

Audit and Governance Committee Report

26 September 2012

Report of: **Strategic Director**

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To: Audit and Governance Committee

DATE: 26 September 2012

Wards Affected
All

Actions arising

Recommendation

That members note the content of the report

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to respond on actions arising from previous committee meetings.
2. The contact officer for this report is Steve Bishop, strategic director and s.151 chief finance officer for South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, telephone (SODC) 01491 823831 and (VWHDC) 01235 540332.

Strategic objectives

3. To assist the council to manage its business effectively by providing an assurance framework to monitor the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment.

Matters arising

4.

(a) Annual Governance Statement AG.32 & AG.35	Committee Date – 28 September 2011
On 28 September 2011, the committee suggested introducing an investment strategy, particularly in relation to property.	
Comment The updated annual governance statement in September 2011 included this	Action Retain on matters arising for review.

<p>recommendation. This suggestion had been referred to the asset management group for consideration. This would be considered at the next meeting of the Asset Management Group on 4 May 2012.</p>	
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(b) ICT report	Committee Date – 18 January 2012
<p>The committee sought assurances in the internal audit follow-up reports that staff leavers' names and logins had been quickly removed from the council's IT systems to prevent unauthorised access.</p>	
<p>Comment The committee considered that this item should remain on the matters arising list until the additional ICT follow up had been completed and reported to the next committee meeting.</p>	<p>Action Retain on matters arising list. Follow-up report to be considered by the committee in September 2012.</p>

(c) Waste Mgt and Recycling report	Committee Date – 18 January 2012
<p>The committee asked for an update of whether Biffa was complying with the council's instruction not to collect garden waste from the addresses of persistent non-payers.</p>	
<p>Comment The committee were keen to ensure that this item was kept under review to consider the possibility of a licensing scheme, eg annual stickers or coloured tags on the bins to monitor who had, and had not, paid for their collections.</p>	<p>Action To ask Biffa for an update on the progress of their operative training. Retain on matters arising list.</p>

(d) Audit Commission progress report	Committee Date – 18 January 2012
<p>The strategic director undertook to investigate whether any further action was necessary on the other key considerations suggested by the Audit Commission.</p>	
<p>Comment The council had not formally completed the fraud prevention checklist, but the Audit Manager has a service plan target of reviewing the fraud and money laundering control environment and will incorporate the checklist into her review.</p>	<p>Action Retain on matters arising list.</p>

(e) Treasury management strategy annual review	Committee Date – 18 January 2012
<p>The committee requested the council's asset management group to consider whether the ratio of physical property and financial investments was still fit for purpose.</p>	
<p>Comment The committee noted that this suggestion had been referred to the council's asset management group.</p>	<p>Action Retain on matters arising list.</p>

(f) Business continuity and risk management update AG.52	Committee Date – 18 January 2012
<p>The committee asked the officers to report back on the timescale for testing the business continuity arrangements and to confirm that business continuity arrangements are in place for the council's largest and most important contracts and that the officers</p>	

are satisfied with the arrangements.	
<p>Comment</p> <p>The committee noted that in collaboration with Oxfordshire County Council, this council would be carrying out a simulated walk-through test of its business continuity plans alongside an emergency plan exercise on 24 April 2012. The results of the test would be reported to the committee.</p> <p>The officers had reviewed the business continuity plans of each of the council's six major contractors and confirmed that they were fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Retain on matters arising list. Results to be considered by the committee in September 2012.</p>

(g) Complaints panel	Committee Date – 21 March 2012
The committee requested that a complaints panel was set up to consider a complaint by a Radley resident and advise the chief executive and group leaders on any further action considered appropriate.	
<p>Comment</p> <p>The panel has been established and a meeting with the reporting officers and the complainant is awaited.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Retain on matters arising list.</p>

(h) Internal audit activity report on ICT	Committee Date – 21 March 2012
The committee requested that the internal audit report on ICT be presented to the next committee meeting	
<p>Comment</p> <p>Presented for 11 July agenda</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Retain on matters arising list.</p>

(i) Comments on internal audit reports not presented to committee – National non-domestic rates	Committee Date – 21 March 2012
The committee requested that when further details of the government's changes to the national non-domestic rates system became available, Cabinet, Council and this committee should be informed.	
<p>Comment</p> <p>Head of finance to update when in due course</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Retain on matters arising list.</p>

(j) Health and safety annual report	Committee Date – 11 July 2012
The committee requested the officers add to the action plan for 2012/13 that the fire policy needs to be published for council properties not used by the council to provide services.	
<p>Comment</p> <p>Now in the action plan.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Retain on matters arising list.</p>

(k) Health and safety annual report	Committee Date – 11 July 2012
The committee requested the officers to investigate whether the Cabinet had a responsibility for health and safety and therefore should receive training.	
<p>Comment</p> <p>No requirement for Cabinet to be trained.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Retain on matters arising list.</p>

(l) District and parish council elections – May 2011	Committee Date – 11 July 2012
The committee requested the returning officer to provide the committee with an analysis of the estimated cost of the 2011 local elections, had the elections printer fulfilled its contract and had the government not held a referendum.	
Comment David Buckle to advise committee members	Action Retain on matters arising list.

(m) Complaints procedure	Committee Date – 11 July 2012
The committee requested the officers to reconsider the revised complaints procedure to include councillors' input in the third stage, and consult Councillors Mike Murray and Judy Roberts on the revised proposal before submitting it to the next committee meeting for consideration.	
Comment David Buckle to liaise with Councillors Murray and Roberts	Action Retain on matters arising list.

(n) Statement of accounts	Committee Date – 11 July 2012
The committee requested the officers to organise a question and answer session on the statement of accounts in early September and to remind the relevant councillors that they need to complete and return their related party transactions form to the council.	
Comment Completed	Action Remove from matters arising list.

(o) Treasury management	Committee Date – 11 July 2012
The committee requested the officers to circulate the date for councillor training on an introduction to treasury management.	
Comment No date set for this training. Only very limited places available.	Action Retain on matters arising list.

(p) Annual governance statement 2011/12	Committee Date – 11 July 2012
The committee requested the officers to amend the draft annual governance statement in paragraph 102 to add a reference to the audit manager's ability to report directly to the chief executive or the committee if necessary.	
Comment Completed	Action Remove from matters arising list.

(q) Annual governance statement 2011/12	Committee Date – 11 July 2012
The committee requested the officers to amend the draft annual governance statement in paragraph 102 to add a reference to the audit manager's ability to report directly to the chief executive or the committee if necessary.	
Comment Completed	Action Remove from matters arising list.

STEVE BISHOP
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR