complaint is resolved this is noted immediately on Firmstep to ensure accurate information is available.</p>	High	<p>Complaints to be communicated to the Designated Complaints Logging Officer as well as Head of Service/Complaints Officer at time of receipt. Discussions to take place with Departments to find the best way of delivering this across platforms. If via Enquiries email then CSC will email to the designated officer as well as the Head of Service. Logging Officer then responsible with logging the complaint in a timely manner and monitor timescales until resolution. Head of Service/Complaints Officer to send Logging Officer response so complaint can be closed asap on Firmstep.</p> <p>Position (July 2022) We are currently reviewing the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedure with the intention that all complaints are to be logged by the Customer Service Centre. Centralising where the complaints are coming into will make us able to log the complaints immediately on receipt and help monitor response time from Departments. Once the complaint is logged it will be sent to the Department's Head of Service to investigate and respond to the complaint.</p> <p>Position (September 2022)</p>	Customer Service Centre Team Manager	31 October 2022	*	<p>30 November 2022</p> <p>31 January 2023</p> <p>31 May 2023</p> <p>30 Sept 2023</p> <p>31 October 2023</p>

APPENDIX 5 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Complaints Handling 2021/22							
Final report issued May 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
Page 44			<p>We are currently reviewing the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedure with the intention that all complaints are to be logged by the Customer Service Centre. Centralising where the complaints are coming into will make us able to log the complaints immediately on receipt and help monitor response time from Departments. Once the complaint is logged it will be sent to the Department's Head of Service to investigate and respond to the complaint.</p> <p>This revised Compliments & Complaints policy is going to P&R Committee in November and will be put in place following approval.</p> <p>Position (November 2022) The new complaints and vexatious complaints policies were agreed at P&R on 7th November which are now live.</p> <p>Work is taking place in the creation of a new Corporate Complaints Procedure. These should be circulated by January 2023.</p> <p>Position (March 2023) Complaints procedure has been finalised and work is continuing to be done so that members of the public are able to raise a complaint online using the self-service portal.</p> <p>Position (July 2023) We have finalised the wording for the Compliments and Complaints online forms, including internal and external correspondence. The forms have been built. Testing is underway to confirm function and raise any anomalies. This will allow members of the public to raise their complaints online</p>				

APPENDIX 5 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Complaints Handling 2021/22							
Final report issued May 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
			using the self-service portal and Customer Service representatives to raise complaints as soon as they are received whether that is by email, letter, or over the phone. Completing and submitting the form will automatically log an open complaint on the Granicus system. (30 th September 2023). Position (September 2023) We are currently in the final testing stage. We are on target to launch the new process for 1st October 2023.				

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2022/23 AUDIT PLAN

Development Management – Pre-Application Fees 2022/23							
Final report issued February 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
02	The Council should produce a line-by-line breakdown of the pre-application fees and charges and how they relate to the costs of the service to ensure that the costs are recovered fully and all resource requirements are considered adequately.	Low	<p>Position (March 2023) It is proposed to undertake a full cost exercise that will take into account the cost of the team and organisational overheads for setting charges for 2024/25.</p> <p>Position (July 2023) Support from finance team needed to undertake this action. Finance team have to date been occupied by end of year work. HOS and TLs to discuss next steps with finance, however, six month extension suggested at this time to accommodate this work.</p> <p>Position (September 2023) Awaiting support from the Finance team. Still aiming for March 2024 completion.</p>	Head of Regulatory Services / DM Team Leaders	30 September 2023	*	31 March 2024

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FOI 2022/23							
Final report issued March 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
02	<p>Management should perform a training needs analysis to identify and assess the level and type of training required by all members of staff with regards to the FOIA and should develop a mandatory training programme that is based upon these requirements.</p> <p>Training completion should be recorded and monitored, and training records should be maintained for</p>	Medium	<p>Agreed – the current Data Protection / GDPR e-Learning module will be updated to include FOI requests. This will include a mandatory course for all staff to complete. HR keep records of completions and these are reported to CMT quarterly.</p> <p>The FOI intranet page has been updated and communicated to all staff.</p> <p>Position (July 2023) Updated e-learning module has been drafted</p>	Data Protection Officer	31 August 2023	✓	

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2022/23 AUDIT PLAN

FOI 2022/23							
Final report issued March 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
	audit purposes. Furthermore, the Council should put arrangements in place for raising FOIA awareness, such as e-mail communications to members of staff and updating the information governance section on the Council's intranet to include the requirements of the FOIA and the responsibilities of members of staff.		and will be available by August 2023. Position (September 2023) The updated combined DP and FOI training module went live on the e-learning platform in August 2023 and all staff have been instructed to complete it. Number of completions will be reported to CMT.				

Financial Reconciliations 2022/23							
Final report issued April 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
01	We recommend that the reconciliation procedure notes detail the responsible owner as well as the next review date to ensure they remain up-to-date and relevant.	Low	The process notes do name the author of the note; however, we will add a next review date and responsible person. We will introduce a front sheet on each reconciliation to provide all details recommended. Position (July 2023) Process notes are in the process of being updated – on target for completion by deadline. Position – September 2023 Process note updates are continuing but progress is slower than anticipated due to work pressures. Completion is expected by 30th November 2023.	Chief Accountant	31 August 2023		30 November 2023

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2022/23 AUDIT PLAN

Cyber Security 2022/23 Final report issued April 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
01	<p>Management should review and assess the current cyber security training platform and put arrangements in place so that training completion can be recorded, reported and monitored on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Arrangements should be put in place for ensuring that the cyber security training is completed by all members of staff, as required, which could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying specific staff members who are required to complete the training and working with their line managers to ensure completion. Ensuring regular, top-down communication to increase awareness of the training. Requiring completion of the e-learning before issuing new devices to individuals or as part of performance and progression reviews. 	Medium	<p>We will review the current cyber security training platform. The current platform is used for all mandatory training for staff.</p> <p>We will review the viability of users not receiving their device until they have completed their cyber-related mandatory training.</p> <p>Position – July 2023</p> <p>1.1 – A review of alternative training platforms has been conducted and a demo of the products has been provided by the vendors.</p> <p>1.2 - Each product comes at a cost and budget implications are being considered.</p> <p>1.3 - The management of training completion by staff is currently being carried out by HR and members of staff are being notified by email when they are due to complete each training module.</p> <p>1.4 – Starters, Movers, Leaver’s process is currently being updated to ensure that joiners complete the Cyber Security Modules as part of the probation period as per HR Probationary Policy.</p> <p>Position – September 2023</p> <p>1.4 – The Starters, Movers, Leaver’s process has been updated to reflect the completion of the cyber security module as per the requirement of the HR Probation Policy.</p>	Associate Director of ICT and Shared Services	31 December 2023		

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2022/23 AUDIT PLAN

Treasury 2022/23 Final report issued April 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
01	<p>1) The Councils should develop an ESG policy, which ensures that investments are made in consideration with the Councils climate change, environmental and governance policies. The policy should emphasise that the Council seeks to be a responsible investor and consider ESG risks as an important overlay to the investment process, thereby improving future sustainability of investments. Once incorporated, ESG risks should also be included in under the Risk Management section of the Treasury Management Practices document for consistency.</p> <p>2) The policy should also explain that the Councils will not knowingly invest directly in businesses whose activities and practices pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups, or whose activities are inconsistent with the Council's mission and values.</p> <p>3) The policy should outline the conditions where investments should not be made with certain organisations, which have material links to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights abuse (e.g., child labour, political oppression) • Environmentally harmful activities (e.g., pollutants, destruction of habitat, fossil fuels) • Socially harmful activities (e.g., tobacco, gambling). 	Medium	<p>An ESG Policy will be developed for both Councils during 2023/24 for approval alongside the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy Statements.</p> <p>Position – July 2023 Guidance has been provided by our Treasury Management providers and we are on target to include an ESG policy within the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy Statements.</p> <p>Position – September 2023 We remain on track to include an ESG Policy in the Draft Treasury Management Strategy Statements for 2024/25 which will be presented to Audit Committees in November and December.</p>	Head of Finance	30 November 2023		

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2022/23 AUDIT PLAN

Council Tax 2022/23 Final report issued May 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
01	TRDC should ensure that a review of debt outstanding is conducted and decisions taken regarding whether or not to proceed for write-offs.	Medium	A review of all outstanding debt will be completed during 2023/24.	Revenues Manager/Data Performance Manager	31 March 2024		
	Subsequently, write-offs should be conducted at regular intervals going forward.		All outstanding write-offs have been cleared since this report was written and on-going write-offs will be reviewed once a quarter.				
	The 'How and Why to put a write off code on a Council Tax Account' procedure should include version control to ensure that it is reviewed periodically.		Agreed. Our quality team will get a version control sheet added.				
			Position – July 2023 The review of all debt is underway, and this will include looking at debts suitable for write-off.				
			The write-offs for Q1 are being prepared.				
			Version control has been added to all procedures.				
			Position – September 2023 The team continue to identify and put forward cases for write off where appropriate.				
04	The Council should document the processes relating to backdated discounts and exemptions to ensure that consistent actions are undertaken by staff and these refunds are appropriately reviewed and approved prior to payment.	Low	Agreed.	Revenues Manager/Data Performance Manager	30 June 2023	*	30 Sept 2023
			Position – July 2023 The document for backdating an SPD has been documented. We will incorporate the approach for all the other types of discount and exemptions so that it the guidance is held in once process.				
			Position – September 2023 The processes are documented, they just				

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2022/23 AUDIT PLAN

Council Tax 2022/23							
Final report issued May 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
			need to be collated, which has been delayed due to the summer period. Management controls are in place to ensure appropriate review takes place prior to approval.				

NDR 2022/23							
Final report issued May 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
01	<p>We recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions are taken to address the issue preventing the production of the monthly 'default arrangement list' and (subject to the issue being successfully resolved), arrangements are put in place for Senior Officers to check that these are being actioned appropriately. As an interim measure, Revenues Officers should be reminded to diarise arrangements to enable checks to be conducted to confirm arrangements are being complied with. 	Medium	<p>The default arrangements list is working and being run. During 2022/23 much of the BAU recovery work slipped due to the service having to process energy and business grants (CARF). During 2023/24 all recovery work will be reviewed, and this will include a review of arrangements that have defaulted.</p> <p>Position – July 2023 Review is currently underway.</p> <p>Position – September 2023 A review of the Recovery processes is ongoing and as part of this we are looking at the ways in which this can be managed more efficiently.</p>	Revenues Manager	31 March 2024		
02	<p>We recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven-day lists are produced and actioned at regular interval (e.g. monthly). 	Medium	<p>The 7-day list is working and being run. During 2022/23 much of the BAU recovery work slipped due to the service having to process energy and business grants (CARF). During 2023/24 all recovery work will be reviewed,</p>	Revenues Manager	31 March 2024		

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2022/23 AUDIT PLAN

NDR 2022/23							
Final report issued May 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrangements are put in place for Senior Officers to check that these are being actioned appropriately. 		<p>and this will include a review of arrangements that have defaulted.</p> <p>Position – July 2023 Review is currently underway.</p> <p>Position – September 2023 A review of the Recovery processes is ongoing and as part of this we are looking at the ways in which this can be managed more efficiently.</p>				

Property Services 2022/23							
Final Report issued May 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
03	The Council should ensure that it is aware of all records which were held outside of the Capita System, and that once the information is fully implemented within the TRAMPS system these external records are deleted.	Medium	<p>This recommendation is noted and Officers will continue to observe all data protection and GDPR guidance with respect to data security.</p> <p>External records will be deleted once this stage of work is complete.</p> <p>A wider Council review of direct debit data transfer is being carried out. As part of this a data upload into the TRAMPS system is being considered.</p> <p>Position (July 2023) Data protection and GDPR guidance continues to be followed by Officers. Completion date remains on target.</p> <p>Position (September 2023)</p>	Facilities Manager	31 December 2023		

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2022/23 AUDIT PLAN

Property Services 2022/23 Final report issued May 2023							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
			work is ongoing and remains on target for completion by the specified date. Once the data transfer has been fully reconciled, data from the legacy system will be fully and thoroughly deleted.				

APPENDIX 7 ASSURANCE AND RECOMMENDATION PRIORITY LEVELS

Audit Opinions		
Assurance Level	Definition	
Assurance Reviews		
Substantial	A sound system of governance, risk management and control exist, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	
Reasonable	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	
Limited	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	
No	Immediate action is required to address fundamental gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	
Not Assessed	This opinion is used in relation to consultancy or embedded assurance activities, where the nature of the work is to provide support and advice to management and is not of a sufficient depth to provide an opinion on the adequacy of governance or internal control arrangements. Recommendations will however be made where required to support system or process improvements.	
Grant / Funding Certification Reviews		
Unqualified	No material matters have been identified in relation the eligibility, accounting and expenditure associated with the funding received that would cause SIAS to believe that the related funding conditions have not been met.	
Qualified	Except for the matters identified within the audit report, the eligibility, accounting and expenditure associated with the funding received meets the requirements of the funding conditions.	
Disclaimer Opinion	Based on the limitations indicated within the report, SIAS are unable to provide an opinion in relation to the Council's compliance with the eligibility, accounting and expenditure requirements contained within the funding conditions.	
Adverse Opinion	Based on the significance of the matters included within the report, the Council have not complied with the funding conditions associated with the funding received.	
Recommendation Priority Levels		
Priority Level	Definition	
Corporate	Critical	Audit findings which, in the present state, represent a serious risk to the organisation as a whole, i.e. reputation, financial resources and / or compliance with regulations. Management action to implement the appropriate controls is required immediately.
	High	Audit findings indicate a serious weakness or breakdown in control environment, which, if untreated by management intervention, is highly likely to put achievement of core service objectives at risk. Remedial action is required urgently.
Service	Medium	Audit findings which, if not treated by appropriate management action, are likely to put achievement of some of the core service objectives at risk. Remedial action is required in a timely manner.
	Low	Audit findings indicate opportunities to implement good or best practice, which, if adopted, will enhance the control environment. The appropriate solution should be implemented as soon as is practically possible.

AUDIT COMMITTEE – 28 SEPTEMBER 2023

PART I – DELEGATED

COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME

(DoF)

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Audit Committee's latest Work Programme to enable the Committee to make updates as required.

2. Details

- 2.1 The Audit Committee meets five times per financial year between 1 April and 31 March. The work programme is presented at each meeting of the Committee to enable any changes to be made and to provide Members with updated information on future meetings.
- 2.2 The work programme includes a rolling annual training programme which is delivered prior to each committee. The following topics form the programme:
- Role of the Audit Committee
 - Statement of Accounts
 - Treasury Management
 - Internal Audit
 - Risk Management
- 2.3 Additional 'deep dive' training is arranged for members of the committee ahead of approval of the audited Statement of Accounts.
- 2.4 The following items are standing items on the agenda and are presented at each meeting of the Committee:
- Internal Audit Report – SIAS Audit Client Manager
 - Financial and Budgetary Risks – Head of Finance
 - Committee Work Programme
- 2.5 The programme of ad hoc reports scheduled to be presented to this Committee in the next 12 months is shown in the table below:

Financial Year 2023/24		
Date	Report	Officer Responsible
28 September 2023	TRAINING: Role of the Audit Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Azets – External Auditors appointed from 2023/24 • Standing Items 	Head of Finance External Auditor
8 December 2023	TRAINING: Treasury Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2023/24 • Draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 • Risk Management Framework • External Annual Audit Letter 2019/20 • Approval of the 2020/21 Accounts and External Auditors Report • External Auditor Audit Plan 2021/22 • External Auditor Plan 2023/24 • Standing Items 	Head of Finance Head of Finance Head of Finance Emergency Planning and Risk Manager External Auditors Head of Finance and External Auditor External Auditors External Auditors
21 March 2024	TRAINING: Internal Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Audit Letter 2021/22 • Accounting Policies 2023/24 • External Audit Annual Letter 2021/22 • Approval of the 2021/22 Accounts and External Auditors Report • External Auditor Audit Plan 2022/23 • Approval of the 2022/23 Accounts and External Auditors Report • Standing Items 	Client Audit Manager External Auditors Head of Finance External Auditor Head of Finance and External Auditor External Auditor Head of Finance and External Auditor

Financial Year 2024/25		
May 2024	TRAINING: Statement of Accounts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasury Management Annual Report 2023/24 • SIAS Annual Assurance Statement & Internal Audit Annual Report • Approval of the draft Statement of Accounts 2023/24 and Annual Governance Statement • Annual Audit Letter 2022/23 • Standing Items 	Head of Finance Head of Finance Client Audit Manager Head of Finance External Auditor
July 2024	TRAINING: Role of the Audit Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud Annual Report • SIAS Board Annual Report • Standing Items 	Head of Finance Fraud Manager Client Audit Manager

3 Options/Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The recommendation allows the Committee to determine its work programme.

4 Policy/Budget Implications

4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

5 Financial, Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Customer Services Centre, Website and Risk Management Implications

5.1 None specific.

6 Recommendation

6.1 That the Committee consider and makes necessary changes to its Work Programme.

Background Papers

Reports and minutes – Audit Committee

Report prepared by: Hannah Doney – Head of Finance

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