

Runnymede Borough Council

Internal Audit Progress Report for Outstanding Recommendations

2022-23

May 2022

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This summary report provides the Standards and Audit Committee with an update on the progress in implementing the priority 1, 2 and 3 recommendations arising in previous internal audit reports.
2. This follow up review was carried out in May 2022. Since the previous follow up review was carried out (December 2021), 18 recommendations have reached their initial or revised target implementation date, and status updates have also been sought for the 10 recommendations previously reported as outstanding.

Key Findings & Action Points

3. The follow up review considered whether the management action taken addresses the control issues that gave rise to the recommendations. The implementation of these recommendations can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against misstatement or loss. From the work carried out the following evaluations of the progress of the management actions taken to date have been identified.

Evaluation	Number of Recommendations
Implemented	11
Outstanding	11
No Longer Applicable	3
Not Implemented	0

4. For the 11 recommendations that have been confirmed as implemented, no further action is necessary and specific details have not been included in this report
5. For the 11 recommendations classified as Outstanding, these will continue to be periodically monitored, and details relating to six of these recommendations have been included in the Detailed Findings section below. Of these recommendations, in one case a revised implementation date has been set. For the remaining five recommendations these are still under discussion with Heads of Service and have not been included in this report.
6. Four of the outstanding recommendations relate to the previous Depot audit. It was advised by the Depot Manager that there have been no further developments since the previous audit due to unfilled vacancies (nearly 1/3 of the staff) within the office staff at the depot. Due to the limited amount of staff available to run and deliver the daily operations all the staff time has been devoted to ensuring the operations are run and delivered in continually difficult times. The Depot is subject to a separate, full follow up review during 2022/23 and therefore these recommendations will be considered as part of that review.
7. With regard to the Safeguarding audit the new Head of Service is making progress with implementing the recommendations and these have now been removed from the outstanding list. A follow up audit is recommended in this area sometime during 2022/23 where upon an update on this important area of activity can be reported to Members.

- 8. Three recommendations are classified as no longer applicable as they have been superseded by further internal audit reviews during 2021/22 (relating to Internal Communications and Planning Enforcement).

Scope and Limitations of the Review

- 9. The review considers the progress made in implementing the recommendations made in the previous internal audit reports and to establish the extent to which management has taken the necessary actions to address the control issues that gave rise to the internal audit recommendations.
- 10. The responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and work performed by internal audit should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should internal audit work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud or irregularity, should there be any, although the audit procedures have been designed so that any material irregularity has a reasonable probability of discovery. Even sound systems of internal control may not be proof against collusive fraud.
- 11. For the purposes of this review reliance was placed on management to provide internal audit with full access to staff and to accounting records and transactions and to ensure the authenticity of these documents.

Release of Report

- 12. The table below sets out the history of this report.

Date final report issued:	
----------------------------------	--

Detailed Findings

Follow Up

13. Management representations were obtained on the action taken to address the recommendations and limited testing has been carried out to confirm these management representations. The following matters were identified in considering the recommendations that have not been fully implemented:

14. Depot

Audit title	Depot	Audit year	2020/21	Priority	1
Recommendation	The Depot create its own risk register to identify the key risks associated with the Depot and how these are being controlled and managed.				
Initial management response	The recommendation raised in the previous report was for a separate risk register for the depot be 'considered'. This was then agreed by the then DSO manager with a target date of 1 July 2018. Follow up of this in Oct 2019 found this remained outstanding and it was subsequently brought to the attention of the new DSO manager in Dec 2019 with a revised date for action being agreed with the CHoES of April 2020. Revised further to April 2021 as a direct impact of Covid and awaiting the outcome of the 'depot feasibility study' commenced in Feb 2020 but also delayed for the same reason. New implementation date set to allow for outcome of on-going H&S risk assessments report.				
Responsible Officer/s	DSO Manager /CHoES	Original implementation date	30/09/21	Revised implementation date	TBC
Latest Update	It was advised by the Depot Manager that there have been no further developments since the previous audit due to unfilled vacancies (nearly 1/3 of the staff) within the office staff at the depot. Due to the limited amount of staff available to run and deliver the daily operations all the staff time has been devoted to ensuring the operations are run and delivered in continually difficult times. The Depot is subject to a separate, full follow up review during 2022/23 and therefore this recommendation will be considered as part of that review.				
Status	Outstanding				

Audit title	Depot	Audit year	2020/21	Priority	2
Recommendation	The security at the Depot be reviewed and appropriate action taken to keep the site secure by use of both physical security measures (a working gate) and via adequate surveillance.				

Initial management response	These are both longstanding issues and indicative of a lack of regular maintenance and investment by the authority into what are ailing facilities. Both are included in the current depot feasibility study and require financial investment to rectify.					
Responsible Officer/s	DSO Manager / Corporate Head of Environmental Services	Original implementation date	Long term remedy dependent of the outcome of the feasibility study due to report in Sept 2021.	Revised implementation date	TBC	
Latest Update	It was advised by the Depot Manager that there have been no further developments since the previous audit due to unfilled vacancies (nearly 1/3 of the staff) within the office staff at the depot. Due to the limited amount of staff available to run and deliver the daily operations all the staff time has been devoted to ensuring the operations are run and delivered in continually difficult times. The Depot is subject to a separate, full follow up review during 2022/23 and therefore this recommendation will be considered as part of that review.					
Status	Outstanding					

Audit title	Depot	Audit year	2020/21	Priority	3	
Recommendation	Consideration be given to the purchase of the optimisation route package.					
Initial management response	Agreed. Finance was sought for this upgrade by the DSO but not forthcoming due to present financial pressures. A report to be made to the relevant committee requesting funding to upgrade the system.					
Responsible Officer/s	DSO Manager /CHoES	Original implementation date	30/09/21	Revised implementation date	TBC	
Latest Update	It was advised by the Depot Manager that there have been no further developments since the previous audit due to unfilled vacancies (nearly 1/3 of the staff) within the office staff at the depot. Due to the limited amount of staff available to run and deliver the daily operations all the staff time has been devoted to ensuring the operations are run and delivered in continually difficult times. The Depot is subject to a separate, full follow up review during 2022/23 and therefore this recommendation will be considered as part of that review.					
Status	Outstanding					

Audit title	Depot	Audit year	2020/21	Priority	3	
Recommendation	Detailed stock take procedures be documented and a re-order level established, where appropriate.					

Initial management response	Noted.				
Responsible Officer/s	DSO Manager /CHoES	Original implementation date	30/09/21	Revised implementation date	TBC
Latest Update	<p>It was advised by the Depot Manager that there have been no further developments since the previous audit due to unfilled vacancies (nearly 1/3 of the staff) within the office staff at the depot. Due to the limited amount of staff available to run and deliver the daily operations all the staff time has been devoted to ensuring the operations are run and delivered in continually difficult times.</p> <p>The Depot is subject to a separate, full follow up review during 2022/23 and therefore this recommendation will be considered as part of that review.</p>				
Status	Outstanding				

15. GDPR Preparedness

Audit title	GDPR Preparedness	Audit year	2017/18	Priority	2
Recommendation	A review of all contracts and agreements with third parties be undertaken to ensure all content is GDPR compliant.				
Initial management response	Meeting on 26/09/18. With CHL&G and Legal Services Manager to discuss.				
Responsible Officer/s	Corporate Head of Law & Governance	Original implementation date	28/02/19 (subsequently March 2020, October 2020, July 2021, December 2021)	Revised implementation date	31/03/22
Latest Update	<p>During the previous follow up review in October 2021 it was advised that the impact of Covid was longer than anticipated. With a clearer path out of Covid, work on this project would restart. A completion date of December 2021 was subsequently envisaged and a revised target date set.</p> <p>During this follow up review, it was advised by the Corporate Head of Law and Governance that work is in progress, with completion envisaged by 31st March 2022. Delays have been experienced due to carrying out this work alongside business as usual activities and therefore having to prioritise other tasks on occasions.</p>				
Status	Outstanding			A revised target date has been set.	

16. Procurement

Audit title	Procurement	Audit year	2020/21	Priority	2
Recommendation	Buying Managers be reminded of the need to comply with the Council’s Standing Orders in all cases. Where necessary, training needs be identified as part of the 1-2-1 / appraisal process.				
Initial management response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take to SLT as an agenda item- this needs to come from CLT. 2. Email to all staff regarding Contract Standing Orders and Staff Pages for information on Procurement and offer of training. 				
Responsible Officer/s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chief Executive/ CHoLG 2. Corporate Procurement 	Original implementation date	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.TBC Autumn 2021 SLT are carrying a number of posts vacant and therefore needs to be actioned once new postholders are onboarded. 2.Autumn 2021 once Staff Home issues have been resolved for Procurement Pages 	Revised implementation date	30/06/22
Latest Update	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.The timeframe for implementing this recommendation was dependent on the appointments of the Assistant Chief Executive and the Corporate Head of Environmental Services. It was advised that both posts were filled by mid March 2022, therefore a revised implementation date of Q1 2022/23 was provided. 2.The Staff Home pages have been updated. A relaunch of training is planned for the release of the new Constitution and updated Contract Standing Orders in Q1 2022/23, therefore the implementation date has been revised. 				
Status	Outstanding			A revised target date has been set.	