



Three Rivers District Council
Audit Committee Progress Report
28 March 2023
Item 7

Recommendation

Members are recommended to:

- Note the Internal Audit Progress Report for the period to 17 March 2023
- Approve amendments to the Audit Plan as at 17 March 2023
- Agree changes to the implementation dates for 5 audit recommendations (paragraph 2.5) for the reasons set out in Appendices 3 to 7
- Agree removal of implemented audit recommendations (Appendices 3 to 7)

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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 2022/23 as at 17 March 2023.
 - b) Proposed amendments to the approved 2022/23 Annual Audit Plan.
 - c) Implementation status of all previously agreed audit recommendations from 2018/19 onwards.
 - d) An update on performance management information as at 17 March 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 2022/23 Annual Audit Plan was approved by Audit Committee on 29 March 2022.
- 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 8 December 2022.

2. Audit Plan Update

Delivery of Audit Plan and Key Audit Findings

- 2.1 At 17 March 2023, 87% of the 2022/23 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 One 2022/23 report has been finalised since December Audit Committee.

Audit Title	Date of Issue	Assurance Level	Number and Priority of Recommendations
Development Management, Pre-apps	February 2023	Substantial	Two low

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 17 March 2023, with full details given in appendices 3 to 7:

Year	Recommendations made No.	Implemented	Not yet due	Outstanding & request made for extended time or no update provided	Percentage implemented %
2018/19	38	38	0	0	100%
2019/20	37	36	1	0	97%
2020/21	25	23	0	2	92%
2021/22	36	31	2	3	86%
2022/23	3	1	2	0	33%

- 2.5 Since 8 December 2022 Audit Committee, extension to implementation dates have been requested by action owners for five recommendations as follows:
- One from the 2020/21 Garages audit,
 - One from the 2020/21 Debtors audit,
 - One from the 2021/22 Cyber Security audit,
 - One from the 2021/22 Complaints Handling audit, and
 - One from the 2021/22 Creditors audit.

Proposed 2022/23 Audit Plan Amendments

- 2.6 Since December Audit Committee, a new audit of FOI has been added to the 2022/23 Three Rivers District Council Audit Plan, with the days coming from a reduction in the original allocation for the Property Services audit and from unused contingency from the Shared Services Audit Plan.

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 2022/23 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 2022/23 Annual performance indicators and targets were approved by the SIAS Board in March 2022. 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 17 March 2023	Actual to 17 March 2023
1. Internal Audit Annual Plan Report – approved by March Audit Committee or the first meeting of the financial year should a March committee not meet	Yes	N/A	Yes
2. Annual Internal Audit Plan Delivery – the percentage of the Annual Internal Audit Plan delivered (excluding unused contingency)	95%	91% (210 / 231.5 days)	87% (202 / 231.5 days)
3. Project Delivery – the number of projects delivered to draft report stage against projects in the approved Annual Internal Audit Plan	95%	65% (13 out of 20 projects to draft)	55% (11 out of 20 projects to draft)
4. Client Satisfaction* – percentage of client satisfaction questionnaires returned at ‘satisfactory overall’ level (minimum of 39/65 overall)	95%	100%	100% (based on three received)
5. Chief Audit Executive’s Annual Assurance Opinion and Report – presented at the first Audit Committee meeting of the financial year	Yes	N/A	Yes

Service Update and Current Plan Delivery Position

2.9 As reported above, SIAS are currently behind profile for both billable days and projects delivered to draft report status, this a result of in-year challenges in respect of recruitment and retention.

2.10 In response to the above challenges SIAS commissioned two additional external audit partners for quarter four, to supplement the resources available from our contracted external partner. Whilst this has provided sufficient resource to allocate all 2022/23 audits for completion, it has resulted in several audits across our partner councils being moved to quarter four for completion, with these currently in fieldwork. In addition, and outside of the control of SIAS, a small number of audits were also deferred to quarter four, or in some cases April 2023.

- 2.11 Whilst the above is likely to impact on our ability to meet the Key Performance Indicator related to 95% of reports being delivered to draft report stage by 31 March, we are currently satisfied that such delays would not impact on our ability to deliver an un-caveated Annual Assurance report and opinion. Based on current resource availability (including our external partners), we would be able to provide assurance to this Committee that all but one of the audits within the 2022/23 Three Rivers District Council and Shared Services Audit Plans have been allocated for completion before the end of the financial year. The remaining audit is expected to be completed to draft report stage in early April.
- 2.12 The above position is subject to continual monitoring, and regular updates will be provided to the Council's Section 151 Officer, and if required members of the Audit Committee, should it be deemed that any remaining projects could not be completed in sufficient time to inform the annual opinion.

APPENDIX 1 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2022/23 – UPDATE ON POSITION AS AT 17 MARCH 2023

2022/23 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									
Council Tax (shared services plan)						10	BDO	9.5	Draft Report Issued
Financial Reconciliations (shared services plan)						13	BDO	12.5	Draft Report Issued
Fixed Asset Register (shared services plan)						10	BDO	8	In Fieldwork
NDR (shared services plan)						10	SIAS	9.5	Draft Report Issued
Payroll (shared services plan)						12	Mazars	10	In Fieldwork
Sundry Debtors (shared services plan)						10	BDO	9.5	Draft Report Issued
Treasury (shared services plan)						8	BDO	6	In Fieldwork
Operational Audits									
Arts Council Recovery Fund Grant	Unqualified	-	-	-	-	3	SIAS	3	Final Report Issued
Business Continuity Planning						8	BDO	7.5	Draft Report Issued
CIL Spend						8	Mazars	1	In Planning
Contain Outbreak Management Fund Grant	Unqualified	-	-	-	-	0.5	SIAS	0.5	Final Report Issued
Development Management (pre-apps)	Substantial	0	0	0	2	8	BDO	8	Final Report Issued
DFG Capital Grant Certification	Unqualified	-	-	-	-	2	SIAS	2	Final Report Issued
Housing Allocations	Substantial	0	0	0	1	10	SIAS	10	Final Report Issued
Housing Condition Surveys /						9	SIAS	8	In Fieldwork

APPENDIX 1 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2022/23 – UPDATE ON POSITION AS AT 17 MARCH 2023

AUDITABLE AREA	LEVEL OF ASSURANCE	RECS				AUDIT PLAN DAYS	LEAD AUDITOR ASSIGNED	BILLABLE DAYS COMPLETED	STATUS/COMMENT
		C	H	M	L				
HMOs									
Property Services						10	Mazars	8	In Fieldwork
Street Naming & Numbering						8	SIAS	5	In Fieldwork
Trees						10	BDO	8	In Fieldwork
Green Homes Grant	Unqualified	-	-	-	-	3	SIAS	3	Final Report Issued
FOI						9	BDO	7	In Fieldwork
Contract Management									
No audits									
Shared Learning / Joint Reviews									
Shared Learning / Joint Reviews						4		4	Through Year
IT Audits									
Cyber Security (shared services plan)						15	BDO	12	In Fieldwork
To Be Allocated									
Unused Contingency (shared services plan)						1.5		0	
Follow-Up Audits									
Follow-up of outstanding audit recommendations						9		9	Complete
Strategic Support									

APPENDIX 1 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2022/23 – UPDATE ON POSITION AS AT 17 MARCH 2023

AUDITABLE AREA	LEVEL OF ASSURANCE	RECS				AUDIT PLAN DAYS	LEAD AUDITOR ASSIGNED	BILLABLE DAYS COMPLETED	STATUS/COMMENT
		C	H	M	L				
2023/24 Audit Planning						5		5	Complete
Annual Governance Statement						3		3	Complete
Audit Committee						9		8.5	Through Year
Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2021/22						3		3	Complete
Monitoring and Client Meetings						7		6.5	Through Year
SIAS Development						3		3	Complete
2021/22 Projects Requiring Completion									
2021/22 Projects Requiring Completion (5 days TRDC plan / 7 days shared services plan)						12		12	Complete
TRDC TOTAL		0	0	0	3	136.5		118	
SHARED SERVICES TOTAL						96.5		84	
COMBINED TOTAL		0	0	0	3	233		202	

Key to recommendation priority levels:

C = Critical, H = High, M = Medium, L = Low

APPENDIX 2 2022/23 AUDIT PLAN PROJECTED START DATES

Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept
Housing Allocations Final Report Issued	Arts Council Recovery Fund Final Report Issued	Contain Outbreak Management Fund Grant Final Report Issued		Development Management Pre-apps [*]	Sundry Debtors (Shared services plan) Draft Report Issued
				Housing Condition Surveys and HMOs ^{**}	Green Homes Grant Final Report Issued
					DFG Certification Final Report Issued

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
NDR (Shared services plan) Draft Report Issued	Payroll (Shared services plan) ***	Financial Reconciliations (Shared services plan) Draft Report Issued	Cyber Security (Shared services plan) In Fieldwork	Trees In Fieldwork	
Business Continuity Planning Draft Report Issued	Council Tax (Shared services plan) Draft Report Issued	Fixed Asset Register (Shared services plan) In Fieldwork	Street Naming & Numbering In Fieldwork	CIL Spend In Planning	

APPENDIX 2 2022/23 AUDIT PLAN PROJECTED START DATES

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	Property Services ****	Development Management Pre-apps * Final Report Issued	Treasury (Shared services plan) In Fieldwork		
		Housing Condition Surveys and HMOs ** In Fieldwork	Payroll (Shared services plan) *** In Fieldwork		
			Property Services **** In Fieldwork		

* Development Management Pre-apps moved from August 2022 to December 2022 due to resourcing at BDO, our external partner. Service has now requested a January 2023 start date.

** Housing Condition Surveys & HMOs moved from August 2022 to December 2022 due to staff absence in SIAS.

*** Payroll moved from November 2022 to January 2023 to match resource availability.

**** Property moved from November 2022 to January 2023 to match resource availability.

APPENDIX 3 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2018/19 AUDIT PLAN

Benefits 2018/19							
Final report issued April 2019							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
02	We recommend that testing of the module is carried out to reinstate the ability to delete obsolete data.	Medium	<p>Position (September 2022) Training on how to write the script required to make the retention & destruction module work took place on 12.09.22 (a re-write of the scripts was necessary as the original script could not be located and the officers who wrote and implemented the original scripts no longer work for the authority). We have a few matters to check in terms of the corporate retention polices and a few system parameters to check and then we can switch the module on. Once the script has run once we will know how many documents we have to destroy and how long it will take to destroy them all on the basis we can run the script for a couple of hours every evening and longer at the weekend.</p> <p>Position (November 2022) Some testing and prep work carried out, things were delayed a little due to delivery of the Energy Fuel Rebates and testing for a server migration. Going live week commencing 14.11.22 with a selection of document types which will be increased until all document types are included.</p> <p>Position (March 2023) The Retention & Destruction Module went live on 17.12.22 and the recommendation is now resolved.</p>	Benefits Manager	31 May 2019	✓	31 October 2019 30 June 2020 30 Sept 2020 31 March 2021 30 Sept 2021 30 November 2021 31 January 2022 15 March 2022 31 August 2022 31 October 2022 30 November 2022

APPENDIX 4 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 4 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
			<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 4 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
			<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</p>				

APPENDIX 4 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
			Commercial Estate. The property and asset addresses have been uploaded into the system and the next stage of work will be 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.				
02	We recommend that the Council explore what reports are available from the systems in place to better inform property activity.	Medium	<p>Position (September 2022) The work to satisfy this recommendation remains on track. As previously indicated, until the Property Management System is fully populated with all property data we will be unable to unlock the full reporting power of the system, however, given the progress in relation to the garage estate (comments in connection with recommendation 1 above), we should be in a position to run performance reports from November 2022.</p> <p>Position (November 2022) With the garage asset data now populated on the Property Management System the first stage of enhanced reporting can be rolled out. The Property Management System is capable of producing very detailed, bespoke reports or generalised reporting. The Property & CSC Teams will be exploring and testing the reporting capabilities in further detail over the coming months and this experience will also help to when the commercial estate data is uploaded onto the Trace system.</p>	Principal Property and Asset Manager	30 April 2021	✓	

APPENDIX 4 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
			<p>Position (March 2023) As with reference in updates provided in September & November 2022, the capabilities of the Trace system will not be fully utilised until all TRDC asset data is held on the system. However, the capabilities of the system will be tested and used to full effect now that the garage data is held on the Property Management System. Occupancy details, tenancy dates, vacancy data and rental income can all be deduced from the system and bespoke reports created to report on very specific or more general information. One of the attractions of the Trace system is the fact that if the data is held in the system, it can be extracted with advanced reporting tools. It is considered that this task is now completed.</p>	Property Services Team	Before 31 March 2023		

APPENDIX 5 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	*	<p>30 Sept 2021</p> <p>28 Feb 2022</p> <p>31 May 2022</p> <p>30 Sept 2022</p> <p>31 January 2023</p> <p>31 May 2023</p>

APPENDIX 5 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>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>				

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 (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)</p>	Recovery Team Leader, Revenues Manager and Finance.	31 August 2021	*	31 October 2021 30 October 2022

APPENDIX 5 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
			<p>This work is about to start now that the write-off work for Sundry Debts is complete. The whole review of Sundry Debts is still in progress.</p> <p>Position (March 2022) / Position (July 2022) No update provided.</p> <p>Position (September 2022) 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 (March 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>31 December 2022</p> <p>30 June 2023</p>

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Equalities & Diversity 2021/22 Final report issued March 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
02	The Comprehensive Equality Policy to be amended to detail that its review is to be conducted on a five-year cycle.	Low	<p>The five-year cycle was agreed as part of the Strategy and Policy register. The review is due to begin at the end of 2022 and therefore this will be updated in the new policy by March 2023.</p> <p>Position (July 2022) / (September 2022) As above.</p> <p>Position (November 2022) Census data is now being released and changes in population profile are being reviewed to inform the policy review.</p> <p>Position (March 2023) The Equalities Committee on 14th March 2023 will consider the new Policy which indicates a 3 year review cycle. Agenda and papers can be found at https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/meeting/equalities-sub-committee-14-march-2023-7pm</p>	Head of Community Partnerships	31 March 2023	✓	
04	<p>The Council should create a more direct link between its current KPIs and its main strategic E&D objectives to monitor progress against these desired goals with increased scrutiny.</p> <p>The Council should draw from its current E&D KPIs, ones that contribute to achieving its strategic objectives, and performance against these indicators should be included in the Council's annual publication of its Equality Duty Information Report (EDIR).</p>	Low	<p>These will be included in the next publication in January 2023 and Annual performance indicator review this will be noted.</p> <p>Position (July 2022) Review of the Corporate Framework has begun and through that process and subsequent service planning the KPIs will be reviewed.</p> <p>Position (September 2022) As above.</p> <p>Position (November 2022) A new Equality Performance Indicator has been agreed with HR and will, subject to</p>	Head of Community Partnerships and Performance and Projects Manager.	31 July 2022	✓	<p>31 January 2023</p> <p>1 April 2023</p>

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Equalities & Diversity 2021/22							
Final report issued March 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
			<p>member approval, come into use in April 2023.</p> <p>Position (March 2023) The Equalities Committee on 14th March 2023 will consider the EDIR and new Policy which include clear and specific links to the newly approved Corporate Framework and specific targets to be met within the timeframe of the new policy. Agenda and papers can be found at https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/meeting/equalities-sub-committee-14-march-2023-7pm</p>				

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</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,</p>	Team Leader for Land and Property	30 June 2022	*	31 March 2023

APPENDIX 6 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
	<p>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>		<p>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 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>				

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Main Accounting 2021/22							
Final report issued April 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
03	<p>We recommend that procedure notes are produced for feeder system reconciliations to enable them to be carried out correctly and checked in a timely manner.</p> <p>We also recommend that Benefits system reconciliations are signed and dated by another person in Finance.</p>	Low	<p>Position (November 2022) In progress – we have a reconciliation tracker and have most of the procedures notes however this has provided an opportunity to rework and improve a small number of processes, which is currently being done as part of this work.</p> <p>Target date is now 31 December 2022.</p> <p>Position (March 2023) We have process notes for each reconciliation on our Tracker. Each reconciliation is signed off by another person. We are currently undertaking an internal audit on reconciliations. Resolved.</p>	Finance Section Head / Finance Systems Manager	31 October 2022	✓	31 December 2022

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 	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 password.</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>	Head of ICT	31 March 2023		31 March 2024

APPENDIX 6 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
	<p>areas,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>		<p>Position (July 2022) Third party tools currently being reviewed and costed. Item not yet due.</p> <p>Position (September 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 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) 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</p>				

APPENDIX 6 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
			<p>recommended by DLUHC is end of Q4 March 2024.</p> <p>Position (March 2023) In progress. Produce options and costs continue to be reviewed and costed against all recommendations included within the DLUHC cyber grant budget.</p>				
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>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 (September 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) 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.</p> <p>1.2 – Workshop with Qualys has been scheduled to discuss the new proposed</p>	Head of ICT	31 March 2023	*	30 June 2023

APPENDIX 6 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
			<p>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.</p> <p>Position (March 2023) Remains in progress, however Associate Director of ICT and Shared services requests an extension of 3 months. This is due to</p> <ul 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. 				

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</p>	High	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	Customer Service Centre Team Manager	31 October 2022	*	<p>30 November 2022</p> <p>31 January 2023</p> <p>31 May 2023</p>

APPENDIX 6 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
	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>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) 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</p>				

APPENDIX 6 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
			<p>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>				

Creditors 2021/22							
Final report issued July 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
02	<p>We recommend:</p> <p>1. The Council creates a policy/procedure covering the use of CHAPS and Faster Payments. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The criteria which must be met to use CHAPS and Faster payments, The process for requesting and approving these payments, Which officers can request and approve these payments and how delegated limits will be set. <p>2. The Council updates the Payment Voucher request procedure to outline the types of payments which are eligible and ineligible to be made using this method.</p> <p>3. The policy and procedures for</p>	Medium	<p>A process note for CHAPS and Faster Payments will be written along with a scheme of delegation, agreed by S151 Officer and published on the intranet.</p> <p>Agreed and will be published as per the above.</p> <p>Agreed they will be published on the intranets and a communication to all staff.</p>	Finance Manager (Systems)	26 August 2022	* - part 1 and 2 resolved. Revised deadline for part 3.	<p>31 October 2022</p> <p>31 December 2022</p> <p>15 March 2023</p> <p>15 April 2023</p>

APPENDIX 6 OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2021/22 AUDIT PLAN

Creditors 2021/22							
Final report issued July 2022							
Ref No.	Recommendation	Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved * or ✓	Revised Deadline
	CHAPS, Faster Payments and Payment Vouchers are communicated/re-communicated to all relevant staff across the Council (e.g., in a corporate communication) and placed on key staff systems such as the Intranet for reference		<p>Position - July 2022 Not yet due.</p> <p>Position (September 2022) 1 is resolved ✓ process note created. 2 is resolved ✓ process updated.</p> <p>3 We will publish revised note and new note on the intranet along with Delegated authority listings.</p> <p>New deadline: 31 October 2022</p> <p>Position (November 2022) Process notes have been written.</p> <p>There are issues with intranet, so these will be circulated by email,</p> <p>Delegated authority lists to be run and agreed.</p> <p>Again, there are issues with intranet so these will be published when intranet issues resolved.</p> <p>Position (March 2023) There has been an issue with the intranet, however, two Finance staff are undertaking training and will publish as agreed. New deadline 15th April 2023.</p>				

APPENDIX 7 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
01	The Council should update the procedures to record the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next review date and/or frequency of review • Who reviewed and approved the document. 	Low	Position (March 2023) This can be added to the documents and version control added.	DM Team Leader	30 April 2023		
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	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.	Head of Regulatory Services / DM Team Leaders	30 September 2023		

APPENDIX 8 ASSURANCE AND 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.