

Runnymede Borough Council

Internal Audit Progress Report for Outstanding Recommendations

2022-23

January 2023

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 December 2022. Since the previous follow up review was carried out (October 2022), two recommendations have reached their initial or revised target implementation date, and status updates have also been sought for the additional recommendations previously reported as outstanding.
3. A separate follow up review has been carried out as part of the 22/23 internal audit plan in relation to the previous Depot audit. Progress on the outstanding recommendations have been reported separately, therefore these have not been included in this report.

Key Findings & Action Points

4. 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	1
Outstanding	4
No Longer Applicable	0
Not Implemented	0

5. For the one recommendation that has been confirmed as implemented, no further action is necessary and specific details have not been included in this report
6. For the four recommendations classified as Outstanding, these will continue to be periodically monitored, and details relating to the specific recommendations in these cases have been included in the Detailed Findings section below.

Scope and Limitations of the Review

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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

10. The table below sets out the history of this report.

Date final report issued:	5 th January 2023
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Detailed Findings

Follow Up

11. 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:

12. Business Continuity

Audit title	Business Continuity	Audit year	2021/22	Priority	3
Recommendation	The debrief report be finalised and the recommendations implemented in a timely manner in order to ensure appropriate risks are being mitigated.				
Initial management response	<p>Formal reporting took place to Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee in July 2020. No amendments were proposed by Members, so this document became the final Debrief Report. The Council continues to refine its responses to emergency situations on an on-going basis alongside moving into a "Living with covid" phase that may require different responses to that at the height of the pandemic. Where appropriate, recommendations have been implemented, for example the Mayor's Thank you sessions for volunteers who supported residents during the pandemic. Other lessons learnt have been incorporated into the iterative process of reviewing our Emergency response and Business continuity plans.</p> <p>An officer group is being set up to ensure there is a forum for this continuous review and update of policies so that the recommendations from the review and lessons learnt are embedded into future processes.</p>				
Responsible Officer/s	Head of External Projects and Climate Change	Original implementation date	Terms of reference for new group to be agreed by 30/09/22 (subsequently revised to 30/11/22)	Revised implementation date	31/12/22
Latest Update	<p>It was previously advised by the Head of External Projects and Climate Change that there had been a slight delay due to unforeseen events. A workshop to kickstart the review and update of polices, and consideration of scenarios and responses, including the establishment of the Officer Group and its terms of reference had been diarised for 16 November 2022 with a view to finalising the terms of reference by the end of November 2022.</p> <p>As part of this follow up review, it was advised that this had been further delayed but was expected to be completed by the end of December.</p>				
Status	Outstanding			A revised target date has been set.	

13. ICT – Mobile Device Security Management

Audit title	Mobile Device Security Management	Audit year	2018/19	Priority	2
Recommendation	A more regular review schedule be put in place for all policies and procedure documents relating to Mobile Device Management, with additional detail to be added to the current Mobile Device Management policies as per the report text.				
Initial management response	Agreed, the policies will be updated as the contracts come up for review moving forward but all will be done by the end of the calendar year.				
Responsible Officer/s	Infrastructure and Security Manager	Original implementation date	31/12/19 (subsequently March 2021, then March 2022, then June 2022, then October 2022, then December 2022)	Revised implementation date	28/02/23
Latest Update	It was previously advised that the policies had been written but required formal approval. The Chief Executive had requested for these to be reviewed via the Transformation Working Group, however agreed dates had not been received from the leader on the meeting. It was therefore suggested to move the implementation date to October 2022 as the policies could not be rolled out until they had been approved. The policies were subsequently scheduled for the December Service Transformation Working Group meeting, however this meeting was cancelled and the policies will now be presented for approval in February 2023.				
Status	Outstanding			A revised target date has been set.	

14. Procurement

Audit title	Procurement	Audit year	2020/21	Priority	3
Recommendation	Procurement Strategy and associated policies be finalised at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the overall vision, direction and priorities for the Council's procurement activities are clearly communicated.				
Initial management response	Needs to be reflective of the Council's strategies for Climate Change, Prosperous Economy and Health and Wellbeing Corporate Themes that are being developed and drafted with deadline of Nov '21. Review and revise draft Procurement Strategy in light of these emerging strategies.				
Responsible Officer/s	Head of Business Planning, Projects and Performance	Original implementation date	Q1 2022/23	Revised implementation date	31/03/23
Latest Update	<p>It was originally envisaged that this would be a task for a new Procurement Manager post. However, it was subsequently agreed in March 2022 that the new Procurement Manager post would be kept vacant during 2022 whilst options for the future provision of procurement is investigated. The task would therefore be completed by the Head of Business Planning, Projects and Performance however resource capacity is an issue. Recruitment to a permanent Procurement Officer post has failed three times and the Interim Procurement Officer left the Council in August. As a result, resource capacity in the team to deliver on ongoing procurements is stretched. It was advised that the Strategy review was underway but was taking longer due to resources.</p> <p>A further update was provided during this follow up review that a Procurement Officer was due to start in December which would help the situation, however the recruitment to the Procurement Manager post is still on-hold and therefore the team would continue to be stretched in terms of workload.</p> <p>Although the Procurement Strategy draft is in progress, this will need to reflect any future direction in terms of longer-term service strategy. Similarly the Procurement Bill is passing through Parliament at the moment and is likely to take effect at some point in 2023. The Council will then have 6 months to implement the changes which will be considerable and will require significant re-writes of processes, procedures, toolkits and training materials to launch to staff.</p> <p>The Head of Business Planning, Projects and Performance is planning to run a workshop with a number of Corporate Heads in January to feed into the procurement strategy. Despite staffing levels still not being at full capacity, it was advised that a draft interim Procurement Strategy for 2023/24 (based on the current position) could be in place by the end of March 2023.</p>				
Status	Outstanding				
Audit title	Procurement	Audit year	2020/21	Priority	3
Recommendation	Procurement to liaise with Heads of Service to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly understood. This could be incorporated into the Procurement Strategy, or documented separately as part of a Procurement Charter or roles and responsibilities matrix.				

Initial management response	<p>Work with a range of stakeholders to develop a roles and responsibility matrix.</p> <p>Take a proposal to SLT as an agenda item for approval.</p> <p>Add to the Procurement Toolkit.</p> <p>SLT are carrying a number of posts vacant and therefore needs to be actioned once new postholders are onboarded.</p>				
Responsible Officer/s	Head of Business Planning, Projects and Performance	Original implementation date	Q2 2022/23	Revised implementation date	31/03/23
Latest Update	<p>It was previously advised by the Head of Business Planning, Projects and Performance that resource capacity issues in the team meant this was unlikely to be progressed during Q2 or Q3.</p> <p>As part of this follow up review, it was advised that the Head of Business Planning, Projects and Performance is planning to run a workshop with a number of Corporate Heads in January, which will assist in the review of a RACI matrix for ITQs and ITTs. A revised timeframe of March 2023 was provided.</p>				
Status	<p style="text-align: center;">Outstanding</p>				
