

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSES FROM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS
ISSUED QUARTER 4, 2013/14

Report Reference	Recommendation	Risk Rating¹	Responsible Officer	Management Response and Target Implementation Date
Conservation – 13 March 2014				
4.6.3	The Conservation Grants page on the WDC website should be enhanced to include information about the types of grants available, the eligible properties, the amount of the grant and the conditions.	Low	Principal Architect / Planner	Improve information on the website for potential applicants to make it clear the amount of grant available. End of May 2014.
4.6.4	All relevant paperwork relating to the payment of a grant should be retained on file for future reference.	Medium	Principal Architect / Planner	Ensure clear audit trail by introducing a new electronic system. End of September 2014.
4.6.4	Other members of staff in Development Services should receive a basic knowledge of the land charges system in order to be able to provide cover.	Medium	Head of Development Services	Further staff trained on Land Charges in Development Management Administration. End of September 2014.

¹ Risk Ratings are defined as follows:

- Low - Minimal adverse impact on achievement of the Authority's objectives if not adequately addressed.
- Medium - Moderate adverse impact on achievement of the Authority's objectives if not adequately addressed.
- High - Requires urgent attention with major adverse impact on achievement of Authority's objectives if not adequately addressed.

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Collection of Council Tax – 3 February 2014				
<p>The review, concentrating on the valuation and liability aspects this year, was able to give a substantial level of assurance that the systems and controls in place for the collection of council tax are appropriate and operating effectively.</p> <p>A minor issue was identified relating to an exemption that had been applied which had not been appropriately followed up. However, due to the one-off nature of this error, no formal recommendation was thought to be warranted.</p>				
Housing Rent Collection – 25 March 2014				
4.1.1 & 4.1.2	<p>The procedures and guidance notes held by Housing and Property Services should be reviewed periodically and updated by a nominated officer. This should be evidenced by the inclusion of a version control table.</p> <p>Additionally, the Rent Arrears Officer should ensure that the arrears workflow schedule is kept up to date.</p>	Low	<p>Business Support Manager</p> <p>Senior Income Recovery Officer</p>	<p>The procedure notes will be reviewed on an annual basis. 30 September 2014.</p> <p>The Senior Income Recovery Officer carries out fortnightly audits on each Rent Arrears Officer weekly workflow and tasks to ensure that all have been completed. Implemented.</p>

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4.2.4	<p>The Business Support Manager should ensure that the annual declaration forms are completed annually by all relevant staff.</p> <p>Additionally, the spreadsheet containing the names of staff, who have completed the form, should be saved and stored on a shared drive, to ensure that it can be readily available for inspection at any time.</p>	Low	Business Support Manager	<p>The annual declaration forms will be issued annually and a central record maintained on the shared drive.</p> <p>30 June 2014.</p>
4.8.6	The Code of Financial Practice and the Scheme of Delegation should be amended to include the correct authorisation limits for write offs.	Low	Business Support Manager	<p>The write off authorisation limits have been amended to reflect the Code of Financial Practice and the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>Completed.</p>

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Data Protection – 18 February 2014				
3.1.6 (1)	The Data Protection Staff Guidelines should be reviewed with consideration given to cross-referencing to other relevant policies and legislative/regulatory relationships.	Medium	Democratic Services Manager	<p>The purpose of the Audit was to independently establish a base position and highlight the areas of weakness prior to a review of the current arrangements being undertaken. The review is to be completed with assistance from WCC Legal Services and a first meeting has been arranged for 24 February 2014.</p> <p>The review had been agreed as part of the Service Area Plan for Democratic Services because this area of work had not been looked at in detail since 2011.</p> <p>The recommendations are all accepted and will now be built into the review.</p> <p>July 2014.</p>
3.1.6 (2)	Following review, the Data Protection Staff Guidelines published electronically on the Intranet and incorporated within policies to be released on implementation of the awareness management software solution.	Medium	Democratic Services Manager	<p>As above.</p> <p>July 2014.</p>

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3.3.4	An awareness survey should be commissioned to gauge understanding of Data Protection matters among those staff handling personal data.	Medium	Democratic Services Manager	There was recognition of the need to improve understanding of the skills and provide evidence of training in this area. Therefore as part of the e-learning review a system has been purchased "meta compliance" which will be able to provide independent verification of staff skills and knowledge and develop these. It should be noted that this tool will also be used for other key corporate training. Awaiting confirmation of implementation date from HR.
3.4.5	A review of personal data collection arrangements should be undertaken across the Council to identify instances where fair processing notices are not provided to proper standard at the point of collection and institute remedial action taken where required.	Medium	Democratic Services Manager	This is agreed and will be built into the review as per recommendation 1. July 2014.
3.5.2 (1)	A review of systematic data sharing should be undertaken across the Council to gauge compliance with the Information Commissioner's Code of Practice and recommend formal data sharing agreements where not already applied.	Medium	Democratic Services Manager	This is agreed and will built into the review as per recommendation 1. July 2014.
3.5.2 (2)	The Data Protection Policy should be updated to reflect systematic data sharing with other organisations and how it is managed.	Low	Democratic Services Manager	This is agreed and will built into the review as per recommendation 1. April 2014.

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3.6.9	The current arrangements for handling subject access requests should be reviewed to determine and implement actions for improving compliance.	High	Democratic Services Manager	This is of concern and will be reviewed as a matter of urgency to see how this can be improved. The majority of cases were about ensuring responses were sent on time and ensuring the log is updated to show cases have been closed off. While this has improved there is a need to improve this further. April 2014.
3.8.3	A framework for active monitoring of compliance with Data Protection legislation and good practice should be established with consideration given to reconstituting a network of Service Area representatives.	Medium	Democratic Services Manager	This is agreed and will be built into the review as per recommendation 1. July 2014.

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Media Services – 27 March 2014				
4.1.12	The functions provided by Media Services should be benchmarked against other local authorities' arrangements to confirm that the current organisation of media and printing services is effective and provides value for money.	Medium	Media Services Manager	Experience when undertaking a review of the service has shown that obtaining useful comparisons from a benchmarking exercise is difficult. Other authorities work and structure their media service differently. Few have print frameworks in place and departments can source their own print with little or no consultation with their print team. The EU print framework WDC has in place demonstrates efficiency and savings. The Communications audit is planned for 14/15 perhaps as a result of that we could look again at the benefits of Benchmarking. March 2015.
4.4.1	In order to properly gauge customer satisfaction and identify any areas for improvement, formal feedback should be obtained from service users through 'end-of-job' surveys or in a more general way through annual surveys, like those used by ICT.	Medium	Media Services Manager	Agreed – we will look to do this by the end of the year. December 2014.

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Housing Environmental Functions – 10 March 2014				
4.5.5	Forecasts of future resource demands for HMO licensing should be incorporated in the service plans and appropriate budget provisions made to enable early preparation for upsurges of licence renewals due.	Medium	Head of Housing and Property Services	Recommendation accepted. Sept 2014 and built into the Service redesign proposals.
Leaseholder Service Charges – 24 March 2014				
<p>The review, carried out when the service was in a transitional state, was able to give only a moderate level of assurance that the systems in place are adequate to administer leaseholder service charging economically, efficiently and effectively. However, in the light of the programme in place committed to addressing the known issues, formal recommendations were not considered necessary.</p>				
Town Hall Lettings – 19 March 2014				
4.4.7	Whenever management deems it appropriate, payment in full in advance or a sizeable deposit should be considered for high value lettings.	Medium	Theatre and Town Hall Manager	To be implemented at the point of agreement between the venue and hirer. Assessment of risk made by Deputy Manager or General Manager. 20 March 2014.
4.6.3	Invoices for Town Hall lettings should be produced on a regular basis and at least monthly.	Medium	Theatre and Town Hall Manager	Recharges for commercial hires to be completed on a Monday for the previous week. Internal, WDC recharges to be passed to our Accountant on the first Monday of every month for processing. 24 March 2014.
4.7.5	The insurance implications of Town Hall lettings should be discussed with the Insurance and Risk Officer and procedural changes introduced as appropriate.	Medium	Theatre and Town Hall Manager	Meeting to be arranged and any action points or alterations of contracts to be implemented. 30 April 2014.

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4.8.6	The rental for the use of office space at the Town Hall by Warwick University should be collected using the periodic income feature of the debtors system.	Medium	Business Support Manager	Clarification to be sought from contract services as to the terms of the latest lease renewal and then the charges set up on debtors system. 30 April 2014.
Markets and Mops – 31 March 2014				
4.1.10	Formal meetings should be held to discuss / review invoice figures at appropriate stages of the year, in line with the (current) contract, with the FS Team being made aware of the correct figures to be used on the invoices in a timely manner.	Low	Business Manager (Town Centre)	A formal meeting is to be held during September / October to review stall counts and set next year costs. September / October (annually).
4.1.13	The fee setting process should be adhered to (i.e. fees to be agreed for the production of the October Executive report for the following year), with notes to the report highlighting that these will be implemented from April, not January as stated in the report (unless agreed differently in the new contract).	Low	Business Manager (Town Centre)	As above for future years. September / October.
4.1.13	If new fees are being agreed to come into effect from April 2014, an update report should be presented to Executive as appropriate.	Low	Business Manager (Town Centre)	A meeting with Sketts is already set for 3 April to review this year's fees and an Executive report will follow. Immediate.

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4.1.14	Formal monitoring should be undertaken to ascertain the number of stalls in place at markets held.	Medium	Business Manager (Town Centre)	Quarterly spot checks to be undertaken by relevant Town Development Officers. A monthly spreadsheet is to be supplied by Sketts showing stall numbers. First check to be made by end of June 2014. Spreadsheet in place by end of April 2014.
4.1.21	Annual reminders should be set up to ensure that updated insurance cover details are received from the market operator upon expiry of the certificates provided.	Low	Business Manager (Town Centre)	The need to supply insurance details will be covered in the new tender, and reminders will be set thereafter. Immediate.
4.2.13	Insurance documentation is obtained in respect of all rides operated at the Mop fairs.	Medium	Events Managers	Insurance documentation will be obtained for future Mop Fairs. October 2014.
Street Cleansing – 31 March 2014				
4.2.7	The schedules spreadsheet should be reviewed to ensure that it reflects the current agreement.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	Changes to the contract can come from a variety of sources. A new process will be put in place to document how those changes are taken account of in the contract. September 2014.
4.2.8	A full review should be undertaken between the variation orders approved and the amounts charged to ascertain if any payment amendments need to be processed.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	Variations are to be controlled via the Senior Contract Officer, who is also responsible for the contract payments. April 2014.

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4.2.8	All future invoices should be checked appropriately against approved variation orders, with any discrepancies being rectified.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	Checks will be made as part of the monthly claim and payment. April 2014.
4.3.7	Staff are reminded of the need to ensure that an appropriate level of detail is recorded on Flare so that anyone else reviewing the case can ascertain exactly what has been done to resolve the issue.	Medium	Senior Contract Officer	This is a training issue for the Area Officers and contractors to ensure the appropriate level of detail is being recorded. Internal training will be arranged as appropriate. April 2014.
4.3.10	A review should be performed of the categorisation and reporting arrangements on Flare to make it useful to the service.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	This is a training issue for the Area Officers and contractors to ensure the appropriate level of detail is being recorded. Internal training will be arranged as appropriate. April 2014.
4.3.10	The need for consistency in the classification of calls received should be highlighted to relevant staff.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	Classification of a complaint/enquiry/request for service can be difficult as they are open to interpretation. However, the issue will be highlighted. April 2014.

4.6.2	The contractor should be asked to provide evidence that they hold professional indemnity insurance in line with the contract conditions. Annual reminders should also be set up to ensure that updated copies are received upon expiry of the certificates provided.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	Up to date insurance certificates will be obtained from the street cleansing contractor. June 2014.
Grounds Maintenance – 31 March 2014				
4.2.4	A formal process should be established for notifying the Senior Contract Officer of any changes to the contract specification that are agreed by other officers.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	Changes to the contract can come from a variety of sources. A new process will be put in place to document how those changes are taken account of in the contract. September 2014.
4.2.10	Formal, authorised, variation orders should be maintained for changes to the grounds maintenance contract.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	Variations are to be controlled via the Senior Contract Officer, who is also responsible for the contract payments. April 2014.
4.2.12	Checks should be undertaken to confirm that the invoices submitted relating to the hours worked by attendants etc. are accurate.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	Checks will be made as part of the monthly claim and payment. April 2014.
4.3.7	Staff should be reminded of the need to ensure that an appropriate level of detail is recorded on Flare so that anyone else reviewing the case can ascertain exactly what has been done to resolve the issue.	Medium	Senior Contract Officer	This is a training issue for the Area Officers and contractors to ensure the appropriate level of detail is being recorded. Internal training will be arranged as appropriate. April 2014.

4.3.10	A review should be performed of the categorisation and reporting arrangements on Flare to make it useful to the service.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	This is a training issue for the Area Officers and contractors to ensure the appropriate level of detail is being recorded. Internal training will be arranged as appropriate. April 2014.
4.3.10	The need for consistency in the classification of calls received should be highlighted to relevant staff.	Medium	Senior Contract Officer	Classification of a complaint/enquiry/request for service can be difficult as they are open to interpretation. However, the issue will be highlighted. June 2014.
4.3.11	Contract Officers should receive appropriate training to allow them to identify whether the work performed under the contract is in line with the agreed specification.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	This is a training issue focusing on any areas of the contract that they are unfamiliar with. Internal training will be arranged as appropriate. May 2014.
4.4.2	Budgets for the relevant codes are set in line with the figures agreed in the contract.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	To be checked monthly as part of the contract payment process. April 2014.
4.6.2	The contractor should be contacted to ask for copies of current insurance certificates to ensure that cover is still held. Annual reminders should also be set up to ensure that updated copies are received upon expiry of the certificates provided.	Low	Senior Contract Officer	Up to date insurance certificates will be obtained from the grounds maintenance contractor. April 2014.