



INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

London Borough of Southwark

For presentation to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

15 November 2023



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1. SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AUDIT WORK

Purpose of report

This report informs the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee of progress against completion of the 2022-23 and 2023-24 internal audit plans. It summarises the work we have undertaken, together with our assessment of the systems reviewed and the recommendations we have raised. Our work complies with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Internal audit methodology

We have agreed terms of reference for each piece of work with the designated audit owner, identifying the headline and sub-risks, which have been covered as part of the assignment. This approach is designed to enable us to give assurance on the risk management and internal control processes in place to mitigate the risks identified.

Our reporting methodology is based on four assurance levels in respect of our overall conclusions as to the design and operational effectiveness of controls within the system reviewed - substantial, moderate, limited or no assurance. The four assurance levels are designed to ensure that the opinion given does not gravitate to a "satisfactory" or middle band grading. Under any system, we are required to make a judgement when making our overall assessment. The definitions for our assurance levels are set out in appendix 1 to this report.

Internal audit plan 2022-23

All reports have now been finalised for work relating to 2022-23. Where reports have been finalised since the last meeting of the Committee, the executive summaries are included in section 4 of this report.

Building Safety Audit - Addendum

We would like to bring to the Committee's attention that the risks highlighted in the final report presented within our Internal Audit Progress Report to its meeting in September 2023, did not take into account all relevant information relating to the current status of the Building Safety service. As we reported, the Council continues its journey to ensure compliance with the new Building Safety Act and secondary legislation. However, significant information was not provided to us during the original audit (April and May 2023) and the Assistant Director of Building Safety, and the Director of Asset Management had not signed off the reports as complete or accurate. Therefore, we have agreed to complete a further audit in Quarter 4 of this audit year, to bring a full and revised view of the service, which will also act as a follow up / update to any recommendations made at the time.

Internal audit programme for schools

The fieldwork and draft reports for all 2022-23 school audits have been completed. The assurance ratings for schools where final reports have been issued are included in section 2.

We are delivering the work programme previously agreed with the former Director of Education for 2023-24 that will meet the assurance needs of the Council. Delivery commenced in June 2023.

All school audits are booked in, and the majority of start dates have been agreed with the headteachers and school business managers. A schedule of progress and internal audit opinions for 2023-24 is also included in section 2 of this report.

Internal audit plan 2023-24

The status of the audits commenced to date for 2023-24 is outlined within section 3 of this report.

Where reports have been finalised since the last meeting of the Committee, the executive summaries are included in section 4.

Follow-up

As part of finalising each audit report, we agree with management the actions that will be taken in response to each finding and recommendation, including the date by which the actions will be completed.

Internal audit routinely follows up all high and medium recommendations that are due ahead of each Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. A full schedule of recommendations falling due in the period is issued to each Directorate Management Team with a request for an update on the status and evidence to support implementation. Limited substantive testing is also completed where this is appropriate.

The recommendation implementation rate of 90% has remained constant since the last meeting.

Following an action from the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in September 2023, the follow-up table has been extended to separate out longstanding recommendations from 2020-21 and 2021-22. The officers responsible for these recommendations have previously attended the Committee and advised that all recommendations will be implemented by 31 March 2024.

Non-Internal Audit assurance work completed since the last meeting.

Risk Management - we continue to provide administrative support to the Council on its risk management arrangements across the directorates.

Transparency Reporting - we continue to provide support and challenge to the Council in meeting its obligations for reporting of expenditure under the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. No issues to prevent publication of the information have arisen.

2. Schools internal audit plan

The table below includes the status of audits commenced to date and the assurance opinions where the final report has been issued.

School	Status	Design	Operational Effectiveness
2022-23 (remaining audits)			
Crawford Primary School	Final Report	Moderate	Moderate
St Jude's Church of England Primary School	Final Report	Moderate	Moderate
St Peter's Church of England Primary School	Final Report	Moderate	Moderate
Tuke School	Draft Report 26-May 2023		
Grove Children & Family Centre	Draft Report 09-Jun-23		
St George's Church of England Primary School	Draft Report 30-Jun-23		
2023-24			
St James Church of England Primary School	Quality Assurance / Reporting		
Brunswick Park Primary School	Quality Assurance / Reporting		
Bellenden Primary School	Quality Assurance / Reporting		
Friars Primary School	7 Nov 2023		
Comber Grove Primary School	20 Nov 2023		
Rye Oak Primary School	27 Nov 2023		
Evelina Hospital School	6 Dec 2023		
Riverside Primary School	6 Dec 2023		
Robert Browning Primary School	11 Dec 2023		
Bird In Bush School	15 Jan 2024		

School	Status	Design	Operational Effectiveness
Victory School	22 Jan 2024		
Crampton Primary School	23 Jan 2024		
Hollydale Primary School	29 Jan 2024		
Alfred Salter Primary School	31 Jan 2024 (awaiting confirmation)		
St George's Cathedral RC Primary School	5 Feb 2024		
Tower Bridge Primary School	26 Feb 2024		
Grange Primary School	4 Mar 2024		

3. SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023-24

The table below includes the status of audits commenced to date and outlines all agreed work at the time of writing. For those audits not yet at reporting stage, the table is split by directorate. For those audits shaded in grey, the executive summaries are included in section 4.

Audit	Director / Audit Sponsor	ToR issued	Fieldwork (planned / indicative)	QA / Reporting	Design	Operational Effectiveness
FINAL REPORTS - PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED TO THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE						
Family Hubs and Start for Life	Director, Childrens Services	✓	✓	✓	NA Grant audit	NA Grant audit
Capital Expenditure Management - General Fund	Strategic Director, Finance/ Chief Accountant	✓	✓	Final Report	Moderate	Moderate
Sickness Absence Management	Assistant Chief Executive - Governance and Assurance	✓	✓	Final Report	Moderate	Moderate
Supporting Families - Grant Audit (April to July claims)	Director, Children and Families	✓	✓	Final Report	NA Grant audit	NA Grant audit
FINAL REPORTS - EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES INCLUDED IN THIS PROGRESS REPORT						
Home Ownership - Garages	Director of Customer and Exchequer Services	✓	✓	Final Report	Moderate	Limited
Home to School Transport	Director of Education	✓	✓	Final Report	NA Advisory	NA Advisory
Housing Adaptations	Director of Asset Management	✓	✓	Final Report	Moderate	Moderate
Leisure services	Director of Leisure	✓	✓	Final Report	NA Advisory	NA Advisory

Audit	Director / Audit Sponsor	ToR issued	Fieldwork (planned / indicative)	QA / Reporting	Design	Operational Effectiveness
Pupil Registry Systems	Director of Education	✓	✓	✓ Final Report	Substantial	Substantial
Social Housing White Paper	Director of Resident Services	✓	✓	✓ Final Report	Moderate	Substantial
Southwark Repairs - Service Improvement Plan	Director of Asset Management	✓	✓	✓ Final Report	Moderate	Moderate
Supporting Families - Grant Audit (Augst to September claims)	Director, Children and Families	✓	✓	✓ Final Report	NA Grant audit	NA Grant audit
Voids	Director of Resident Services	✓	✓	✓ Final Report	Moderate	Limited
DRAFT REPORTS ISSUED						
TMO2 - Haddonhall TMO	Director, Resident Services	✓	✓	✓ Draft Report 16 Oct 2023		
TMO3 - Kennington Park TMO	Director, Resident Services	✓	✓	✓ Draft Report 24 Oct 2023		
TMO1 - Browning EMB	Director, Resident Services	✓	✓	✓ Draft Report 2 Nov 2023		
Children and Adult Services Directorate						
Adopt London Partnership	Director of Childrens Services / Director of Finance	Scoping	11 Dec 2023			

Audit	Director / Audit Sponsor	ToR issued	Fieldwork (planned / indicative)	QA / Reporting	Design	Operational Effectiveness
Care Leavers	Director, Children and Families	✓	27 Nov 2023			
Direct Payments	Director, Adult Social Care	✓	✓			
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Director, Public Health	Scoping	12 Feb 2024			
Legal Fees	Director, Children and Families / Assistant Chief Executive - Governance and Assurance	✓	✓			
New: Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts	Director of Education	✓	✓			
Service assurance / change programme review	Strategic Director, Children and Adult Services	Planning	Q4			
Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth Directorate						
Estates Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance	Director, Environment	✓	✓			
Leisure services - assurance	Director, Leisure	Scoping	11 Dec 2023			
Major regeneration - programme & projects	Director of Planning and Growth	✓	✓			
Planning applications and s106 agreements	Director, Planning and Growth	✓	✓			
Tree Management Service	Director, Leisure	✓	✓			

Audit	Director / Audit Sponsor	ToR issued	Fieldwork (planned / indicative)	QA / Reporting	Design	Operational Effectiveness
Finance Directorate, including IT audits						
Accounts Receivable and Debt management	Director, Customer and Exchequer Services	Planning	8 Jan 2024			
Budgetary Monitoring and Reporting	Director, Finance	✓	27 Nov 2023			
Capital Expenditure Management - Housing Revenue Account	Director, Finance	✓	✓			
Contract Management	Head of Procurement	Planning	26 Feb 2024			
Cost of Living Fund	Director, Customer and Exchequer Services	Planning	5 Feb 2024			
Fairer Future Procurement Framework	Head of Procurement	Planning	12 Feb 2024			
Housing Benefits	Director, Customer and Exchequer Services	Planning	31 Jan 2024			
Mosaic	Director, Customer and Exchequer Services	Planning	11 Mar 2024			
Payments to individuals outside of PAYE / IR35	Director of Exchequer Services / Director of HR	✓	✓			
Pensions Administration	Pensions Manager	✓	4 Dec 2023			
Service assurance / change programme reviews	Strategic Director, Finance	Planning	Q4			
IT - Asset / Hardware Management	Chief Digital and Technology Officer	Scoping	12 Dec 2023			

Audit	Director / Audit Sponsor	ToR issued	Fieldwork (planned / indicative)	QA / Reporting	Design	Operational Effectiveness
IT - Cyber Security	Chief Digital and Technology Officer	Scoping	8 Nov 2023			
IT - Service Review	Chief Digital and Technology Officer	Scoping	14 Mar 2024			
IT - Shared Service Governance	Chief Digital and Technology Officer	✓	✓			
Housing Directorate						
Housing Solutions - Applications and Allocations	Director, Resident Services	Planning	20 Nov 2023			
Service Assurance / Change Programme Reviews	Strategic Director, Housing	Planning	Q4			
Statutory Disrepairs	Director, Asset Management	✓	✓			
Temporary Accommodation Budget Recovery Board - Advisory	Director, Resident Services	Ongoing	Ongoing			
New: Tenancy Management Organisation - Accounts Objection Review	Strategic Director, Housing and Strategic Director, Finance	✓	✓			
Strategy and Communities						
Council Delivery Plan	Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy and Communities	✓	✓			
Economic Renewal Plan / Strategy	Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy and Communities	Planning	4 Mar 2024			
Governance and Assurance						
Corporate Facilities Management	Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Planning	4 Dec 2023			

Audit	Director / Audit Sponsor	ToR issued	Fieldwork (planned / indicative)	QA / Reporting	Design	Operational Effectiveness
IR35	Director, People and Organisational Development	✓	✓			
Payroll	Director, Customer and Exchequer Services	Planning	11 Mar 2024			
Records management	Assistant Chief Executive Governance and Assurance	✓	✓			
Staff recruitment and vetting	Director, People and Organisational Development	Planning	8 Jan 2023			
Integrated Care System						
Partnership governance and integration of services	Joint leadership role with the ICB	Planning	26 Feb 2024			
Commissioning of services	Director, Commissioning	Planning	11 Mar 2024			

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES OF REPORTS FINALISED SINCE THE LAST MEETING

CAS44 Pupil Registry Systems October 2023	LEVEL OF ASSURANCE		SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
	Design	Operational effectiveness	High	-
	Substantial	Substantial	Medium	-
			Low	1
Purpose of review:	To provide assurance on the adequacy, completeness, and accuracy of the processes the Council has in place relating to pupil registration systems data. The audit also considered the extent to which the Council is consistently monitoring the quality of information received from schools in relation to pupil movements to prevent CME.			
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 states that where the reason for a pupil of compulsory school age's absence cannot be established at the time when the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. The name of a pupil may only be deleted from the attendance register when that pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register for that school. There are 15 grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age can be deleted from the admission register. Primarily the Regulations place duties on schools to inform the Local Authority when children are starting or leaving school.</p> <p>The process of receiving notifications from schools is managed with the Pupil Tracking and Licensing (PTL) team within Education Access. The schools complete an online registry form and send it to the Council when a child is joining/leaving the school. These forms generate an excel report listing all notifications received from schools and details of the pupil's movements and the corresponding dates. As stated in the regulations there must be a valid reason given for why the child is moving, and this information has to be verified. The Council has the duty to recognise when a child is missing education (CME). If a school informs the Council that a child has moved but has no indication of where the child has relocated, further checks are undertaken by the Southwark team to identify if the child is CME, and, if so, take action to get them back into education.</p> <p>The PTL team quality assures the data received from schools and utilises the census which is completed by schools and cross checked against the school's internal register held at the time of the visit. They can then ascertain whether the school has been consistently informing them through the registry process of all pupil movements.</p> <p>Areas of strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has a Children Missing Education (CME) Protocol document in place that is comprehensive and covers each stage of the process. Significant guidance for staff on roles, responsibilities, procedures, and safeguarding is included. The policy was distributed to Headteachers of Southwark schools, managers and staff in Children's & Adults Services and Southwark Safeguarding Children's Board. The Council's process for identifying and tracking CME is led through the Pupil Tracking and Licensing (PTL) Team in the Education Access division in Southwark Children's and Adults' Services. The PTL Manager is the named person for CME to whom schools and other agencies can 				

make referrals. Data is quality checked by the PTL Officer and shared with the School Admission team each week. The PTL Manager supervises and monitors school responses and conducts a compliance audit annually. The Strategic Development Manager provides an annual analysis report for SMT and the CME Monitoring Group and the Assistant Director - Education then shares this report with all schools.

- The Council monitors children at risk of missing education through its monthly CME Monitoring Group Meetings, the main purpose of which is to ensure that there is no drift, delay, or avoidance in following up cases where there are concerns. As preparation for each meeting, all current CME cases are checked against Children's Services systems to identify any additional risk factors, including current children's social care and SEND status.
- We reviewed a sample of ten schools to examine if there is consistency between the pupil movement data held by the Council and that held by individual schools. Our review identified that in all cases, the data held by the Council matched the data held on the latest census (Summer Census as at 18/05/2023), reasons for movement were valid i.e., the pupil has been confirmed as registered at another school and a current pupil location was present. We also confirmed that periodic quality checks of data are undertaken by the Education Data Manager to ensure reconciliation is accurate and to identify any issues that arise with the Department for Education. This was last completed in July 2023.
- The PTL team maintain regular contact with schools via telephone and email to discuss and resolve issues related to pupil movement data. Documentation and protocols are listed on the Council's website to assist schools and offers advice and guidance for schools in relation to pupil registry and CME processes. Briefings are also provided by the Council to schools, primarily in relation to removing children from schools' registers (off-rolling) and exceptional pupil movement.
- Cases of CME and missing pupil location information are investigated and followed up by the PTL team. All additions and deletions are monitored by the PTL Manager and Strategic Development Manager - Child Not in School on a regular basis. Evidence is retained and monitored by the PTL Manager. We reviewed a sample of 10 CME cases raised between April 2022 and March 2023 to verify if appropriate follow up action and investigation had taken place to ascertain the child's current location. Our review found that in all cases, an investigation was undertaken with adequate follow up action taken.
- Key data metrics relating to the completeness and accuracy of pupil movement data sent by schools are monitored regularly by the PTL team. These data metrics are also discussed at CME Monitoring Group meetings and any issues identified are escalated to SMT. We reviewed the spreadsheet used by the Strategic Development Manager to collate this data in the last 12 months and confirmed that it was sufficiently detailed and complete.
- An annual review of non-receipt of pupil movement data from schools is undertaken by the PTL team. The Strategic Development Manager undertook a gap analysis of schools which had not submitted any forms in the last 12 months. This report was reviewed by the Assistant Director and Service Development Manager. Provisional arrangements that have been put in place to address the non-receipt of pupil movement data include a school census audit, targeted at the 13 schools which did not submit any deletions from their respective register forms.

Areas of concern:

- We identified one minor improvement to further strengthen controls. The Capita 1 system does not currently have a regularly updated record of which school each pupil is attending. A systems project is underway, which will address this issue.

CAS42 Home to School Transport October 2023		LEVEL OF ASSURANCE		SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
		Design	Operational effectiveness	High	-
		N/A - Advisory	N/A - Advisory	Medium	2
				Low	-
Purpose of review:	To support the Council in understanding the benefits and drawbacks of an individual transport grant as opposed to direct payment scheme. We also reviewed the use of a service information dashboard and the data received from the contractor and suggest improvements in using the data related to service take up, trends, costs and to track contractor performance more effectively. This is an internal audit advisory review; therefore, no internal audit assurance or opinion is provided on the effectiveness of the design or operation of the controls.				
Background:	<p>Local Authorities have a duty under Section 508B of the Education Act 1996 to make travel arrangements to facilitate school attendance for eligible children aged 5-16. This includes children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of mobility problems or health and safety issues related to their special educational needs (SEN) or disability.</p> <p>Local authorities have duties under Section 508F of the Education Act 1996 to publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport to facilitate the attendance of eligible persons of sixth form age receiving education or training, and for adults over 19 including those with an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan up to age of 25.</p> <p>The Council sets out how it meets these duties in the Southwark Travel Assistance Policy. The Council provides travel assistance to 737 children and young people, of whom vehicle transport (bus or taxi) is provided for 553 (75%) at an average annual cost of £9,738 per child. The Home to School Transport budget is split between two cost centres which include direct transport costs and staffing costs of the team within Education Access organising assessment and service delivery. The service is consistently overspending on its budget and the drivers of this increase include a reduction in funding allocated, a continuing growth in numbers of children eligible for travel assistance; and inflationary pressures increasing cost of bus and taxi journeys.</p> <p>Areas of strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Children’s and Adults Board (CAB) had formally agreed a proposal for the SEND Travel Assistance Team to proceed with piloting, during the 2023-24 academic year new PTBs, which if successful, will permanently replace, from September 2024, the current direct payment scheme. • Personal Travel Budget: The proposal to proceed with piloting PTBs was reviewed by the Council’s legal and corporate finance teams. • There is a comprehensive SEND travel assistance policy dated May 2023 on the website. • Service provision framework and controls: Our review and discussions regarding the use of the service information and data received from the contractor identified the following processes and controls in place to ensure that eligible children with SEND receive appropriate transportation to school support, which support the effective management of resources: 				

- There is a comprehensive data set of students receiving travel assistance with details of costs being used to monitor the service take up, trends and overall costs. This is supporting effective demand management of the service. The information is held on a spreadsheet; however, we were informed that SEND Transport has been identified as a priority for a Capita digital risk improvement programme once a SEND module has been completed. This would ensure a new service information dashboard system would be developed to mitigate any risks around the use of the spreadsheet by providing an efficient, flexible, scalable, multi-user access system with agile reporting aligned with regulatory requirements.
- Home to School Transport Budget Management: The cost of delivering free home to school travel has increased significantly in recent years. The budget set for SEND transport between 2020 and 2023 did not keep track with rising costs and demand, and the budget has been significantly overspent each year. Our review identified that the Council manage demand by eligible children with SEND and the transportation costs by monitoring revenue costs and travel costs together to ensure financial sustainability. Monthly budgetary control is completed in line with the Council's routine budgetary control processes.
- To support the Council's priority to control the growth in expenditure to bring it back within budget, a £1.2m savings target has been set by the Council, to be achieved in the period 2023-24 to 2026-27. A Budget Recovery Board (BRB), and a comprehensive BRB SEND transport update paper dated August 2023 endorsed a BRB Action Plan on Home to School Transport on 9 August 2023. The BRB SEND transport paper updates on several actions taken, including an analysis of key drivers of SEND transport budget position and summary of legal advice received to assess possible savings/cost-avoidance options and implementation implications.

Areas of concern:

- Personal transport expenditure: The new approach to SEND travel assistance is due mainly to the fact that the service is consistently overspending its budget. Drivers of the consistent budget overspending include a reduction in the funding allocated (a one-off adult services allocation in 2021-22 improved the position), continuing growth in the numbers of children that are eligible for travel assistance and inflationary pressures increasing the cost of bus and taxi journeys. The importance of continued close monitoring of the demand and associated financial pressures facing the service through the Budget Recovery Board action plan is acknowledged. At this stage we cannot provide a view on the effectiveness of that process given that the target periods fall outside of the scope of this audit period. We have not made any recommendations in this area; however, we are raising this as a key area to monitor as without it, the service runs the risk of overspending again.
- Key Performance Indicators: A new interim contract for the bus contractor, HATS, has been approved by the Children's and Adults Board (CAB) to run from 1 September 2023 - 31 August 2025. Our review of the agreed KPIs to assess whether these are in line with the national guidance identified that they are not comprehensive as they do not cover the full-service specification of the contract.
- Benchmarking: While we were completing our fieldwork, we were informed that the Council would be undertaking a benchmarking exercise with Bexley and Kent County Council to consider the tax implications for those in receipt of the new PTBs, including those in receipt of various means-tested benefits, such as Income Support, Housing Benefit, Universal Credit, and Working Tax Credit. The benchmarking results were not completed in time for our fieldwork to cover them. In addition, it was unclear whether there was a decision to ensure professional advice from a qualified tax professional or HM Revenue & Customs would be sought to understand the tax implications and financial impacts of providing PTBs compared to the existing direct payment scheme for school travel expenses. Despite this, we were informed that the SEND Transport Team were already issuing the PTBs for the academic year 2023-24. There is a risk the tax implications for those in receipt of the individualised transport budgets are not known and have not been researched thoroughly as part of the proposal to amend the current direct payment scheme with individualised transport budgets.

H14 Housing Adaptations October 2023		LEVEL OF ASSURANCE		SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
		Design	Operational effectiveness	High	-
		Moderate	Moderate	Medium	2
				Low	1
Purpose of review:	To provide assurance over the housing adaptations process to ensure funding is spent appropriately and that effective budget monitoring is completed.				
<p>Background:</p> <p>Residents who are either over 60, have a disability, live with someone with a disability or look after a disabled child and find it difficult to get in and around their home, can apply for an adaptation to their home. Adaptations can range from fitting wet rooms or stairlifts to external handrails or door entry systems. All requests for an adaptation require an assessment from the occupational therapy service who make a recommendation as to what is suitable for the person's needs.</p> <p>Council tenants do not have to pay anything towards the costs. If the resident is a homeowner, private tenant, or housing association tenant they can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) up to the value of £30,000 to put towards the adaptation cost. The grant is means tested for people aged over 19. However, people in receipt of certain benefits are eligible for 100% of the grant.</p> <p>Following the recommendation from the occupational therapy service, residents can manage the adaptations themselves and choose their own building company. The Council surveyor will give advice and sign off the works when complete. Alternatively the resident can use the Council's Home Improvement Agency to oversee the adaptations and the work will be completed by an approved contractor. For Council properties the work is undertaken by one of three contractors, who the Council has a contract with depending on the area (North, South, Central).</p> <p>For HAT works undertaken, we found there was an annual budget for 2023-24 of £1.3m and for April and May 2023 there had been a total spend of £219,223.62. For HIA works undertaken, in April and May 2023 there had been a total spend of £240,967.18.</p> <p>Areas of strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We confirmed that the Council has a procedure document that details how the housing adaptations process is managed across the service. This is accompanied by template documentation to ensure the correct information is recorded when approving Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). • For a sample of 20 Housing Adaptation Team (HAT), and 10 Home Improvement Agency (HIA) applications, we found that all 20 HAT works were accompanied by an occupational therapist (OT) referral form with the works quoted matching this. The progress of works was tracked and confirmed that all 20 were completed in accordance with the recommendations raised by the OT. For all 10 HIA applications, all were accompanied by a referral form and all works quoted for and completed were in accordance with this initial form. • We confirmed that there are 18 team members and managers that complete declarations of interest on an annual basis. We found that all 18 had completed the process for the 23/24 financial year with no relevant declarations declared that would impact their work or the work delivered to applicants. 					

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- We confirmed the Council has a monthly budget monitoring process which highlights aids and adaptations to the boroughs housing. We reviewed the monthly budget monitoring completed from April, May, and June 2023. We found the spreadsheet breaks down the budget into separate costs and highlights any monthly over and underspend. The budget also breaks down the number of orders as well as average order costs.

Areas of concern:

- Grant contracts include a time limitation of five years, whereby if the resident moves in that time, they are required to pay back the money to the Council. Currently the Council do not record these as charges against the property, so these are not automatically paid when the property is sold and undertake this on an ad hoc basis. We were provided with an extract of the spreadsheet utilised to monitor the grants awarded and noted these only recorded the 2020/21 financial year grants and did not contain any recent grants awarded and it was not sufficiently clear to confirm that effective monitoring is completed on a regular basis. We were advised the Council is considering whether to record the grants as charges on properties. When agreeing to the conditions of the grant, there is an obligation placed upon the homeowner to inform the Council when they move.
- For a sample of 10 HIA works, all were accompanied by a surveyor assessment confirming the works were satisfactory, it was noted that one of these was delayed by approximately four months, and for two of these the final email to finance was not saved from the email inbox to the case management system. For a sample of 20 HAT works, for two of these, despite requests to the contractor, final electrical safety documentation was not provided, and works were paid in any event. Standard process is that funding is provided after works have been confirmed as completed and inspected by a surveyor. For a further three HAT works, no evidence of a surveyor inspection or approval was signed off and attached to the case management system before being paid through iWorld by the quality surveyor on a desktop-based process.
- For a sample of 10 HIA applications, one grant required a further award due to additional works required. The SSC Manager correctly approved this, but this was not saved on the case management system.

F56 Homeownership Garages October 2023		LEVEL OF ASSURANCE		SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
		Design	Operational effectiveness	High	-
		Moderate	Limited	Medium	5
				Low	3
Purpose of audit:	To provide assurance over the design and operational controls relating to the management of the Council's garage stock, including maintenance of ownership and collection of fees due.				
Background:					
<p>The Council maintains a stock of circa 6,500 garages. Where an individual applies for a garage, they are put on a waiting list and must provide supporting documentation such as ID, proof of address and whether they have any disabilities. This process was closed until 1 September 2023 while the current list was transferred to the new automated waiting list and allocations programme. The Council has put in place a Garage Improvement Programme which has a focus on improving various areas such as lettings, allocations, void turnaround, repairs, KPI's and digital presence. The programme started in May 2023 and is expected to be completed in November 2023.</p> <p>There are three different levels for garage rent which vary from £18.10 per week to £41.20 per week and this depends on whether individuals are secure Council tenants, resident leaseholders who reside in the property or not, whether the tenant is aged over 70 and whether they have any disabilities. Rents are reviewed on an annual basis as part of the HRA rent setting budget. There are extra service charges if the garage has more space than an average garage, there is parking outside the garage or there is a water tap nearby. The charges range between £0.50 and £5.80. Garage rent is payable via a Rent Swipe Card or setting up a direct debit. When an individual signs up for a garage, they must pay rent six weeks in advance and then at least weekly in advance thereafter. Where payments are not made by individuals, the Council first go through the arrears process which involves issuing three arrears' letters, before a Notice to Quit (NTQ) and Section 41 notice is issued. The Council may then repossess the garage and recharge costs back to the individual.</p> <p>Individuals who rent a garage from the Council must have a Garage Licence Agreement which sets out rules and obligations of both the individual and the Council in terms of garage use, repairs, and general health & safety. The Council's Buildings Insurance does not cover damage or loss incurred.</p> <p>The Council has repairs officers who are required to do regular inspections for garages within their patch, raise these on iWorld and use three different contractors - for general, responsive repairs, this has been contracted to PRB. For repairs related to metal works, this has been contracted to SBS and for lighting, this has been contracted to Spokemead. In addition to responsive type repairs, the Council also have a planned maintenance programme in place for garages which covers the replacement of doors and roofs, demolition, guttering and brickwork repair.</p>					
Areas of strength:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an established process to annually review and update garage rent charges, through the annual Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget setting process. We reviewed the 2023-24 HRA Budget and Rent setting report and confirmed that Cabinet agreed to the increase in charges for garages with effect from April 2023. The price increase included justifications such as protecting the Council's garage income stream given the 					

current cost of living crisis in the UK. We reviewed the Annual HRA Budget and Rent Setting report for 2022-23 and confirmed that garage rents were reviewed and updated with Cabinet approval.

- We selected a sample of 15 current garage accounts and confirmed that a signed Garage License Agreement was in place and that the rent charges applied to the account agreed to the 2023-24 approved charges, including any additional service charges.
- Repairs works are either completed by the Council's internal team, Traded Services, or by their contractor PRB. We selected a sample of five Traded Services and ten PRB repairs and confirmed that all fifteen had been raised on the iWorld system.
- The service has established a set of KPIs, including total lets, garage cash collection and total voids. The Homeownership Services Manager collates data for each KPI monthly, through a tracker spreadsheet. Review of the tracker confirmed that it was up to date, having been updated for each month in our period of testing from April to August 2023.
- The Council has an arrears escalation procedure note in place, which documents the steps officers use to attempt to recover debts. This includes sending a series of up to four reminder letters to the licensee, serving a notice to quit, and ultimately repossessing the garage if no payment is received. For our sample of ten garages accounts currently in arrears, we confirmed that the full process had been followed for nine of the accounts. In respect of the other account, we have raised an observation.
- Since June 2023, the Homeownership Services Manager has maintained a Garage Improvement Programme (GIP) presentation, which outlines the project aims and workstreams. In July and October 2023, updates regarding the GIP's progress were included.
- For a sample of 15 applications, we confirmed that photo ID and proof of address had been maintained on file to support the application form, in line with the Council's procedure.

Areas of concern:

- Whilst the Council have a reactive process in place to respond to concerns raised by the public regarding garage use, there is an absence of proactive monitoring processes, such as inspections, to deter and identify garages being sublet, garages not being used in accordance with the Garage License Agreement or garages being used for illegal purposes. Furthermore, there is no explicit anti-fraud clause regarding the illegality of subletting in either the template Garage License Agreement or on the Council's website, representing a gap in the control framework.
- The Council has 1,307 garage accounts in arrears, as of 1 October 2023. Review of the latest report identified that the number of days since these accounts were either in credit or at a balance of zero ranged between seven and 3,752 days. Between 2019 and 2021, the Council completed annual aged debt reviews and write-offs. There has been no further review since March 2021.
- We reviewed a sample of 15 garage accounts and identified some discrepancies with the application of additional service charges. There were two accounts for which the additional charge had been annotated by hand on the Garage License Agreement and one account where a water charge was applied to the account, but not included in the Agreement. In all three cases, it was unclear if the licensee was informed of the fee despite being charged the additional amounts. There were also two accounts where water charges had been erroneously applied to the account, however the Council has informed both licensees and credited the accounts.
- Nine of our sample of 15 accounts had non-standard rate charges applied therefore we sought to confirm that any discounted rates or additional service charges had been assessed and that approval was recorded. The required Garage Let form for one account could not be located and for four accounts the forms had not been signed as authorised by the Council.

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- The Council has four different void pathways, and each has an associated target turnaround time. Whilst these KPIs are documented in the Head of Service KPI tracker, they are not monitored individually. Instead, one 'Void Turnaround (days)' figure is currently measured, as an average for all properties categorised as voids. This prevents the Council from determining their performance against each void target.
 - When repairs works are raised, they can be allocated a priority between G0 (emergency) and G4 (up to six months). An additional code, G5, is used for project works to be completed within the financial year. However, whilst these priorities are embedded in iWorld, the associated criteria are not documented in procedure which could lead to misunderstanding or misuse.
 - For our sample of five Traded Services and ten PRB repairs, we sought to confirm they were costed and completed in a timely manner per their priority. We identified the following exceptions:
 - Traded Services: One repair was not completed and had not been chased up for two months, making it 59 days overdue (at the time of testing). One repair had no note or associated job details in iWorld to confirm completion. Two repairs were currently ongoing and showed overdue because the incorrect priority had been allocated.
 - PRB: Five repairs showed as overdue in iWorld, because the case record had not been closed in a timely manner. Four repairs had not been completed within the target time frame, and no reason for the delay had been included within the case notes.

H27 Social Housing White Paper October 2023		LEVEL OF ASSURANCE		SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
		Design	Operational effectiveness	High	-
		Moderate	Substantial	Medium	1
				Low	2
Purpose of review:	To review the arrangements and plans for the Council's readiness for implementing the legislative requirements of the White Paper and the Social Housing Regulation Bill.				
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Social Housing White Paper was published by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 17 November 2020 and sets out seven commitments that social housing residents should be able to expect from their landlord. It formalises the Government's response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy, within overarching themes that include building safety and measures to boost the supply and quality of social housing. It focuses upon the voice of the resident, with greater redress and stronger consumer regulation of the sector through delivering the improvements in transparency and accountability promised in the 2018 green paper.</p> <p>The White Paper's Charter for Social Housing Residents sets out seven commitments that residents should expect from their landlord. They are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To be safe in your home. 2. To know how your landlord is performing, including on repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money. 3. To have complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong Ombudsman. 4. To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator, and improved customer standards for tenants. 5. To have their voice heard by their landlord. 6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, with the landlord keeping the home in good repair. 7. The government will ensure social housing can support people to take their first step to ownership. <p>It should be noted that Right to Shared Ownership does not apply where the Local Authority is the Landlord and as a result this scope did not cover Chapter 7 of the White Paper.</p> <p>To ensure that landlords comply with the charter, the White Paper outlines plans for new regulation and a strengthened Housing Ombudsman. These plans include regular inspections for landlords with more than 1,000 homes, regulation on consumer standards, removing the serious detriment test and new powers for the Ombudsman to issue complaint handling failure orders. Social landlords will also have to report against new resident satisfaction and income/expenditure measures, with an expectation that residents should be able to access key information from their landlord. The White Paper also proposes a potential review of the Decent Homes Standard, new nominated responsible persons for health and safety and consumer standards, and an</p>					

intention to tackle anti-social behaviour by clarifying the roles of different agencies. The Social Housing Regulation Bill was laid in Parliament in 2022 to deliver the reforms outlined in the Social Housing White Paper. The Bill is currently waiting for Royal Assent.

Areas of strength:

- The Council is rolling out its Building Safety Programme to ensure it is compliant with the Building Safety Act 2022. This programme will cover the required installation of carbon monoxide detectors, replacement cycle of smoke alarms, and Electrical Inspection reports. Fire Risk Assessments of blocks are carried out and made available to residents on request.
- The Strategic Director of Housing has been appointed as the nominated point of contact in compliance with the Building Safety Act (2022).
- The collection of Tenants Satisfaction Measures (TSM) is being closely monitored by two subcommittees. The Management Info Sub-Group monitors the collection of the measures collected by landlords. The TSMs Sub-Group, oversees the required tenant participation surveys, for which a private contractor has been appointed.
- The Council has published details relating to housing income and expenditure, with all expenditure over £250 and executive remuneration on its website. This gives residents clear information on how the Council uses its resources.
- Required disclosures to tenants regarding the use of resources are being made by the Council, and numerous forums are available for residents' engagement and discussion on local housing issues.
- A complaints policy is in place that is in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. The complaints policy is freely available to the public on the Council website. Progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the Complaints Internal Audit Report issued in January 2023. These will be monitored through to completion by our usual follow up process.
- The Council has set out its policy on tackling domestic abuse, in partnership with other agencies, on its website.
- The Council has drafted its Resident Involvement Strategy setting out how it will engage with residents. A consultation exercise is to be undertaken before it is finalised, to ensure that the views of residents are embedded in this strategy. The document is set to be reviewed on an annual basis.
- It was demonstrated that the Council was closely monitoring developments in housing staff training/qualification requirements, with a view to achieving compliance once these have been established by the government. Developments have been reported to the Senior Management Team.
- The Council has published its allocations policy on its website. The Social Housing Regulation Programme Group which meets on a monthly basis, regularly monitors the Council's position in relation to compliance with the Decent Homes Standard.
- The Council has set out a plan to be Carbon Neutral by 2030, which includes an action plan for energy efficiency in Council housing.
- Mental and physical health and wellbeing offered to residents are clearly advertised on the Council's webpage, as is the Council's approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime.

Areas of concern:

- The Council's allocation's policy was published in November 2013 and requires review to ensure compliance with current government guidance.
- Several resident engagement forums advertised on the Council website did not have the meeting venue updated prior to the meeting. The Building Safety Inbox for residents to raise building safety concerns with the Council was not sufficiently advertised on the Council's website.

H09 Southwark Repairs - Service Improvement Plan November 2023		Design	Operational effectiveness	High	-
		Moderate	Moderate	Medium	1
				Low	1
Purpose of review:	To provide assurance over the implementation of the service improvement plan. We have not tested the underlying services in relation to implementation.				
<p>Background:</p> <p>On 1 October 2018, the building repairs and maintenance service was brought in-house, and Southwark Building Services (SBS) was given several responsibilities including general needs voids, and temporary accommodation voids. This decision was made permanent upon review by Cabinet in 2019 and the repairs service was given the task of developing an improvement plan. In February 2020 the Southwark Housing Scrutiny Commission published its report into housing repairs that included several recommendations which were subsequently agreed by Cabinet in December 2020.</p> <p>The SBS Service Improvement Plan was approved by Cabinet in April 2020. The plan is stated as an ambitious programme to deliver an excellent repairs service, focused on the delivery of internal repairs. Services such as communal repairs, voids and roofing are either already provided by external repairs partners or are planned to be soon. The goals are that these services will all be delivered in-house, however this will be a phased approach.</p> <p>The improvement plan is designed to deliver on the five aims approved by Cabinet based on feedback from residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An easy-to-use service – A repair job that will be completed right first time. – A repair job that treats me and my home with respect – Open and honest feedback on the quality of the repair – A fit for the future service that puts your needs at the heart of the service. <p>The project to deliver the improvement plan has seven workstreams: Digital Systems, Service Process Development, Customer Journey, Workforce Development, Communication and Engagement, Financial Management, and Procurement and are monitored by a Strategic Board, Sponsor Board, and Delivery Board. Updates are also made to the Council’s Corporate Management Team and Cabinet on progress made against the plan.</p> <p>In April 2020 the SBS was transferred from the Environment and Leisure Department to the Housing and Modernisation Department with the intention to dissolve the ‘client/contract split’ and to develop a wholly integrated and seamless repairs service. During the lockdown associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, although work began on the improvement plan, progress was slower than anticipated as the priority was on maintaining an essential repairs service in extraordinary circumstances. The service has now fully reopened and the repairs backlog arising over the pandemic is now cleared.</p> <p>Due to the first lockdown arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, although work began on the improvement plan, progress was slower than anticipated as the priority was on maintaining an essential repairs service in extraordinary circumstances. The service has now fully reopened (June 2022) and while demand remains high, the repairs backlog arising over the lockdown periods is now cleared. This did however create a work in progress legacy that remains today but with plans to address by mid-2024.</p>					

Since June 2023, a new Assistant Director of Repairs and Interim Director of Transformation are in post to assist in implementing a Good to Great Action Plan Stabilisation & Service Improvement Plan - Repairs (SIP), as well as develop a transformation programme for the service. In light of the challenges facing the wider service, the Repairs Transformation Board decided to extend the scope of the work to include all of Asset Management. This is now reflected in the name of the programme from “Repairs Transformation Programme” to “Asset Management Transformation Programme”. The rationale for that change was directly linked to the broader scope needed to understand also how corporate functions interact and impact with the services the Division operates in the council around performance.

Areas of strength:

- A stabilisation phase of the project has been established in the form of a SIP which fully details the goals and work of the service. This has been distilled into 130 actions recorded within this log, which also includes KPIs and PIs for the service and will be updated on a monthly basis. The initial position has been recorded for May/June 2023 and substantive monitoring will take place from August 2023 onwards. In May/June 2023 overall performance was unsatisfactory and this was discussed at the Repairs Transformation Board and how this data will be used to compare against the actions completed to show the improvement trajectory. The action plan fully detailed the issue and action, priority, and the owner of each action with a specific date and countdown to this date. As of 11 August 2023, the most recent version of the plan confirmed that out of 130 actions, 50 were not started, 28 were complete, 51 were in progress and one was overdue. The overdue action had an associated comment to confirm what was being undertaken to resolve this. The actions were confirmed as being reasonable and associated to specific services and the agreed programme. The actions covered specific areas such as communal repairs, voids and procurement.
- The June 2023 Housing Quality Network (HQN) report into repairs has been incorporated into the SIP. The Assistant Director of Repairs has been in contact with the lead Councillors to confirm this. The report and action plan were reviewed and were confirmed as including all actions recommended by the HQN. This is reviewed monthly as part of the Repairs Transformation Board above.

Areas of concern:

- A design phase of the service transformation has been established, pending final approval, which included performance management and continuous improvement and creates a Strategic Asset Management Framework setting out the golden thread from the overall priorities. This sets out the activity and objectives to be met over the subsequent years across the key strategic priorities, and is shaped by the medium-term financial strategy, which will be used to shape business plans that drive delivery and individual performance management. Asset Management Transformation Portfolio Board meetings were to be held monthly focusing on performance and report into Performance CMT, as approved by the Repairs Transformation Board and CMT in June and July 2023 respectively. However, this is currently on hold following the departure of the Council’s Strategic Director, Housing. While an interim Strategic Director has been appointed, there is a risk of delay and no continuity plan in place.
- While the transformation project has been initially approved, discussions are still ongoing as to the staff that will be used to deliver and manage the transformation work and the medium/long term actions needed to be taken. The Strategic Director, Housing has now left the Council which has resulted in a sponsorship vacuum and this work has been paused until recruitment can be completed, which will impact the programme mobilising and working at pace. Once this has been finalised the transformation project will be added to the directorate risk register.
- A governance structure is in place for the stabilisation programme and drafted for the design and implementation of the transformation programme setting out roles and responsibilities. However, from reviewing the terms of reference for the Repairs Transformation Board there is a section in relation to membership of the group including name, position, and role but this had not been completed with the attendees.

H09 Southwark Repairs - Service Improvement Plan November 2023		LEVEL OF ASSURANCE		SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
		Design	Operational effectiveness	High	-
		Moderate	Moderate	Medium	1
				Low	1
Purpose of review:	To provide assurance over the implementation of the service improvement plan. We have not tested the underlying services in relation to implementation.				
<p>Background:</p> <p>On 1 October 2018, the building repairs and maintenance service was brought in-house, and Southwark Building Services (SBS) was given several responsibilities including general needs voids, and temporary accommodation voids. This decision was made permanent upon review by Cabinet in 2019 and the repairs service was given the task of developing an improvement plan. In February 2020 the Southwark Housing Scrutiny Commission published its report into housing repairs that included several recommendations which were subsequently agreed by Cabinet in December 2020.</p> <p>The SBS Service Improvement Plan was approved by Cabinet in April 2020. The plan is stated as an ambitious programme to deliver an excellent repairs service, focused on the delivery of internal repairs. Services such as communal repairs, voids and roofing are either already provided by external repairs partners or are planned to be soon. The goals are that these services will all be delivered in-house, however this will be a phased approach.</p> <p>The improvement plan is designed to deliver on the five aims approved by Cabinet based on feedback from residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An easy-to-use service – A repair job that will be completed right first time. – A repair job that treats me and my home with respect – Open and honest feedback on the quality of the repair – A fit for the future service that puts your needs at the heart of the service. <p>The project to deliver the improvement plan has seven workstreams: Digital Systems, Service Process Development, Customer Journey, Workforce Development, Communication and Engagement, Financial Management, and Procurement and are monitored by a Strategic Board, Sponsor Board, and Delivery Board. Updates are also made to the Council’s Corporate Management Team and Cabinet on progress made against the plan.</p> <p>In April 2020 the SBS was transferred from the Environment and Leisure Department to the Housing and Modernisation Department with the intention to dissolve the ‘client/contract split’ and to develop a wholly integrated and seamless repairs service. During the lockdown associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, although work began on the improvement plan, progress was slower than anticipated as the priority was on maintaining an essential repairs service in extraordinary circumstances. The service has now fully reopened and the repairs backlog arising over the pandemic is now cleared.</p>					

Since June 2023, a new Assistant Director of Repairs and Interim Director of Transformation are in post to assist in implementing a Stabilisation & Improvement Plan - Repairs (SIP), as well as develop a transformation programme for the service.

In light of the challenges facing the wider service, the Repairs Transformation Board extended the scope of the work to include all of Asset Management. This is now reflected in the name of the programme from “Repairs Transformation Programme” to “Asset Management Transformation Programme”.

Areas of strength:

- A stabilisation phase of the project has been established in the form of a SIP which fully details the goals and work of the service. This has been distilled into 130 actions recorded within this log, which also includes KPIs and PIs for the service and will be updated on a monthly basis. The initial position has been recorded for May/June 2023 and substantive monitoring will take place from August 2023 onwards. In May/June 2023 overall performance was unsatisfactory and this was discussed at the Repairs Transformation Board and how this data will be used to compare against the actions completed to show the improvement trajectory. The action plan fully detailed the issue and action, priority, and the owner of each action with a specific date and countdown to this date. As of 11 August 2023, the most recent version of the plan confirmed that out of 130 actions, 50 were not started, 28 were complete, 51 were in progress and one was overdue. The overdue action had an associated comment to confirm what was being undertaken to resolve this. The actions were confirmed as being reasonable and associated to specific services and the agreed programme. The actions covered specific areas such as communal repairs, voids, and procurement.
- The June 2023 Housing Quality Network (HQN) report into repairs has been incorporated into the SIP. The Assistant Director of Repairs has been in contact with the lead Councillors to confirm this. The report and action plan were reviewed and were confirmed as including all actions recommended by the HQN. This is reviewed monthly as part of the Repairs Transformation Board above.

Areas of concern:

- A design phase of the service transformation has been established, pending final approval, which included performance management and continuous improvement and creates a Strategic Asset Management Framework setting out the golden thread from the overall priorities. This sets out the activity and objectives to be met over the subsequent years across the key strategic priorities, and is shaped by the medium-term financial strategy, which will be used to shape business plans that drive delivery and individual performance management. Asset Management Transformation Portfolio Board meetings were to be held monthly focusing on performance and report into Performance CMT, as approved by the Repairs Transformation Board and CMT in June and July 2023 respectively. However, this is currently on hold following the departure of the Council’s Strategic Director, Housing. While an interim Strategic Director has been appointed, there is a risk of delay and no continuity plan in place.
- While the transformation project has been initially approved, discussions are still ongoing as to the staff that will be used to deliver and manage the transformation work and the medium/long term actions needed to be taken. The Strategic Director, Housing has now left the Council which has resulted in a sponsorship vacuum and this work has been paused until recruitment can be completed, which will impact the programme mobilising and working at pace. Once this has been finalised the transformation project will be added to the directorate risk register.
- A governance structure is in place for the stabilisation programme and drafted for the design and implementation of the transformation programme setting out roles and responsibilities. However, from reviewing the terms of reference for the Repairs Transformation Board there is a section in relation to membership of the group including name, position, and role but this had not been completed with the attendees.

ENG23a Leisure Services September 2023		LEVEL OF ASSURANCE		SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
		Design	Operational effectiveness	High	-
		N/A - Advisory	N/A - Advisory	Medium	-
				Low	-
Purpose of audit:	This was a consultancy review conducted to identify and outline the controls we'd expect to be in place for the delivery of Leisure Services. The outcomes of this review are based on analysis / benchmarking with Leisure Services audits completed across our wider client portfolio, review of publicised insourcing examples and considering the controls against the key risk areas outlined below. This has been completed to act as a checklist to ensure the Council is considering all appropriate controls.				
Background:	<p>Following officer recommendations made in March 2021, on 14 September 2021, Cabinet considered a Procurement Strategy report for insourcing the leisure service (eight leisure centres) and approved the plan to bring the leisure service back in-house on 21 June 2023 at the expiry of the current contract with Sports and Leisure Management Limited. The Council will be one of the first London boroughs to do this. This move is in line with the Council's preference for in-house services, which help put residents at the heart of everything it does. Insourcing also helps the Council to ensure its leisure offer is focused on helping to reduce inequality and improve the health of residents and help relieve some of the financial pressures caused during the covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Council has adopted a two-phase approach to the in-sourcing. Phase one aimed to transfer the centres as seamlessly to the Council as possible with negligible impact on customers and staff. Phase two will be to consider how long term aims and ambitions can be achieved alongside other Council priorities and programmes, and how the current service offer can be enhanced.</p>				
Areas of concern:	<p>Through our review per risk, as a minimum the following controls should be considered as part of the insourcing process/leisure service set up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leisure Services strategy should be formulated following consultation with stakeholders and should include: Version control, scheduled date of next review, officer responsible for review, defined roles, and responsibilities, set out the corporate approach, a plan for the future of its facilities based on a sound understanding of their condition and forward maintenance costs, KPIs and how they will be monitored, reporting arrangements and a list of assets. The Strategy should be reviewed by key officers and consideration given to Member involvement. • Action plans. The strategy should be supported by action plans to help deliver the key objectives of the Strategy with clear responsibility and timescale assigned for each action. A traffic light system could be used to indicate progress towards completion of each action. • Transition Plan. This should detail the short-term objectives to aid the insourcing of Leisure Services and be supported by action plans with responsibility assigned for each action. • Procedures. There should be documented procedures for each area of responsibility/activity within Leisure Services. The procedures should be version controlled, have a scheduled date of next review, and assigned officer. 				

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- Risk registers. Officers should identify risks at an operational level and strategic level, using the Council's risk management framework to underpin the risk identification, escalation, and reporting. Officers should maintain risk registers and regularly reviewed detailing the mitigating controls in place and any intended future controls to lower risk ratings to within the Council's risk tolerance.
 - A health and safety risk assessment should be documented for all facilities by a qualified individual. Officers should establish an ongoing programme for future assessments to ensure there is regular review and any remedial actions reported, acted on and monitored for completion.
 - Insurance. The Council should have evidence of any outstanding insurance claims and any potential financial liability there may be. Ongoing insurance cover should also be set up.
 - Officers should undertake a review of first aid supplies to establish awareness of what there is and ensure there is adequate, in-date stock.
 - Officers should undertake an analysis of first aid training to ensure leisure centre officers have up to date appropriate training.
 - All certifications (e.g. gas, fire safety, lift safety, asbestos, electrical installation, and Legionella) should be reviewed to confirm it is up to date.
 - TUPE transfer list. The Council should have received a list of all staff who will be transferred including their age, statement of pay, hours of work, length of service, details of any disciplinary action taken in the last two years, details of any employee grievances raised in the last two years and details of any legal action brought by the employee against the former employer in the last two years.
 - HR review. HR should undertake a review of reporting, structures, pay and benefits to ensure it is in line with the Council's expectations.
 - Gap analysis. The Council should perform a gap analysis to identify differences between the TUPE list and any new staffing structure to inform the Council what recruitment/redeployment is required. All TUPE staff should receive the applicable Council onboarding.
 - Asset register. The Council should compile a list of all assets detailing ownership, asset condition and dates for review and repair.
 - Building condition surveys. Existing building condition surveys should be reviewed and where appropriate new ones conducted. This should link to the ongoing maintenance programme.
 - Asbestos surveys. The Council should have a clear understanding of any asbestos and potential risks to the public in the assets it now owns.
 - Performance indicators. There should be evidence of:
 - A documented methodology for performance indicators has been established including which officers were consulted. These should link back to the objectives outlined in the Leisure Services Strategy to evidence how they are being met.
 - A record of performance indicators.
 - Evidence of ongoing monitoring of performance indicators.
 - Operating budget. The Council should have an operating budget which has been approved by key officers and is regularly monitored.
 - Budgets codes and budget holders should be set up on the Council's budgeting system. Relevant balance sheets should be set up including opening balances detailing debtors, creditors, membership fees, taxation liabilities and details of any legal liabilities or claims.
 - Monies owed by the former contractor. The Council should understand any monies owed by the former contractor for advance payment of membership fees and arrangements should be in place for repayment.
 - Fees. There should be evidence that all fees have been agreed and approved by Members.

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- Ordering and authorisation levels. These should be established for the new structure and link to any financial procedure documentation.
 - Supplier list. Is there an approved supplier list, which is in line with the Councils financial procedure rules.
 - Stock. Officers should have undertaken a stock take to confirm levels of stock in place.
 - Established governance and reporting structure. A governance structure made up of key officers and members should be set up to provide adequate oversight.
 - Reporting. Officers should provide regular reports to the new governance structure including member briefings if appropriate. The reports could include but not be limited to progress against the Strategy objectives, financial information and ongoing risks and their mitigation.

H41 Voids September 2023		LEVEL OF ASSURANCE		SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
		Design	Operational effectiveness	High	1
		Moderate	Limited	Medium	1
				Low	-
Purpose of audit:	<p>To provide assurance over the housing voids contract management and performance of contractors to enable the re-letting of the property, including remedial works and checks. The audit focused on the management and monitoring of the Council’s key contractors who undertake general needs and temporary accommodation voids repairs.</p> <p>A review of the reasons for the non-procurement within original agreed timeframes was also be undertaken, to identify any lessons learned for future procurement by SBS.</p>				
Background:	<p>On 1 October 2018, the building repairs and maintenance service was brought in-house, and Southwark Building Services (SBS) was given a number of responsibilities including general needs voids, and temporary accommodation voids. To meet service demands, SBS procured three contracts for the provision of general needs voids works - BCS (Electrical and Building) Services Ltd, GC Construct Ltd and Sandersons Building Services Ltd. There are two further contracts for the provision of temporary accommodation voids - BCS (Electrical and Building) Services Ltd, and GC Construct Ltd.</p> <p>These contracts commenced on 2 September 2019 for an initial one-year period with an expiry date of 1 September 2020. On 13 May 2020 officers carried out a review of the SBS supply chain and identified a risk that the contracts were due to expire and that there was insufficient time to re-procure. Therefore, a contract extension was sought and approved by Cabinet, resulting in an expiry date of 1 September 2021. A procurement exercise was not completed, and in October 2021 a further extension was granted by Cabinet extending the voids contract to November 2021 and the temporary accommodation voids contract to 30 April 2022. In September 2022, approval was sought from Cabinet to again extend the voids contract and temporary voids contract for a further 11 months once the procurement exercise is underway to ensure continuity of the service until new contracts have been procured and are in place. In January 2023 a further gateway report was approved by Cabinet that a procurement exercise should take place and that an extension should be granted, however the extension was not formally recorded within the decisions. A procurement plan is underway, however the contracts are out of time and extensions need to be finalised.</p> <p>During this time contract management and monitoring is being performed to ensure all contractors are performing satisfactorily across both general voids and temporary accommodation voids, including the completion of works in a timely manner, in order for properties to be readily available to reduce homelessness and maximise rental income.</p> <p>Areas of strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We confirmed that the Council has a procedure document that details how the voids process is managed with contractors across the service. Further expectations and requirements of the Council and the contractor are detailed within the specific contracts. There is also central 				

documentation on the Council's intranet page that details how best to manage contractors that staff were aware of and would refer to if necessary.

- We found contract management arrangements to be in place for all five contractors. Contract management meetings included a standard agenda discussing value of jobs recorded on the contractor code, KPIs, health and safety incidents, processes, workloads/capacity, and quality issues arising from works completed. These were attended by appropriate officers from both the Council and the contractor. These were found to meet contractor and Council requirements. Contract management meetings were evidenced as having taken place monthly, except in April and May 2023. In these months, contract monitoring took place as part of the less formal (unminuted) weekly catchup sessions, with the primary purpose of these more regular meetings being to resolve any backlog of works at the end of the financial year. Where issues had been identified in the monthly meeting, agreed actions had been followed up at subsequent contract management meeting to resolution. For, and
- We reviewed the Housing Risk Register and confirmed that key risks in relation to contractors were included and reviewed quarterly as part of the corporate risk programme. The register specifically included risks in relation to ineffective procurement of contracts, and failure of major suppliers, along with associated mitigations.

Areas of concern:

- While contract management was being completed on a monthly basis using data based on performance and the number of days to complete a job, this was routinely above the 14-day target per job. Based on KPI data available, contractors have been routinely above the 14-day target since April 2022. The maximum average days across all contractors was 25 days in March 2023, which then returned to 17 days in April 2023 once. Based on the meeting documentation, this was attributed to issues within the Council relating to internal allocation and payment of jobs, but this issue has now been resolved, based on the previous KPI data and subsequent meeting minutes confirmed this issue had been resolved. No other issue or root cause has been, or could be identified as part of testing completed, with action needed to uncover this to inform improvements.
- The Council is now out of contract for all works contracts as of January 2023. In January 2023 it was agreed by Cabinet that a procurement exercise would take place and that a further 11-month extension was required, however the associated decisions did not include the approval of this extension, with the procurement exercise being completed by January 2024. With no approval this raises a question in relation to the validity of the extensions, which needs to be resolved as part of the ongoing procurement plan. It was noted that since 2 September 2019, the Council has spent £6.7m on temporary accommodation voids, and £17.5m for general voids contractors.

Supporting Families Grant Claims 1 August 2023 to 30 September 2023 September 2023		LEVEL OF ASSURANCE		SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIO	
		Design	Operational effectiveness	High	-
		N/A - Advisory	N/A - Advisory	Medium	-
				Low	-
Purpose of audit:	In accordance with the Supporting Families Programme Guidance, we sought to verify a representative sample of 10% families that the Council has supported, before the claim is submitted, to confirm the eligibility of the payments by results being claimed.				
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Supporting Families Programme launched in March 2021 and builds on the previous Troubled Families programme. Its focus is on building the resilience of vulnerable families, and on driving system change so that every area has joined up, efficient local services which are able to identify families in need and provide the right support at the right time. Supporting Families is committed to strong multi-agency local partnerships in every area with mature local and national data systems. This means investing more in good practice, overcoming barriers to data-sharing, and involving the voice of families in service design and commissioning.</p> <p>The programme falls under the joint remit of the Government’s Department of Education and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The programme’s aim is to have a positive impact for individual families, across public services and for the rest of society.</p> <p>The Supporting Families Guidance sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The outcomes that must be achieved with families before a results payment can be claimed (chapter 3). - Details regarding how to identify and work with families where a result payment will be claimed for successful family outcomes achieved (chapter 4). - The evidence that is required to make a claim for successful family outcomes achieved by families who have been supported by the programme (chapter 5). - The risk-based approach to assurance visits in 2022-25 and the audit requirements of Supporting Families (chapter 6). <p>Consequently, this internal audit was required under the Supporting Families Programme Guidance, issued by the former Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Department for Education. The guidance 2021-2022, issued by MHCLG applies to the Council’s claims to 31 July 2023 and has been applied in this audit.</p> <p>The Council receives £800 for each claim under the Payment by Results process. The anticipated number of claims for 2023-24 is 676, resulting in grant funding of £540,800.</p> <p>For the period 1 April 2023 to 31 July 2023, the Council had prepared a total of 270 claims to be submitted.</p> <p>Areas of strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We reviewed the Council’s SFOP against the National Supporting Families Outcome Framework and Programme Guidance (2022-25) and found that the family needs sections included under each of the ten headline outcomes agreed between the documents. 					

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- We identified three headline outcomes in the Council’s SFOP (Improved Mental and Physical Health, Improved Family Relationships and Preventing and Tackling Crime) for which the Council had included additional outcome or evidence options in their Framework. Review of the National Guidance found that this is acceptable, if approval is sought by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). We confirmed that the DLUHC shared the SFOP with the Council on 25 July 2023, showing their approval de facto. We therefore confirmed that the Council’s SFOP is in line with National Guidance.
 - For the period 1 August 2023 to 30 September 2023, we reviewed a sample of nine claims, as agreed with both the Council and the DLUHC. We sought to verify that the summary of extracts and data correspond to the reasons why the family is considered a successful outcome. Of our sample, we identified no exceptions to prevent submission.
 - We selected one-third of the originally selected 17 claims (six claims) to confirm the Council’s assertions against primary data. For the six cases we reviewed in Mosaic, we identified no discrepancies between the source data and the successful outcome assertions provided by the Council.

Areas of concern:

- Review of the evidence sheets provided for the sample of nine claims identified two instances (family IDs 160566 and 902117), whereby an additional, optional evidence criteria was stated as ‘met’. The criteria requires that the adult is engaging with, and benefitting from, appropriate support to show successfully improved mental and physical health (criteria three). However, our review of the supporting evidence found that the criteria was not fully met, because at the point of Mosaic record closure, the individual had been referred or waitlisted, but not yet accessed the support.
- Review of the Council’s evidence summaries for the sample of nine claims identified two minor typographic errors. We subsequently confirmed, via a Teams call, that the minor errors were corrected in the relevant forms. We also verified that all other details in the summary, including the success measures, matched to the Mosaic screenshots provided.

5. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS

Of the 490 high and medium recommendations relating to 2017-18 to 2022-23, that have fallen due as of 20 October 2023, we have confirmed with reference to evidence that 440 have been fully implemented or superseded, representing 90%, the same percentage as per our last report to the Committee.

We have confirmed that all recommendations relating to 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 have been completed. The chart shows the relative percentages for each year from 2020-21 to 2022-23.

Several recommendation target dates for 2022-23 audits are continuing to be revised multiple times, which is preventing the implementation rate from being reported as higher.

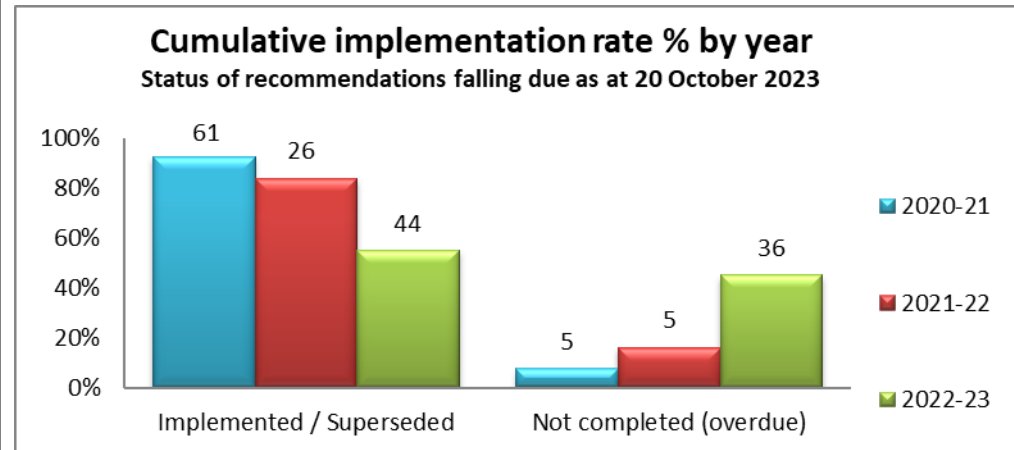
There remain some longstanding recommendations from previous years that are yet to be fully implemented, but these have now reduced in number. There are several audits where the originally agreed implementation date has not been met and a new date has been provided.

The implementation rate may be higher than 89%. However, without supporting evidence, we cannot confirm this.

The implementation status of each internal audit is summarised in the table overleaf.

Please note that the table does not include audits where:

- *All recommendations have been implemented.*
- *Recommendations to be followed up as part of another audit during the year (for example key financial systems)*
- *Recommendations not yet due for implementation.*



RECOMMENDATION IMPLEMENTATION RATES BY AUDIT - LONGSTANDING OVERDUE

Audit Area	Total High & Medium recommendations due for implementation	Implemented		In progress at the follow up date		Awaiting update, revised date, or evidence		% Verified complete	Management Implementation dates
		H	M	H	M	H	M		
2020-21 Audits									
Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth Directorate									
2020-21 Community Infrastructure Levy <i>As officers reported to the June 2023 meeting, this recommendation will be implemented by the end of March 2024.</i>	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	0%	December 2020 July 2024 March 2024
2020-21 South Dock Marina <i>Please refer to latest update.</i>	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	0%	June 2022 November 2022 March 2023 March 2024
2021-22 Audits									
Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth Directorate									
2021-22 Movement Policy and Plan <i>Please refer to latest update.</i>	6	-	2	-	4	-	-	33%	September 2024 January 2023 December 2023
Children's and Adults Directorate									
2021-22 Adoption Services <i>Please refer to latest update.</i>	3	1	-	1	1	-	-	33%	January 2023 June 2023 September 2023 October 2023 February 2024

Audit Area	Total High & Medium recommendations due for implementation	Implemented		In progress at the follow up date		Awaiting update, revised date, or evidence		% Verified complete	Management Implementation dates
		H	M	H	M	H	M		
Finance Directorate									
2021-22 Software Asset Management <i>Please refer to latest update.</i>	4	-	2	-	1	-	1	50%	March 2022 September 2022 December 2022 June 2023 August 2023 November 2023
Housing Directorate									
2021-22 Cooper Close TMO <i>Please refer to latest update.</i>	3	-	1	-	2	-	-	33%	April 2022 July 2022 November 2023

RECOMMENDATION IMPLEMENTATION RATES BY AUDIT WHERE NOT YET FULLY COMPLETED

Audit Area	Total High & Medium recommendations due for implementation	Implemented		In progress at the follow up date		Awaiting update, revised date, or evidence		% Verified complete	Management Implementation dates
		H	M	H	M	H	M		
Assistant Chief Executive's Department - Governance and Assurance									
2022-23 Complaints	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	50%	March 2023 August 2023 December 2023
2022-23 Payroll and HR	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	0%	July 2023 September 2023 January 2024
2022-23 Supplier Resilience	5	1	1	-	3	-	-	40%	August 2023 October 2023 January 2024
Childrens and Adults Directorate									
2022-23 Children's Assurance Unit	3	-	2	-	1	-	-	67%	May 2023 September 2023 November 2023
2022-23 SEND Finance	7	-	1	4	2	-	-	14%	June 2023 September 2023 December 2023
2022-23 Mental Health	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	0%	October 2023 December 2023
2022-23 Safeguarding Adults	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	0%	November 2023 January 2024
2022-23 Mosaic Payments	3	-	1	-	2	-	-	33%	December 2023

Audit Area	Total High & Medium recommendations due for implementation	Implemented		In progress at the follow up date		Awaiting update, revised date, or evidence		% Verified complete	Management Implementation dates
		H	M	H	M	H	M		
Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth Directorate									
2022-23 Library Services	4	-	3	-	1	-	-	75%	September 2022 April 2023 July 2023 September 2023 December 2023
2022-23 Cemeteries and Crematoria	4	-	2	-	2	-	-	50%	30 June 2023 December 2023
2022-23 Markets	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	0%	September 2023 April 2024
2022-23 Building Control	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	0%	October 2023 November 2023
Finance Directorate									
2022-23 Insurance	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	0%	December 2022 July 2023 September 2023 January 2024
2022-23 Software Licensing Management	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	0%	February 2023 July 2023 October 2023 February 2024
2022-23 Accounts Payable	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	0%	July 2023 September 2023 April 2024
2022-23 Pensions Administration	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	0%	June 2023 October 2023

Audit Area	Total High & Medium recommendations due for implementation	Implemented		In progress at the follow up date		Awaiting update, revised date, or evidence		% Verified complete	Management Implementation dates
		H	M	H	M	H	M		
2022-23 Housing Rents	4	-	2	-	2	-	-	50%	October 2023 February 2024
Housing Directorate									
2022-23 Applegarth TMO	2	-	2	-	-	-	1	67%	July 2023 Implemented Evidence required

FURTHER INFORMATION ON RECOMMENDATIONS NOT YET IMPLEMENTED WHERE UPDATES WERE RECEIVED

The tables below show the latest updates with regards to the recommendations not yet implemented, where these have been provided. The table excludes recommendations that have not fallen due or where no update has been provided.

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
Governance and Assurance Directorate		
2022-23 Complaints		
<p>1.6 The Complaints Team should conduct spot checks (we recommend six-monthly) on a sample of cases to assess whether all the required documentation such as an acknowledgment letter and a decision letter is retained onto the system, a caseworker is assigned within one week of the complaint received date and that a decision has been communicated within the set timeframes. If there have been delays, the Complaints Team should ensure adequate evidence of communication with the complainants is retained. The results of these spot checks and consistent non-compliance should be included in the periodic management report.</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Operations Manager/Complaints Manager</p> <p>February 2023/March 2023</p> <p>August 2023</p> <p>September 2023</p> <p>December 2023</p>	<p>1.6 - The Complaints Manager confirmed that the recruitment of a Quality and Performance team will commence at the end of October. It is proposed that the spot checks will be reported on at the next quarterly CMT report.</p>
2022-23 Payroll and HR		
<p>1. The Principal SAP Officer should complete a full walk-through of payroll processes with the HR Business Team Strategic Lead, to ensure that a meaningful final review and approval of the monthly payroll runs can be completed.</p> <p>2. Following this, the approval and confirmation process should be established to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. A supporting payroll review officer should be confirmed to mitigate against the risk of staff absence.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Head of HR Operations/Principal SAP Officer</p> <p>July 2023</p> <p>September 2023</p> <p>January 2024</p>	<p>1. The Head of HR confirmed that the real time run through was completed in both September/October in terms of relevant processes. Further work is now being done to define meaningful review criteria of the various payroll outputs, in terms of devising suitable audit protocol for approvals.</p> <p>2. The Head of HR confirmed that the key issues of building suitable mitigations are in progress with recruitment about to be initiated for a role dedicated to providing appropriate level of cover for key payroll running processes and therefore resilience.</p>
<p>1. The review of the overpayments procedure document should be completed to ensure guidance regarding sufficient and timely recovery action is in place. This recommendation was raised in the 2021/22 audit and has rolled over into this audit.</p>	<p>Head of HR Operations/Principal SAP Officer</p>	<p>Parts 1. And 2. - The Head of HR advised that this work is on-going and allied to reinforcing prevention work to ensure preventable overpayments (such as late notification of leavers or failing to update sickness records by managers) is clearly set out for managers by</p>

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
<p>2. Staff should be briefed on the reviewed procedure to ensure it is adhered to. This recommendation was raised in the 2021/22 audit and has rolled over into this audit.</p> <p>3. The Council should introduce a KPI to ensure recovery action for overpayments is monitored, such as a KPI for the time taken for overpayments to be added to the managed debt process.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>4 October 2023 January 2024</p>	<p>members of the HR team who are in regular operational contact with the business.</p> <p>3. The Head of HR advised that work is ongoing to develop a meaningful KPI for use in having an overview of recovery actions being taken for overpayments, recognizing that debts for those who remain employed, and leavers are different recovery pathways.</p>
2022-23 Supplier Resilience		
<p>3.1 Contact contract managers for the three contracts where there was missing supporting evidence to gain assurance that supplier resilience is being appropriately considered.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Relevant contract managers / LCO / Chief Officers, Head of Procurement July 2023 September 2023 November 2023</p>	<p>The Head of Procurement advised that the following actions have been completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reminder email and specific request for information missing from the Internal Audit was sent to Lead Contract Officers. • The PFI information was submitted but out of time for inclusion in the audit report. • The garage minor works and maintenance contracts were sent following the follow up. <p>The information on Heating and Water Contract A with OCO Ltd is still being chased therefore the due date has been revised to the end of October 2023.</p>
<p>4.2 Ensure Southwark Construction have an up-to-date business continuity plan in place, which includes key suppliers.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Lead Contract Officers/Chief Officers for all Strategic Contracts Director of Southwark Construction Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager July 2023 October 2023</p>	<p>4.2 - we were advised by the Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager that business continuity (BC) plans are now completed in a standard format across the organisation. Completed plans are held on standalone BC software package maintained by the emergency planning team but the plans are departmentally owned. Within the planning process each departmental lead BC officer is required to consider the business continuity plans of their key suppliers. The process is ongoing and reviewed at least annually. We requested a copy of the Southwark Construction BCP and are awaiting receipt before marking this recommendation as complete.</p>
<p>7.1 Ensure all contracts include Key Performance Indicators to measure the performance of the supplier.</p> <p>7.2 Ensure all contract managers regularly monitor performance of the supplier in line with the contract.</p>	<p>Chief Officers / CMT Strategic Director of Finance and Assistance Chief Executive - Governance and Assurance</p>	<p>The Head of Procurement advised that a reminder of the council's Contract Management approach was sent via the Directors' Forum (see 5.1 above) which includes KPIs. A wider Contract Management review is being undertaken starting in November 2023 that will support</p>

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
Medium	August 2023 September 2023 January 2024	guidance and training around KPIs and contract management in support of achieving Best Value and the coming Procurement Act.
Children's and Adults Directorate		
2021-22 Adoption Services		
The Council should perform an exercise to ensure it has captured the latest contact details of all adopters in addition to identifying all financial assessments which are over 12 months and ensure that a plan is developed to bring these up to date. High	HoS Permanence and Resources / AD Safeguarding and Care January 2022 July 2023 September 2023 January 2024	The Service Development Manager for Children and Families advised that the action to develop modernised performance reporting remains in progress, since the last update in August 2023. The Adoption Services Power BI Dashboard is within the departmental Power BI Development Prioritisation Schedule.
The Council should update its policies and procedures handbook, specifically the Adoption and Special Guardianship section to reflect any changes in staff or procedures since April 2019. Additionally, the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2011 should also be updated to consider the latest 2014 revision of the standard. Medium	HoS Permanence and Resources / AD Safeguarding and Care December 2024 July 2023 October 2023 February 2024	This action is part complete. The Service Development Manager for Children and Families confirmed that the online procedures have now been updated. However, our review of the website and subsequent discussion with the Service Development Manager confirmed that a typographical error on the website still reflects the old guidance, despite the link itself having been updated. We were advised that other procedures are being updated in a priority order alongside all wider Children's Services procedures.
2022-23 Childrens Assurance Unit		
2.2 The CQAU could undertake a thematic audit related to the data recorded for CPC delays to investigate the key reasons for delays and develop possible action plans or share learnings. Medium	Principal Social Worker and A&D Lead May 2023 September 2023 November 2023	The Service Development Manager for Children and Families advised that this action is part complete. Data tracking in relation to this action was implemented in August 2023 and to date there has not been sufficient time for a reasonable sample size to be built up for analysis. This analysis is scheduled to take place in November 2023.
2022-23 Safeguarding Adults		
Team management should complete quarterly sample checks to ensure referrals are completed and documented appropriately.	Team Manager - Safeguarding and DOLS - Adult Social Care August 2023	We were advised by the Team Manager (Safeguarding and DOLS) that this action has been delayed. The Team Manager is leaving the Council at the end of November therefore focus has been on other key

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
Where issues are identified training should be implemented for the team or individuals to ensure these are resolved. Medium	January 2024	projects. We were therefore advised of a revised implementation date of January 2024, following the new Team Manager joining the Council.
The Performance and Quality Team should undertake monthly audits focusing on safeguarding to ensure that any issues are identified and resolved by the team. Medium	Team Manager - Safeguarding and DOLS - Adult Social Care August 2023 January 2024	As above, we were advised by the Team Manager (Safeguarding and DOLS) that this action has been delayed. The Team Manager is leaving the Council at the end of November therefore focus has been on other key projects. We were therefore advised of a revised implementation date of January 2024, following the new Team Manager joining the Council.
2022-23 Mosaic Payments		
1.1 The Older People and Physical Disabilities Unit and the Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and All Age Disabilities Unit, should develop a monitoring mechanism to ensure that all annual reviews are allocated to social workers two months prior to the annual review due date. This will ensure that all reviews are completed on a timely basis and allow for correct payments to be made for the care packages allocated. Medium	Assistant Director for Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and All Age Disabilities August 2023 To be followed up ahead in December 2023	We were advised that all teams working within these services will run a weekly report and allocate reviews accordingly at least two months prior to the due date.
3.2 On a six-monthly basis, and during the annual uplift process, the Payments Team should review the payment rates applied to providers and ensure its correctness prior to processing the uplifts.	Head of Service December 2023	We were advised that this is in progress and on track for December 2023. To be discussed with the Service Manager for the Personal Budgets Service and the Payments Team Manager.
2022-23 Mental Health		
1.2 The Panel should review the assessment and confirm the correct sign off has occurred before discussing the case. Medium	Head of Service September 2023 To be followed up in December 2023	We were advised that this action is ongoing. The ASC Panel Chair is ensuring that all assessment paperwork that has been submitted to the panel has been correctly signed off. We will follow this up ahead of the February meeting of the AGSC.
2.1 The Council should complete a review of all placements currently ongoing and ensure that any placements that have been in place for longer than 12 months have been subject to an annual review which has been passed to Panel for review.	Heads of Service / MOSAIC - manager September 2023 November 2023	We were advised that the team continues to work towards achieving this and have prioritised those people who due an annual review. As of Sept 2023, 154 cases have had review in the past 12 months. 2.2 - The system automatically generates a next review date, so PDQ can run reports from it for sharing with Managers as part of the performance dashboard.

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
<p>2.2 The next review date following the initial assessment should be included into Mosaic to allow for reports to run detailing when placements are close to being due for an annual assessment. This should be communicated with the Performance & Quality Data Team so they can include this information in the management information currently provided. If this is not feasible due to the functionality of Mosaic, then we recommend that spot checks should be carried to ensure that placements have been reviewed annually.</p> <p>Medium</p>		
Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth Directorate		
2021-22 Movement Policy and Plan		
<p>The Equity Framework should be issued to Cabinet as soon as possible for further review and approval.</p>	<p>Transport Policy Manager January 2021 April 2023 July 2023 December 2023</p>	<p>Head of Highways advised that Equity Framework updated and to be included in overarching Streets for People (ex-Movement Plan) Strategy to be presented in draft form to Cabinet in July 2023, fully consulted in September 2023, and final version to Cabinet for approval in December 2023.</p>
<p>The Council should review and improve the community engagement particularly with a view to increasing the response from Black and Asian groups to be more representative. There are several options open to the Council to improve in this area such as:</p> <p>(i) selecting a BAME engagement company to provide the service (this would support the Council in their current and future projects/ programmes also)</p> <p>(ii) approaching faith groups in the borough who have a large group of BAME members to complete questionnaires and/or to take part in interviews</p> <p>(iii) Advertise in the local BAME press for example The Voice Newspaper.</p>	<p>Director of Environment Response and Renewal July 2021 November 2022 December 2023</p>	<p>Head of Highways advised that Streets for People strategy to be subject to full public consultation September 2023. This will be supported by the Community Engagement team. We will be using our experience gained through the Streetspace programme and earlier consultation for Movement Plan (November and December 2022) to better reach groups such as Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic groups, faith groups and others that can be under-represented during such engagement.</p>
<p>A sixth monthly overall reporting of the Movement Plan should be introduced.</p>	<p>Transport Policy Manager January 2022</p>	<p>Head of Highways advised that draft Streets for People to be taken to Cabinet in July 2023. Formal final version to be taken to Cabinet for</p>

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
The Annual Report should be scheduled and included on the Forward Plan for Cabinet.	January 2023 April 23 December 2023	approval in December 2023. Both Cabinet dates recorded on Forward Plan. 6-month reviews to be commenced following December 2023 approval of Streets for People Strategy. Annual Report to be produced with first report December 2024.
The transport policies should be updated and prioritised to align with the Movement Plan.	Head of Highways July 2023 September 2023 December 2023	Draft Walking, Cycling and EV strategies prepared and to be subject to consultation in August / September 2023 with report to Cabinet in December 2023. All policies are “daughter” documents to Streets for People Strategy approved by Cabinet on 10 July 2023.
2020-21 South Dock Marina		
Both the Council and Marina should work together in order to agree a solution towards paperless working. Whilst we also recognise that the Marina does not have immediate capacity to deploy resources to scan all documentation, this is something that the Marina and Council should consider over the medium-long term to ensure all paper documentation has been scanned to either the Havenstar system (pending relevant modules and system upgrades) or the Marina’s shared drive. Medium	Harbour Master June 2022 April 2024	We were advised by the Divisional Business Manager that the Gateway report has not been sent for sign off. Subject to this, software delivery should be complete by quarter 4 of 2023/24, with a customer go live of quarter 1 2024-25.
2022-23 Library Services		
b) A formal investigation should be initiated by Senior Management to review whether the services received by the service provider meet contractual expectations, and whether an alternative option should be considered where collections are not made in line with the contract, and the issue persists. Medium	Library Operations Manager August 2022 March 2023 July 2023 September 2023 December 2023	We were advised by the Libraries and Heritage Manager that the Council are waiting for the cashless payments system to go live before any further review of the cash collection agreement is completed. The cashless payments implementation has been slightly delayed due to IT issues, but the Team are aiming to be completed by December 2023. The current arrangement in place with G4S for cashless collections meets contractual obligations. Collections are taking place regularly and are monitored by the libraries support team.

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
2022-23 Cemeteries and Crematoria		
<p>2.1 Our review supports consideration of developing an e-Booking Service, so applicants can book an appropriate slot and track their appointments online easily, safely, and securely.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Bereavement Services Manager September 2023 To be followed up in December 2023</p>	<p>We were advised by the Bereavement Services Manager that the online options are currently progressing. The software is being moved to vendor hosting, which is currently being progressed with all relevant IT departments. There is no 'go live' date available yet.</p> <p><i>As the 'go live' date is not yet available, we agreed with the Bereavement Services Manager that this action will be followed up again ahead of the next AGSC Meeting.</i></p>
2022-23 No Recourse to Public Funds		
<p>1.1 The Council should Investigate fully the reasons why officers do not complete case reviews on time.</p> <p>1.2 Additional controls, such as enhanced strategic oversight and increased monitoring and reporting of reviews, should be introduced to ensure timely completion of case reviews.</p> <p>1.3 A resourced plan should be put in place to address the backlog of overdue reviews and to ensure that sufficient resources are available to complete future reviews on time.</p> <p>High</p>	<p>NRPF Management Team July 2023 August 2023 November 2023</p>	<p>The Community Support Team manager advised us that these actions are in progress:</p> <p>1.1 - Staff changes meant some cases were not completed on time. These vary between staff leaving the council, staff sickness and induction of new staff. The team are implementing that line managers discuss reviews status with their cohort at each supervision.</p> <p>1.2 - The project officer will review the team's Master Case List to ensure better recording which can give increased oversight on a monthly basis. The NRPF team are starting service development to streamline reporting primarily from Mosaic, which kicked off on 16 August 2023.</p> <p>1.3 - As above, the team will be meeting the Divisional Business Manager to look at service development for streamlining the service.</p>
<p>2.1 Regular performance monitoring and reporting should be reintroduced, to report the following information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of NRPF cases. 2. Number of households. 3. Types of Support 4. Length of Support 5. Analysis of trends / comparisons to previous data periods 6. Outstanding / overdue reviews 	<p>Community Support Team Manager July 2023 August 2023 November 2023</p>	<p>The Community Support Team manager advised us that these actions are in progress:</p> <p>2.1 - Per the updates provided for actions 1.2 & 1.3, this action is in progress and commenced on 16 August 2023.</p> <p>2.2 - The NRPF team will be reviewed performance in manager's meetings, with an action plan meeting to be held week beginning 6 November 2023.</p>

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
<p>2.2 Additional officers should be trained on how to monitor and report performance information to provide resilience in case the Community Support Manager is absent for an extended period.</p> <p>Medium</p>		
<p>3.1. A monthly quality control process should be introduced to test a sample of decisions to ensure officers save supporting documentation and the corrects checks have been completed.</p> <p>3.2. Officers should be reminded of the importance of evidencing the decisions they make to confirm compliance with procedures and legislation.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>NRPF Management Team</p> <p>July 2023</p> <p>October 2023</p> <p>November 2023</p>	<p>The Community Support Team manager advised us that these actions are in progress:</p> <p>3.1 - The team have started case monitoring reviewing cases over 5 years old. Managers are to implement quality control as from October 2023 by reviewing a sample of referrals from July to September.</p> <p>3.2 - Case checklist will be implemented - will review checklist for implementation November 2023.</p>
2022-23 Markets		
<p>1.1 The Council should review the Markets policy and outline the delegated authority level to remove temporary and permanent licences.</p> <p>1.2 Guidance should be created detailing the documentation to be provided by permanent, temporary traders and operators. This should be published on the Council's website and referred to internally by the Markets Team when conducting documentation checks.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Markets and Street Trading Manager</p> <p>Autumn 2023</p> <p>January 2024</p>	<p>We were advised of the following updates:</p> <p>1.1 The Markets Policy and Conditions has been reviewed and will be going through the Licensing Committee at the beginning of 2024.</p> <p>1.2 All temporary traders and operators book online and supply the documentation before the licence issued. The website for Markets and Street Trading has been updated. We are currently awaiting evidence to confirm implementation.</p>
<p>2.1 When the annual renewal process is undertaken for the upcoming financial year, a review of all ongoing traders' files should be undertaken to ensure that all supporting documentation has been provided and it is current. If any missing documents are identified, these should be requested prior to the permit being renewed. A confirmation of the review should be provided to the Markets and Street Trading Manager. The renewed licence should be subsequently uploaded on the FGL system.</p> <p>2.2 During the annual renewal process, if insufficient documents are provided by traders, the trader account should be changed from 'live' to 'not live' to achieve consistency in record keeping.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Markets and Street Trading Manager</p> <p>Autumn 2023</p> <p>April 2024</p>	<p>We were advised of the following updates:</p> <p>2.1 This process is now moving into the final phase on FGL. Permanent operators will be able to renew and pay online. All renewals are now from 1st April 2024, so all traders are renewed at the beginning of the new financial year. All documentation needs to be uploaded before permits are awarded.</p> <p>2.2 This will be in place for permit renewals on FGL.</p>

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
<p>3.1 The debt recovery procedure document should be updated to include the requirement of attaching all correspondence with the trader on the SAP system, to ensure the Corporate Income & Debt Management Team have adequate information to pursue debts.</p> <p>3.2 The Markets Team should request an update from the Corporate Income & Debt Management Team on a quarterly basis and record this on the list of traders, to ensure that debtors are not missed, and debt recovery actions are initiated.</p> <p>3.3 The Commercial and Administrative Officer should request SAP access to download electronic reports of debtor accounts. Alternatively, if this is not feasible, then these reports should be requested from the Environment & Leisure Finance Team on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Markets and Street Trading Manager Autumn 2023 April 2024</p>	<p>We were advised of the following updates:</p> <p>3.1 Markets and Street Trading are still working with Finance and SAP. From 1st April 2024, with FGL fully implemented, there will not be any outstanding paper invoices.</p> <p>3.2 This has been implemented and the team are holding monthly meetings with SAP. Debt recovery has been initiated. We are currently awaiting evidence to confirm implementation.</p> <p>3.3 Access and training for commercial and admin officers will commence in November 2024.</p>
2022-23 Building Control		
<p>1.1 A decision should be made on the Full Planning applications within the statutory 5-8 weeks from the date of application. The applicant should be communicated with adequately about any delays and by when they can receive a decision on their application. We recommend a periodic review of the timeframes taken to make decisions is undertaken and the reasons for delays ascertained.</p> <p>1.2 Evidence of completed inspections should be centrally retained. The Building Control Team should conduct checks on a quarterly basis to ensure that all documentation relating to inspections is complete and retained to demonstrate an adequate audit trail.</p> <p>1.3 Evidence of application payment confirmation should be centrally retained to ensure that the application is assessed only after the application fee has been paid by the applicant.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Head of Policy, Building Control and Historic Environment October 2023 November 2023</p>	<p>We were advised of the following updates:</p> <p>1.1 - Decisions - Building Control has developed a daily report which ensures decisions are made within Statutory timelines. There is also a Power Bi report that has been developed to report on decisions. The Building Control policy has also been changed to issue decisions at the same time as the checking tracker is sent to the applicant. We are currently awaiting evidence to confirm implementation.</p> <p>1.2 - Inspections - Again Building Control has developed a daily report which lists out any inspections that have not been entered into the database. There is also a Power Bi report that has been developed to report on inspections. The Building Control policy has also been changed and officers are required to add inspections to the system the same day or by the latest the following day. Building Control have also developed a mobile inspection application where officers are required to write up their inspections on the day. This is uploaded live into the database and an email of the outcome of the inspection is automatically sent to the owner, agent, and builder. Final training on the mobile application will be completed in the next two weeks then this will go live. We have therefore revised the due date of this action to November 2023.</p>

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
<p>1.3 - Payment - It was decided that it was not practicable to not work on an application until the fee had been paid. This is because Building Control receive applications through different formats (online, email & post) and applicants are not always aware on what is deemed controllable work. Therefore, the procedure is for Building Control to assess the application fee and write to the applicant requesting the fee is paid within 7 working days. If this is not provided, then a reminder is sent requesting the fee and giving the applicant a further 7 days. If the fee is not received within this 14-day period, the application is invalidated on the system. If work has been undertaken on the project, it is the policy not to send any decision notices until the fee has been paid. Again, daily uniform reports have been created to check whether the payments have been received.</p>		
<p>Finance Directorate</p>		
<p>2022-23 Insurance</p>		
<p>a) The Risk and Insurance Manager should escalate this again with the IT shared service requesting they provide the necessary documentation to ensure the Council is able to finalise sourcing their cybersecurity insurance. If this is not provided, then this should be raised to the appropriate senior management. Medium</p>	<p>Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager October 2022 July 2023 September 2023 Position to be reviewed in January 2024</p>	<p>Part a) - We were advised that the Strategic Director of Finance asked the Chief Digital and Technology Officer to conduct a review of current cyber security provisions in place and provide a report partly to see if the Council could meet the minimum insurer requirements as a starting point. This is an ongoing piece of work with the area still being explored. A cyber liability policy can be expensive with insurers often requiring fairly high deductibles, so the Council also needs to be clear on the benefit of putting one in place if there is a large element of self-insurance. We agreed that the position of this action will be reviewed in 2024 for further updates.</p>
<p>2021-22 Software Asset Management</p>		
<p>i) Management should put in place a defined Software Asset Management Policy that documents the Council's procedures for the management of software, which should include, but not be limited to: · The procedures for the management of different types of software, including standard software, non-standard software, and line of business software.</p>	<p>Head of IT Applications March 2022 June 2022 December 2022 June 2023 August 2023</p>	<p>We were previously by the Head of Technology Transformation that a draft policy is currently being prepared. We were advised of a revised due date of the end of November 2023.</p>

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The procedures for the management of software assets throughout their lifecycle, including procurement, configuration, deployment, redeployment, and decommissioning. · The procedures for managing the software asset inventory, including software installation and registration and software removal. · The arrangements for the transfer of licences when required. · The roles and responsibilities of members of staff, including, but not being limited to, software misuse. · The requirement for software audits to be performed on a regular basis, including the use of any appropriate audit tools. <p>ii)The defined policy or procedure should be formally approved and communicated to members of staff and should be subject to regular review with a version control in place.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>October 2023 November 2023</p>	
2022-23 Software Licensing Management		
<p>A draft policy to cover the management of software licences will be written with specific reference to procurement of new systems, changes to contractual agreements and Starters/Movers/Leavers.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Head of Security and Infrastructure February 2023 June 2023 November 2023</p>	<p>The Head of Infrastructure and Operations provided a progress update that an STS and LBS Working Group has been established and work on the policy is underway for the revised due date of the end of October 2023.</p>
<p>Processes for the management of software licences, including renewal processes, handling starters/movers/leavers with input from the Council’s HR Service, liaison with business owners, storing licence agreements, monitoring licence utilisation, and updating central monitoring spreadsheets, should be formally documented, and communicated to all relevant staff.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Head of Applications July 2023 September 2023 January 2024</p>	<p>The Head of Technology Transformation advised that the kick-off meeting with Fujitsu in April 2023 was pre-contract. Subsequent contract agreement took an unexpectedly long time, hence the contract was not formally awarded to Fujitsu until September 2023. Fujitsu have now started delivery of the Applications Register that will track application license numbers, with completion of delivery expected in January 2024.</p>
<p>a) An exercise to gather licensing information and evidence relating to ‘line-of-business’ applications is undertaken. An ongoing requirement that business System Owners provide ICT with</p>	<p>Head of Applications July 2023 September 2023</p>	<p>The Head of Infrastructure and Operations advised that this is a live piece of work with a senior stakeholder engagement in place and budget allocated for the delivery of the Software Asset Discovery and Capture. The tool that was being planned requires review to ensure</p>

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
<p>relevant license evidence at the point of acquisition should be introduced.</p> <p>b) The process to be followed when entering /amending data regarding applications in the register is documented. This should include detail on which fields must be completed and the extent of evidence that should be retained and were, e.g., licence agreements.</p> <p>c) The corporate applications register is updated and maintained thereafter to ensure that all details are accurately captured, particularly in relation to licence details, dates of last review, IT support staff, business owners and whether the application is managed by ICT or the business area.</p> <p>d) Software licence agreements are in place, securely maintained and available for inspection when required for both the Council and STS.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>February 2024</p>	<p>that it will deliver the required information and that the ongoing picture is accurate and available. We were advised of a revised due date of February 2024, to allow for completion of applications works.</p>
<p>2022-23 Accounts Payable</p>		
<p>1.1 The nine missing user access forms should be located as soon as possible. Going forward, following consultation with Exchequer Support Services who have expertise in this area, forms should take a standardised format (which considers whether access is being provided to new starters or amending existing permissions), and should be stored and backed up in a central location that is readily accessible.</p> <p>1.2 The FC&P Team should continue to complete the monthly reconciliation of the list of leavers with a list of users with access to SAP and remove access for those who have left the Council. Every month, the Head of Financial Control and Processing should check that these reconciliations have been carried out or a periodic review of the reconciliation by a second person would help manage the risk of missing any individuals who have left the Council.</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Head of Financial Control and Processing July 2023 August 2023 December 2023</p> <p>Head of Financial Control and Processing July 2023 August 2023 Complete</p>	<p>1.1 - The Head of Financial Control and Processing confirmed that the new user form is live and is accessible via The Source. Final configuration changes are required to enable widespread use and indexing, which will be completed by 1 December 2023.</p> <p>1.2 - The Head of Financial Control and Processing advised that this action is complete. A sampling framework has been developed, which will be used as the basis for monthly testing to be carried out by the quality and control teams within Financial Control and Processing. We reviewed the framework in place and confirmed that a variety of test sheets, including sampling methodology, are now in place.</p>





Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
<p>2.5 After quarterly reports are shared, there is no follow up to ensure exceptions have been resolved to prevent POs being raised after invoices are received; reports are run only to flag exceptions and non-compliant departments. The FC&P team should follow up to check that exceptions have been resolved after these have been flagged. The FC&P team should check for quarter-on-quarter performance/improvements; repeat offenders in the quarterly reports should be followed up so that root causes can be identified, and support (such as training) provided as needed.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Head of Financial Control and Processing September/October 2023 April 2024</p>	<p>2.5 - We were advised by the Head of Financial Control and Processing that an annual report will be produced, examining each department's performance over the year. The report will highlight where performance has fallen consistently below target and will be provided to all strategic directors. We were advised of a revised due date of April 2024.</p>
<p>3.1 Quarterly reports are currently run to identify instances of POs being raised retrospectively as well as invoices being paid after more than 30 days. These are shared with Departmental Finance Managers and Business Managers (budget holders). As late payment of invoices (without reasons being provided) is a recurring issue, further escalation of the quarterly reports is required. Exceptions to required practice should be reported to each Directorate Management Team, and a summary presented to the Corporate Management Team. A revised communications strategy from the FC&P Team, as well as a change in the 'tone from the top', would help to raise awareness and understanding of the issue and facilitate good practice going forward across all levels of staff.</p> <p>3.2 Repeat offenders in the quarterly reports should be followed up so that root causes can be identified, and support provided as needed.</p> <p>3.3 A reminder should be sent out to officers, particularly towards year-end (which is when officers are most likely to make this mistake), to refrain from making payments that are invoiced at a future date.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Head of Financial Control and Processing 30 June 2023 September 2023 February 2024</p>	<p>The Head of Financial Control and Processing informed us of the following progress:</p> <p>3.1 - Quarterly reports are now shared with Departmental Finance Managers (please refer to 2.4)</p> <p>3.2 - A mid-year report is being prepared for the period April-September 2023, for the Strategic Director of Finance. This will be circulated by 10 November 2023.</p> <p>3.3 - A reminder will be sent out as part of closing by the Head of Financial Control and Processing, in February 2024.</p>
<p>2022-23 Pensions Administration</p>		
<p>The Council should carry out periodic reconciliations of user accounts between Citrix and UPM to ensure that any disabled accounts on Citrix have been removed from UPM.</p>	<p>Data Systems Manager June 2023 November 2023</p>	<p>The Pensions Manager confirmed that the Data/Systems team are currently in the process of recruiting to fill a number of vacant data team positions. This has impacted delivery of the action, however a Data Management/Security Strategy is currently going through</p>

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
<p>Medium</p>		<p>approval. The action date has therefore been revised to 31 October 2023.</p>
<p>The Council should introduce a process of periodically checking the UPM system for discrepancies such as invalid NI numbers, duplicate employees and checking for instances of bank details being the same for the same/different people.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Data Systems Manager November 2023</p>	<p>The Pensions Manager confirmed that this action is on track to be completed by 31 October 2023. UPM reports will be run monthly as part of the monthly data upload to Employer Hub.</p>
<p>2022-23 Housing Rents</p>		
<p>1.1 The Operations Manager Income (Council Tax) and the Former Tenant Arrears team should carry out a review of all pending former tenant arrears cases to ensure that these are being actioned (i.e., there should be no cases unactioned on the system for over three months, and actions should be reviewed to determine whether they are appropriate).</p> <p>1.3 In addition to the proposed report of aged debt cases, the Operations Manager should design an indicative recovery timetable to provide officers with guidelines (as all cases are unique) and key performance indicators to work towards.</p> <p>1.5 The proposed timetable for write offs should include guidelines on the length of time cases should be left on hold (after the former tenant deceased, for example) before being allocated to an officer, to mitigate the risk that the case is overlooked for an extended period.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>1.1 Operations Manager Income (StepByStep) September 2023 January 2024</p> <p>1.3 Operations Manager Income (StepByStep) October 2023 February 2024</p> <p>1.5 Operations Manager Income (StepByStep) July 2023 December 2023</p>	<p>The Operations Manager confirmed the following:</p> <p>1.1 Cases have been identified however resource levels are limiting progress of reviewing cases. Steps are being put in place to add additional automated steps and to target cases by age.</p> <p>1.3 Performance indicators to be determined based on resources and completion of 1.1 above.</p> <p>1.5 Write off guidance to officers is currently being drafted,</p>
<p>2.1 The missing tenancy agreements should be located, or terms and conditions should be re-agreed, signed, and stored electronically.</p> <p>2.2 A review should be completed to confirm that signed agreements are saved on file for other tenants.</p> <p>2.3 Tenancy accounts on Northgate should be created, and payment allocated, before the start of the tenancy. The Council should introduce annual spot checks to ensure that this is the case.</p>	<p>2.1 - Implemented at time of report 2.2 and 2.3 Resident Services Manager July 2023 October 2023</p>	<p>We were advised by the Operations Manager that checks carried out with Rents in August 2023 found several tenancy agreements had not been uploaded to EDMS in a timely manner. This has been brought to the attention of Resident services for the next review in October 2023.</p>

Recommendation and Priority Level	Manager Responsible & Due Date	Latest Implementation Status
Medium		
Housing Directorate		
2021-22 Cooper Close TMO		
<p>With reference to the finance and procurement rules, the TMO should review current suppliers and consider whether each continues to provide value for money. Alternative quotes should be obtained in line with the procurement procedures unless a long-term contract is in place.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Treasurer January 2022 November 2023</p>	<p>We were advised that the previous TMO Manager has now returned to manage the delivery of all delegated landlord services and providing support to the management committee. The TMI team will work with the committee and the manager to address the audit recommendation.</p>
<p>The TMO should review the Management Committee terms of reference annually to ensure they are up to date.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Chair April 2022 July 2022 November 2023</p>	<p>As above, we were advised that a TMO Manager is now in place and the TMI team will work with the Manager and the management committee to prioritise the review of the terms of reference.</p>
2022-23 Applegarth TMO		
<p>The TMO should ensure that budget monitoring reports are shared at the monthly Management Committee meetings and ensure that reasons for variations and action to address them are adequately documented in the minutes of the meetings.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>TMO Manager June 2023 October 2023 Complete, pending evidence</p>	<p>We were advised by the TMO manager that that this has been completed, however we are currently awaiting evidence to verify this.</p>

APPENDIX 1

OPINION SIGNIFICANCE DEFINITION

Level of Assurance	Design Opinion	Findings from review	Effectiveness Opinion	Findings from review
Substantial 	Appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks.	There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives.	No, or only minor, exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	The controls that are in place are being consistently applied.
Moderate 	In the main, there are appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks reviewed albeit with some that are not fully effective.	Generally, a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives with some exceptions.	A small number of exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	Evidence of non compliance with some controls, that may put some of the system objectives at risk.
Limited 	A number of significant gaps identified in the procedures and controls in key areas. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	System of internal controls is weakened with system objectives at risk of not being achieved.	A number of reoccurring exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	Non-compliance with key procedures and controls places the system objectives at risk.
No 	For all risk areas there are significant gaps in the procedures and controls. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Poor system of internal control.	Due to absence of effective controls and procedures, no reliance can be placed on their operation. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Non compliance and/or compliance with inadequate controls.

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