

**Summary of Recommendations and Management Responses from Internal Audit Reports
issued Quarter 3, 2023/24**

Report Reference	Recommendation	Risk Rating¹	Responsible Officer	Management Response and Target Implementation Date (TID)
Cloud Applications and Hosting Contracts – 24 October 2023				
4.2.2	Procurement and ICT should agree on a process that allows all delivery options for new software solutions to be considered and fully evaluated.	Medium	Head of Customer and Digital Services / Strategic Procurement and Creditors Manager	ICT will work with the Procurement team to agree an appropriate process and ensure this is embedded within future projects for all software solutions. This can be integrated with work toward recommendation 4.4.1. TID: 29/12/23

¹ Risk Ratings are defined as follows:

- High: Issue of significant importance requiring urgent attention.
- Medium: Issue of moderate importance requiring prompt attention.
- Low: Issue of minor importance requiring attention.

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4.3.2	Documented procedures should be developed to support the Cloud Service Assessment Framework.	Low	Head of Customer and Digital Services / Customer and Digital Services (ICT) Cyber Group	The CSAF as recognised in the audit is a relatively new document that has been introduced with the support of colleagues from Procurement. ICT will develop this further to establish formal procedures for evaluation and sign off, ensuring that all appropriate stakeholders are consulted. TID: 29/12/23
4.3.2	A cloud security assessment should be integrated into the MMR and a shorter assessment should be developed for smaller cloud applications.	Medium	Head of Customer and Digital Services / Customer and Digital Services (ICT) Cyber Group / Strategic Procurement and Creditors Manager	A lighter version of the CSAF will be prepared for smaller applications as recommended. In addition, a tailored version will be produced for inclusion with MMR documents. TID: 29/12/23

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4.4.1	A formal ICT procurement policy, that includes cloud applications, should be documented and approved.	Medium	Head of Customer and Digital Services / Strategic Procurement and Creditors Manager	ICT will work with Procurement to design an appropriate process and policy that ensures due diligence is carried out and that ICT are actively involved in the approval of solution procurements. Assistance will be required from the Senior Leadership Team to embed the new policy within their service areas. TID: 31/01/24
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) – 18 October 2023				
4.3.2	Sample checking of data plotted by ICT staff should be undertaken by another member of the GIS team.	Low	Corporate GIS Manager	Increased checking of data to be undertaken; no formal software currently available to monitor data accuracy of inputting. TID: December 2023
4.4.2	All appropriate proposed names should be added to the approved street names list.	Low	Corporate GIS Manager	An additional list of "Inappropriate Street Names" will be incorporated into service. TID: December 2023
4.5.3	The external overlay list should be completed with all relevant details prior to the new system being implemented, with information also recorded as to who will be responsible for obtaining the updates for each set of data.	Medium	Corporate GIS Manager and Systems and Business Improvement Officer	A meeting will be held to assign the responsibilities for updating the external overlay list, with the work to be completed in time for the new GIS to be implemented. TID: April 2024

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Council Tax – 19 December 2023				
No recommendations arising on this occasion.				
Management of Contracts – 21 November 2023				
4.2.2	Service area managers should be reinforcing the importance of ensuring that contract documentation is retained and stored appropriately by contract owners.	Low	Head of Finance	The Senior Leadership Team will be reminded of the importance of retaining and storing documentation appropriately, and within the Finance System where practically possible. We will also look at how we can share a reminder through other mechanisms with contract owners, such as meta-compliance and Managers Forum. TID: SLT Dec 2023 / Managers Forum March 2024

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4.5.2	To ensure procurement is completed legally and fairly, it should be mandatory for those involved in letting the contracts, contract owners and administrators to attend relevant training.	Medium	Strategic Procurement and Creditors Manager	<p>Members were equally concerned by the percentage of contracts awarded by exemption (25%). The Procurement Champions are keen on investigating why the number of exemptions are so high.</p> <p>There is a procurement training review currently being completed with an aim to understand the impact of the current procurement training. West Midlands Employers have been appointed to facilitate four focus groups to assist with the review, with an aim to launch a new training programme in 2024.</p> <p>TID: New training programme to be developed and begun to be rolled out by end of April 2024</p>
Local Elections – 21 November 2023				
4.4.4	To ensure that the costs are in line with contracted amounts, and to promote successful monitoring of budgets and spending, purchase orders should be registered on contract when there is a contract in place.	Low	Electoral Services Manager	<p>The contract will be identified on any supporting payment requests / PO's and officers will be reminded to link spending to the appropriate contract when there is one in place.</p> <p>TID: Completed.</p>

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Grounds Maintenance – 12 October 2023

4.2.1	The contractor should be reminded of their contractual obligation to provide a statement of annual account to the Council at the beginning of each financial year.	Medium	Neighbourhood Services Manager	Agreed to implement. Will be discussed at next managers meeting with IDVERDE. TID: End of October 2023.
4.4.1	The contractor should be reminded to record the weekly inspections for posts and pitches and pass these to the COPO.	Low	Contract Operations and Performance Officer	A reminder email will be sent to IDVERDE. TID: Completed 6 September 2023.
4.4.3	Officers should be reminded to respond to complaints in a timely manner.	Low	Contract Operations and Performance Officer	A reminder email will be sent to Area Contract Officers. TID: Completed 6 September 2023.
	Rectification notice numbers should be included on the Default Notice spreadsheet in order for notices to be matched and located quickly.	Low	Contract Operations and Performance Officer	A reminder email will be sent to Area Contract Officers. TID: Completed 6 September 2023.

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	Staff should be reminded to check that once default notice charges are received, the relevant ledger codes are checked to ensure amounts are accurate and that all relevant notices are uploaded accordingly.	Low	Contract Operations and Performance Officer	A reminder email will be sent to the Data and Performance Officer. TID: Completed 6 September 2023.

Void Management – 22 November 2023

4.3.1	To minimise the potential for fraud, the procedure relating to the termination of tenancies should sit with the Housing Officers as opposed to the Housing Allocations Officers.	Low	Landlord Services Manager; Landlord Operations Manager; Housing Allocations Officer.	Agreed. Landlord Operations team to speak with the Allocations team and create a formal procedure. TID: Spring 2024.
4.3.3	Staff should be reminded to upload all evidence to the DMS.	Low	Contractor Administrator	Agreed. TID: End of November 2023.

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4.3.4	Staff should be reminded to take arrears action in cases where damage recharges have not been paid.	Medium	Landlord Services Manager	Agreed. The Landlord Services Manager to speak to the Purchasing and Payments, Business Administration, and Income Management teams to draw up a procedure outlining the stages for pursuing arrears, including County Court Orders. TID: Summer 2024.
	In line with the abandonment procedure, staff should be reminded to speak to neighbours and next of kin where possible, to gather information regarding tenant whereabouts.	Low	Landlord Operations Manager	Agreed - to be brought up in next team meeting. TID: End of November 2023.
	Staff should be reminded to issue seven-day letters to all abandoned properties.	Low	Landlord Operations Manager	Agreed - to be brought up in next team meeting TID: End of November 2023.
4.4.2	Performance relating to void properties needs to be regularly discussed with the Compliance team.	Low	Compliance Manager / Landlord Services Manager / Housing Needs Manager	Agreed. TID: March 2024.

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4.5.1	A procedure needs to be drawn up to ensure that properties which remain empty after contractor work has completed, are regularly inspected. This is to ensure compliance with insurance requirements and prevent legionella.	Low	Compliance Manager / Landlord Services Manager / Landlord Operations Manager	Agreed. TID: Summer 2024.
	An illegal occupation procedure should be compiled.	Low	Compliance Manager and Senior Housing Advice and Allocations Manager.	Agreed. TID: April 2024.
4.5.3	Staff should be chasing unpaid costs as well as making sure that recharges have been charged to the correct individual.	Medium	Landlord Services Manager.	Agreed. TID: Summer 2024.
4.6.1	The Assets service risk assessment regarding visits and inspections should be updated.	Low	Compliance Manager	Agreed to review with the Health & Safety and Premises Manager. TID: Spring 2024.
Human Resources Management – 23 November 2023				
4.3.1	Staff should be reminded to include policy change dates on the policies uploaded to the Intranet.	Low	Head of People & Communications	Agreed. Staff to be reminded at next team meeting. TID: Completed October 2023.

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Conservation and Design – 1 December 2023				
4.3.2	It should be ensured that document are uploaded to the portal, where appropriate, to provide and audit trail showing that the Conservation team have been consulted with and had the opportunity to provide comments.	Low	Development Manager	The Business Managers will be asked to remind their officers to ensure all relevant documents are uploaded as part of the planning application. This will ensure responses from the Conservation team are logged appropriately with relevant cases.
Economic Development – 23 October 2023				
No recommendations arising on this occasion.				