

EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Appendix B

Recommendation	Priority 1=Low 2=Med 3=High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments/Management Response	Date	Initial Management Response	March 2011 update
Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report - to Audit Cttee 23 Mar 2010							
R1		3 Cat O'Connor Debbie Williams	Agreed	All quarterly capital receipt claims are signed as checked by a second person. The review of the final claim was not evidenced by signature. All the housing subsidy claims were reviewed by a second person but not evidenced as such. The Council will review the guidance and training given to the second person who reviews each claim.	As claims are submitted		This has been added to the process for all claims to be evidence as reviewed - COMPLETE
R2		3 All grant claim preparers	Agreed	Working papers and evidence trails similar to year-end will be adopted	As claims are submitted		COMPLETED
R3		3 Pauline Hull	Agreed	The creation of a more responsive Projects and Improvements Team is underway. A priority task will be to conduct training on the issues raised.	Apr-10		COMPLETED
R4		3 Cat O'Connor	Agreed	This relates to the external leased properties that are not subject to the rent restructures like our normal dwellings. I have an email from CLOG stating that those particular properties did not have to be included in the caps and limit spreadsheet. However, because we own the properties they have to be included in our total property count. Hence the two numbers will not be the same. Note: DCLG took no action on the qualification from the Audit Commission.	As claims are submitted		COMPLETED
R5		3 Cat O'Connor	Not agreed	F004dc is from the 08-09 03 return which just needs the estimated no of dwellings at 31 March 2009 including shared ownership. F001dp from the other form requires the number of dwellings on 1 April 2009 including the authorities share of shared ownership dwellings and including PFI dwellings. It then has an additional note to state that 'however, they should not include unoccupied dwellings which the authority had formally resolved before 1 April 2008 should be demolished or disposed of and which were no longer available for letting on 1 April 2009'. Hence some properties were excluded therefore a difference in the two numbers.			COMPLETED
R6		3 Pauline Hull	Agreed	See response to rec 3 above.			Training has been undertaken to ensure all staff are aware - COMPLETED
R7		Pauline Hull	Agreed				Training has been undertaken to ensure all staff are aware - COMPLETED
R8		3 Pauline Hull	Agreed		Implementation for claim		This will be implemented when the Claim is completed
Annual Governance Report - to Audit cttee 22 Nov 2010							
R1	2	Kelly Dawson	Agreed	Explanations will be provided as part of the working papers if any changes are proposed	Complete		COMPLETED
R2	2	Kelly Dawson	Agreed	Asset valuations disclosed on the balance sheet were correct.	Complete		COMPLETED

					There was not an error of £4.6m, this was just a mis treatment on disclosure note 6.12.		COMPLETED
					A 100% review of asset lives has been undertaken and, where necessary, corrected.		COMPLETED
					Reconciliations between asset systems are being carried out on a quarterly basis.		COMPLETED
			Steve Sprason		In the past year new procedures have been instigated to improve fixed asset management, including closer liaison with other teams within the Council (eg Community Housing), improving property records (eg the change note procedures), and the continuing Voluntary Registration Process which involves checking existing OCC property records against the new titles that are being created. These checks are ongoing.	Ongoing	COMPLETED
R3	Document revaluations at the time the decision is made		Richard Hawkes	Agreed	Decisions to dispose of assets will be monitored for re-categorisation/reevaluation (if required) with immediate effect	22/11/2010	COMPLETED
R4	Include all bank accounts in the financial statements.	3	Anna Winship	Agreed	All bank accounts will be included in all future financial statements	Sep-10	COMPLETED
R5	Improve the lay out of the bank reconciliation. The completion and review of this reconciliation should be done regularly and evidenced. Cash receipts should be allocated to accounts with the financial statements quickly. Long outstanding items should be cleared quickly.	3	Anna Winship	Agreed	The bank reconciliation is up to date. The format of the bank has been amended during the review of the process carried out to complete the bank reconciliation.	complete	COMPLETED
					The bank reconciliation is up to date. The format of the bank has been amended during the review of the process carried out to complete the bank reconciliation.	Nov-10	COMPLETED
R6	When a phone call is received for claiming single person discount (SPD) a cross check should be performed to the electoral register prior to awarding the discount and the check should be evidenced	2	AHL/Helen Bishop	Agreed	This is now in place and checks are made with the following systems: Express Electors HB Academy ESP Bus Pass I-world	Oct-10	COMPLETED
R7	The provision against bad debts for payments made as part of the rent deposit scheme should be kept under review to ensure that the amount is appropriate	2	Gillian Chandler	Agreed	Bad debt provisions are monitored regularly as part of the monthly monitoring work. This will be reviewed quarterly as part of this process	Quarterly	COMPLETED
R8	The Council should obtain a record of the laptop allocations and confirm their location	2	Simon Park/David Oakes	Agreed	All PC and Laptop Assets recorded with user and location details	Jan-11	Work is being undertaken to complete this data collection exercise
					All infrastructure Assets to be documented (with photographic evidence where possible) with location details		Work is being undertaken to complete this data collection exercise
R9	Cash in transit balances should be reviewed and where necessary balances within them reclassified.	2	Anna Winship	Agreed	The Collection Fund is reconciled on a monthly basis.	Monthly	COMPLETED
					This issue refers to the reconciling items between Academy and Agresso at the year, therefore this classification will be carried out to ensure the balance is appropriately classified on the balance sheet.		To be completed as part of the closedown process
R16	Interest on Icelandic bank investments should be impaired.	2	Anna Winship	Agreed	Agreed, accounts have been adjusted	Complete	
R10	Purchase orders should be reviewed regularly.	2	Denise Sheppard	Agreed	All purchasers have been reminded of the procedures to follow in placing orders and paying invoices.	Complete	COMPLETED
					The example raised was for Legal advice and considered low risk.		COMPLETED
R11	Figures in the cash flow statement should be reconciled back to relevant figures in the accounts.	2	Kelly Dawson	Agreed	There were 2 small errors within the statements which have been amended. Full reconciliations will be carried out in future years	Complete	COMPLETED
R12	Evidence the operation of internal control and in particular ensure that reconciliations are signed off as evidence of the review.	3	Anna Winship	Agreed	Evidence of review is a key recommendation from both Audit Commission and Internal Audit. All procedure notes have been amended to include the necessity for this.	Complete	COMPLETED
R13	Review accounting policies yearly to ensure that they are in line with guidance. The policy for long term contracts is updated.	2	Kelly Dawson	Agreed	The accounting policies were reviewed and this was reported to Audit & Governance committee in June 2010.	Complete	COMPLETED
R14	The Council needs to assess each item of balance sheet to see if the criteria to classify them as a financial instrument is met and disclose in the note accordingly.	2	Anna Winship	Agreed	The accounts have been amended.	Complete	COMPLETED
					As part of year end processes the Council will review all Balance Sheet items in line with Financial Instruments guidance.		To be completed as part of the closedown process

R15	All contract changes should be documented and signed by both parties.	3	Jane Lubbock	Agreed	In respect of the Fusion Leisure contract.	ongoing	
					A contract management change control framework was set up at the start of the contract for use by the contract manager and for the change control logs to be used to record all contract variations. These should be documented and signed off by the HOS and Fusion.		COMPLETED
					The HOS and contract manager will ensure that no changes to the contract are agreed at any of the Leisure Boards or other meetings without them subsequently be signed off and documented in accordance with the process.		COMPLETED
R16	Review the format of reconciliations to ensure that they follow a similar layout and show how the balance in the ledger reconciles to the feeder system. Reconciling items should be cleared regularly and not carried forward from one reconciliation to the next. Evidence should be provided to confirm review.	3	Anna Winship	Agreed	All reconciling items were reviewed and officers do actively try to clear within 1 month of identification.	Dec-10	COMPLETED
					The format of reconciliations will be reviewed, and ensure that all reconciliations are reviewed on a regular basis as part of the process.		COMPLETED
					A full list of all reconciliations is being updated and monitored on a monthly basis.		COMPLETED
R17	Review disclosures made in the statements to ensure that they are in line with the SORP requirements.	2	Kelly Dawson	Agreed	A review of SORP requirements was undertaken and a few minor disclosures were missed. These have now been addressed.	Completed	COMPLETED

Equality and Diversity Report - to Audit cttee 24 Sep 2009

R1	<p>Improve the customer experience and outcomes by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) finalising and implementing the Council's customer contact strategy; 2) ensuring that clear arrangements are further developed through the Council's procurement arrangements to monitor, evaluate and control contractors and suppliers in regard to equalities and diversity; 3) implement plans to review and improve customer service standards and monitor against them in all services; and 4) improve the complaints policy and procedure and evaluate and monitor complaints on a regular basis 	2	Peter McQuitty / Helen Bishop / Jane Lubbock / Mike Newman	Agreed	<p>The final Customer Contact Strategy is to be approved by City Executive Board in October 2009.</p> <p>Implementation of key strands in strategy</p> <p>A project brief for a Contract Management Monitoring System and has been prepared and is awaiting approval for funding.</p> <p>An Action Plan in place.</p> <p>Data uploaded and live.</p> <p>We will introduce corporate delivery standards for customer contact channels and service standards for all service areas.</p> <p>Currently carrying out BPI on complaints processes.</p> <p>Roll-out of new complaints system will take place as part of CRM project</p>	Aug 09 - Sept 10	COMPLETE
R2	<p>Improve understanding of community and customer needs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using complaints and ongoing feedback to identify improvements; • finalising and implementing the Council's consultation strategy; and • evaluating the outcomes from the Council's investment in capacity building with the voluntary sector and reporting these outcomes publicly. 	2	Mike Newman, Peter McQuitty, Graham Stratford	Agreed	<p>We will introduce a corporate comments and complaints system that forms part of the performance framework</p> <p>An initial Impact Assessment is currently being undertaken.</p>	Oct 09 - May 10	<p>People & Equalities will be working closely with the recently formed Communities & Neighbourhood team in order to deliver recruitment and selection skill workshops in community centres and be involved in community walkabouts and low level consultation in partnership with their team leaders and locality officers.</p>
R3	<p>Improve the strategic approach to equality and diversity by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing a clear action plan to improve the Council's position against the Local Government Equality Standard and the emerging Local Government Equality Framework; • monitoring strategic equality and diversity plans regularly; • ensuring that the new Corporate Equality scheme is well publicised and available; and • ensuring that the Council is compliant with the Commission for Racial Equality's code of housing. 	2	Peter McQuitty / Graham Stratford	Agreed	<p>An Action Plan is in place for 2009/10</p> <p>An Action Plan is currently being developed for 2010/11</p> <p>Monitoring forms part of Performance Management Framework and is monitored on a monthly basis</p> <p>Steering group established and forms part of Corporate Equality Objectives 2009/10</p>	Ongoing	<p>A dry run to determine where the Council is against "achieving" level is being completed in March 2011 and we are still on track to apply for the accreditation in September 2011. Service transformation plans are still in draft, we will focus attention on key aspects of service, measuring current provision across equalities strands and implementing improvements accordingly</p>

R4	<p>Improve the approach to workforce planning and HR by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the baseline knowledge about the workforce against the six equality strands; • ensuring that gaps in workforce planning are addressed rapidly; • reviewing current HR policies and procedures, including implementation of a fair employment and equal pay policy; • improving the selection and recruitment process to attract a wider group of appropriately qualified applicants; and • developing staff networks to support minority groups and to inform policy development. 	2	Simon Howick	Agreed	<p>Equalities Questionnaire completed and analysis to be undertaken Workforce Plan is complete and an action plan is being developed A review timetable is in place with a list of policies/procedures to be revised The recruitment and selection Policy is part of the policy review timetable</p>	Sept 09 - March 10	<p>A number of activities have been progressed in terms of increasing the diversity of the workforce - despite the current economic climate. This includes presence at the 2011 Oxford Careers Fest, community coaching workshops, Disability Awareness "Two Ticks" accreditation, etc. We are on schedule to ensure the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 are in place which includes improved monitoring of workforce equalities strands. We have reviewed relevant policies to ensure compliance. We will not be progressing staff networks across strands as there is no desire to do this from the workforce</p>
Equality & Diversity	<p>The Authority should ensure that all staff attend the training on equality and diversity. This could be undertaken by regularly monitoring and reporting on attendance levels of staff to the Equalities Board and reiterating the importance of this training to management. With regards to the low attendance from City leisure and City works staff, discussions with heads of service should continue and an action plan should be developed to achieve higher attendance amongst these groups.</p>		Peter McQuitty	Agreed	<p>There is a corporate equality training programme in place and a commitment has been made in the Transformation Service Plan for Human Resources for 2008/9 and 2009/10. This programme will run through 2009/10. Peter Mc Quitty, Melanie Faulkner-Barrett (PPC) and Andy Davice (HR). An action Plan for City Works and City Leisure will be developed to ensure that it is flexible to meet the needs of the service. Colin Bailey (CW), Ian Brooke (CL), Melanie Faulkner-Barrett (PPC) and Andy Davice (HR).</p>	30/06/2009	<p>Garnett Foundation delivered six workshops (8-10th November 2010) on the revised theme of "Delivering Excellent Customer service: Getting It Right First Time". Scenarios and format were rewritten after input from the E&D Business Partner and with live examples provided by Customer Services. Objective: a solution focused approach to provide OCC with actions to consider regarding policy and practice. Jarlath Brine & Kerry Walker will be holding a feed forward meeting with the Garnett Foundation on December 8th 2010 to discuss further revisions and to plan six more sessions between February-April 2011. Jarlath Brine will also be liaising with Mark Preston and Angela Loveday over the diversity element within the Corporate Induction (ongoing).</p>
Equality & Diversity	<p>The CES should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.</p>	Medium	Peter McQuitty	Agreed	<p>It is agreed that the CES will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to take into account legislative changes. Monitoring reports will be completed by Melanie Faulkner-Barrett and sent to the Equalities Board. Daniel Rawstorne (Legal) and Simon Howick (HR) will update the legislative changes. August 2009 and March 2010 Melanie Faulkner-Barrett will update the CES. Peter Mc Quitty and Melanie Faulkner-Barrett. Monthly reports issued from May 2009. Quarterly reports from July 2009. In addition we have also made a commitment in the Transformation Service Plan for PPC that we will, 'Collate and evidence all the work undertaken from August 2008 to March 2009 and issue an annual report'.</p>	31/05/2009	<p>Provisional work has been started on reviewing the strategic equality needs and to anticipate any changes required when the current CES will be refreshed in 2011. The Equality Act 2010 will have a significant influence as will the priorities of the new coalition government which are still unclear (90% of the Equality Act came into force in October 2010 but modifications are happening regularly, e.g. the cancelling of the public sector socio economic duty w/c 15th November 2010). The impact of the CSR is also likely to influence council priorities.</p>

Equality & Diversity	The Authority should include references to equality and diversity within the terms of reference of its partnership agreements. In addition, the Authority should obtain evidence from its partners that their policies are being implemented and are effective.	Medium	Peter McQuitty	Agreed	We have made a commitment in the Transformation Service Plan for Policy, Performance and Communications. Which include an equalities element Terms of Reference for the Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP). Peter McQuitty, Val Johnson, Sebastian Johnson, Melanie Faulkner-Barrett and the Equalities Board. 30th June 2009 Also we will set up a directory and database of community groups in the city. Peter McQuitty, Val Johnson (City Development), Hamera Plume, (PPC), Fiona Colcutt (PPC) and Melanie Faulkner-Barrett (PPC) and the Equalities Board. 31st October 2009 Once the website on equalities is updated, we will reference all our partners and the work that they undertake to help us deliver our Action Plan Val Johnson (City Development), Shey Cobley (PPC), Hamera Plume, (PPC), Fiona Colcutt (PPC) and Melanie Faulkner-Barrett (PPC) and the Equalities Board. 30th June 2009	30/06/2009		All grants allocation applicants are monitored for their equality and diversity statements and constitutions. Ongoing but subject to incorporating changes in legislative direction- COMPLETED
Equality & Diversity	The Authority should ensure that: • the database is updated on a monthly basis by the policy team; • equality impact assessments are included for monitoring within the database system; and • service level objectives, once set, should also be monitored through this system.	Medium	Danny Woodhouse	Agreed	Corvu is the corporate performance management system and this will be used to monitor all the equality targets. All the Transformation Service Plans include an Equalities Action Plan which will be monitored by PPC in partnership with the Heads of Service. Information will be collated on a monthly basis from all the service areas to assess the delivery of their action plan and impact assessments. The traffic light system will be used in monthly reports to demonstrate progress, i.e. red, amber and green. This information will be collated by PPC. All Heads of Service, Danny Woodhouse (PPC), Shajaat Hussain (PPC), Fiona Colcutt (PPC) and Melanie Faulkner- Barrett (PPC). Reports will be issued at the beginning of every month for the previous month.	03/02/2009		Performance management data is monitored by People and Equalities - COMPLETED
Equality & Diversity	The Authority should ensure there are processes in place which allow service areas to share good practice. For example: • identify progress of service areas and compare against each other; • introduce timescales to measure progress; • discuss and monitor progress of service areas at the Wider Leadership Meetings; and • take rectification of action, as appropriate.	Medium	Simon Howick	Agreed	The equalities section that is in the transformation Service Plans are all undergoing an internal review. These plans will be monitored every month to assess progress and will then be discussed at the Directorate meeting with the Strategic Directors. This information will be reported quarterly to the Performance Board. There will also be an equalities item on the Wider Leadership Meetings. Peter Sloman, Mel Barrett, Tim Sadler and all the Heads of Service. Melanie Faulkner-Barrett will collate the monitoring information and update the action plan for circulation Reports will be issued at the beginning of every month for the previous month.	03/02/2009		IIP best practice is shared across service areas. The Employee Charter and Competency Framework include clearly defined equalities expectations. E&D Business Partner is producing a series of tool box talks covering equalities, diversity and customer service that can be presented at team meetings and for wider management teams.
Equality & Diversity	The Authority should ensure complaints are monitored with respect to equality and diversity, and any trends are highlighted and appropriate actions are taken. With regards to customer complaints, the newly introduced CRM system should be utilised.	Medium	Mike Newman	Agreed	The corporate complaints form will be updated to reflect the need to collate and analyse the equalities data. The CRM system will be utilised at OCH to capture this data. Michael Newman (Corporate Secretariat), Romina Peddis (Transformation) and Melanie Faulkner-Barrett. 31st March 2009	31/03/2009		The gap remains that complaints received via the telephone may not necessarily be easy to monitor in terms of equalities. The majority of complaints come in the form of correspondence and not via the formal complaints form and there is no evidence to suggest that any group has been disadvantaged in terms of access to or receipt of OCC services.
Equality & Diversity	The Authority should ensure that the website is kept up to date with progress on equality and diversity objectives.	Medium	Peter McQuitty	Agreed	The internet and intranet will be updated to reflect the progress on the CES. Peter McQuitty, Melanie Faulkner-Barrett (PPC), Lynne Hooper (CD) and Jarlath Brine (OCH). 31st march 2009	31/03/2009		The content of the external website has seen some updates but still requires further review to reflect recent work. Raise a concern that money is no longer available for the Shaw Trust to monitor the accessibility of the website in light of a recent e-accessibility initiative launched by the coalition government (www.fixtheweb.net). Note that there are an estimated six million disabled and older users in the UK but many sites continue to cause problems for them, and it is also estimated that only 19% of websites meet minimum standards for access.
Income, Fees and Charges - to Audit cttee 24 Sep 2009								

R1	The Council should produce an incomes strategy – agreed deadline November 2008. The strategy should clarify what the Council wants to achieve through charging and describe how income generation is to be used to support corporate priorities.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	The Council's Executive Board approved the Income, Fees and Charges Strategy on the 20 May 2009. The strategy was also approved by full Council on the 13 July 2009. The Council has complied with the requirements of the recommendation apart the fact that it did not meet the deadline of November 2008. It is too early to say how successfully it will be applied.	31/03/2009	The Medium Term Financial Strategy was approved by the Council's Executive Board in September 2008, which defined the Council's Corporate Income Targets for the year ahead. The Income, Fees and Charges Strategy was approved on the 20 May 2009 by the Council's Executive Board and this was confirmed by full Council on the 13 July 2009. This newly approved strategy outlines that the Council will need to review all charges mainly as part of the budget review for 2010/11, although some high priority services have already been investigated. The strategy outlines that the Council will target discounts to low income groups to provide access to services and also will look at peak time additional charges in terms of setting charge levels amongst a range of initiatives.	COMPLETED
R2	The strategy should cover a minimum period of three years.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	No written confirmation has been given within the Income Strategy of the three-year review but all documents are linked to the Corporate Plan which is for 2008-2011.	31/03/2009	The Income Strategy has no covering dates but in a meeting on the 24 March 2009 the Audit Commission were informed that the Council is looking at a three-year review of the strategy.	COMPLETED
R3	Councillors of all parties should be closely involved with formulating the strategy.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	Documented minutes of these meetings need to be retained to ensure that outcomes are recorded and monitored.	31/03/2009	The Cross Party Working Group of all members continues meets, but there are no minutes of this group so it was hard to see how they had influenced the strategy.	COMPLETED
R4	The strategy should be based on extensive consultation with residents and customers.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	Whilst various surveys with residents and customers have taken place such as the Talkback and Online Surveys these appeared to have largely focused on the Council's priorities rather than the alignment of the fees and charges strategy. These surveys were largely carried out by the recommended target date, although some of the feedback has come in early 2009. The Council have shown that they have adopted appropriate feedback into the fees and charges strategy agreed on the 20 May 2009. However, extensive consultation has not taken place in respect of fees and charges.	31/03/2009	Various surveys were held with residents and customers.	COMPLETED
R5	It should re-visit the principles referred to in the July 2007 report to the Cross Party Group.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	This recommendation has not been fully implemented. Whilst some charges have been visited as part of the Service Transformation Plans, the major bulk of income, fees and charges will be visited in the budget setting process for 2010/11.	31/03/2009	The Council's Corporate strategy, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, was to move towards charging full cost for services in trading areas, which has yet to be fully realised. An Oxford Slice card has been implemented to offer discounts to people on benefits.	COMPLETED
R6	It should define corporate income targets for future years linked to the medium term financial strategy.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	This is within the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy.	31/03/2009	The Council within the Medium Term Financial Strategy has provided a framework for different inflation levels for different services. It has also defined a commitment within the Strategy of moving towards charging full costs for services in trading areas, introducing an Oxford card to give residents a discount over visitors and targeting discounts to low income groups to provide access to services.	COMPLETED
R7	The strategy should describe how corporate income targets are to be used to coordinate future price changes.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	The approved Strategy advises that the annual budget review will control this process, with the aim of charging full cost for services.	31/03/2009	The Income Strategy states that future price changes will largely be controlled through an annual budget review with the aim of charging full cost for services, starting in 2010/11 although some services have already been reviewed separately or through the Service Transformation Programme.	COMPLETED

R8	The Council should ensure that income generation policies and practices support the delivery of corporate priorities by clarifying the rationale and purpose of charging for specific services.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	Whilst this was not done by the targeted deadline of November or December 2008 a standard template was approved by The Council's Executive Board on the 20 May 2009. This template appears to meet the requirements of the recommendation but has yet to be tested against the full spectrum of fees and charges.	31/12/2008	The Council has introduced a standard template to be fully utilised from the next annual budget setting process in 2010/11 which asks a number of questions when the review of all fees and charges are considered in the annual budget setting review. These appear to meet the requirements of the 'Positively Charged' Report previously published by the Audit Commission and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is the charge set by statute, and if so how much; • is the level of charge based on full recovery; does the service undertake benchmarking and other comparative costing work; • has the charge been the subject of an individual report to the Council; • what concessions are given, and why; • what marketing does the service undertake; • has the service customers been subject to consultation; and • what corporate objectives does the charge meet. 	COMPLETED
R9	The Council should ensure that income generation policies and practices support the delivery of corporate priorities by actively using charging levels to promote service use or modify customer behaviour.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	The Income Strategy was only approved in May 2009 and the challenge of the vast majority of fees and charges has yet to be done. The Council does not as yet appear to offer cheaper access to all service users on Benefits, but does offer additional discounts for holders of the Oxford City Council Bonus Slice Card to Leisure Services which have been introduced as part of the agreement on the Leisure Tender. There does not appear to be higher charges for peak time use as yet.	31/12/2008	The Council has included this within the standard template, which will be used to challenge all current fees and charges when they are reviewed in 2010/11 as part of the annual budget setting process although specific services may be done earlier through the Service Transformation Plans. These include considering offering concessionary discounts to service users on Benefits and considering charging extra for peak time service users.	COMPLETED
R10	The Council should consider opportunities to increase income such as Bulky waste collection.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	This recommendation in the previous Audit Commission report on Income, Fees and Charges was not accepted by the Council. However, it is now being reviewed.	31/03/2009	The Council has taken a policy decision not to implement a charge for Bulky Waste Collection.	COMPLETED
R11	The Council should identify opportunities to increase income such as pre-application planning advice.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	The recommendation was acted upon in a later than planned timeframe. Following consultation the Council used a 'spend to save' project in Feb to Mar 09 to make improvements to the service and charges themselves have been levied since May 09.	31/03/2009	The Council accepted this recommendation and approved a number of charges for pre planning advice. Following consultation, though, planning agents informed them that they would like to see the service improved before such charges were introduced.	COMPLETED
R12	The Council should identify opportunities to increase income such as charging for smaller car parks.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	This has not met the timetable recommended but it is acknowledged that the Council has started to implement although further work is required.	31/03/2009	The Council has introduced charges at the Hinksey Car Park in 2009/10. If you use the swimming pool there you get your money back. Walton Car Park charges just introduced. Working through the other car parks.	COMPLETED
R13	The Council should identify opportunities to increase income such as charging for improved marketing of services.	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	The Council has not met this recommendation, although the impact of the current economic climate may impact upon improved marketing.	31/03/2009	The Council has done some marketing in the Town Hall but little else although it is acknowledged that the current economic climate may impact upon this.	COMPLETED
R14	The Council should identify opportunities to increase income such as sponsorship and advertising (litter bins, car parks and public conveniences).	not applicable	Penny Gardner/Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	The Council has not met this recommendation, although they have just started advertising in the last two editions of 'Your Oxford'. Also the impact of the current economic climate may impact upon improved sponsorship and advertising.	31/03/2009	No opportunities have been identified yet apart from just starting to advertise in the last two editions of 'Your Oxford'.	COMPLETED

R15	The Council should ensure that the budget setting process for 2010/11 supports the use of income objectives consistently, to ensure the delivery of corporate priorities by: - ensuring that the rationale and purpose of charging for each specific service meets a consistent and standard challenge, and - actively using charging levels to promote service use or modify customer behaviour such as introducing peak hour charges for popular services and offering discounts more openly to service users on low incomes		Martin Westmoreland	Agreed	Budget process well underway. Audit of current fees and charges included in Service in information packs. First intended budget reviews week commencing Sept 7th.	31/03/2009		COMPLETED
R16	The Council should develop the opportunities identified previously to introduce income based on the Council approved priorities. Examples include: - bulky waste collection; - charging for smaller car parks across the Council; - improved marketing of services, and - sponsorship and advertising (litter bins, car parks and public conveniences)		Martin Westmoreland	Agreed	The Council continues to introduce new fees and charges where appropriate. It doesn't agree with the examples listed here.	31/03/2009		COMPLETED
R17	The Council should develop a consistent approach to setting income, fees and charges in a timely manner. This includes: - formal reporting of all decisions made by officers or elected members especially those affecting the level of charge - minutes taken of all relevant meetings, and - producing a project timetable and ensuring that it is monitored, taking action as appropriate		Martin Westmoreland	Agreed	Fees & charges are being reviewed explicitly as part of the budget process. The fees & charges of the Council will be agreed as part of the budget approval.	31/03/2009		COMPLETED

Asset Management Progress Review - to Audit Cttee 27 Apr 2010

R1	Provide a corporate challenge to the size, form, mix and distribution of the current asset base through the continuation of its programme of property reviews of assets. (GREEN)	H	Steve Sprason/Keith Jones		The development of the strategic Asset Management Plan will include for high level challenge of the portfolio together with two pilot area based reviews. The intention is to establish a rolling programme of area based reviews on a prioritised basis. At the same time the Council is embarking on a strategic review of its markets.	27/04/2010		Asset Management Plan currently being refreshed for 2011-2013, including new Action Plan (which will incorporate HRA assets). Draft AMP will be circulated for consultation April 2011 and then formally consulted on prior to adaptation by Full Council.
R2	Ensure that the strategic plans for assets fully encompass the aims of the Council, and the long-term business plans of the service departments and those of its partners.(GREEN)	H	Steve Sprason/Keith Jones		Work of developing the Strategic Plan for Property and the preparation of a new Asset Management Plan has already commenced. This will fully encompass these requirements.	27/04/2010		Asset Management Plan currently being refreshed for 2011-2013, including new Action Plan (which will incorporate HRA assets). Draft AMP will be circulated for consultation April 2011 and then formally consulted on prior to adaptation by Full Council.
R3	Engage with the County Council and other local service providers on long term strategic asset management. (AMBER)	Medium	Steve Sprason/Keith Jones		It is proposed that the work as set out in R1 and R2 above will encompass a mapping of other public sector ownerships in the OCC administrative boundaries. It would be hoped to incrementally embrace those other public sector providers in the Strategic Asset Management agenda.	27/04/2010		Collaborative Asset Management group set up in the County incorporating all Partner Organisations. Meeting quarterly. Initiative launched to map-assets onto an GIS overlay to enable area based reviews.
R4	Build capacity to manage the asset base strategically. (GREEN)	H	Steve Sprason		The Council has already determined to create a corporate Property & Facilities Management function. Initially this will draw together property and asset management activities, repairs and maintenance, surveying and engineering activities and certain Facilities Management functions including Cleaning and Caretaking. Phase 2 will encompass a broader review of property and construction related activities within the Authority including proposals to develop Strategic Asset Management capacity.	27/04/2010		Property and Facilities Management restructured to form Corporate Assets, with the overall strategic responsibility for the General Fund and HRA assets. Facilities Management Review underway to design and implement a Integrated Facilities Management model for City Centre office buildings with the capability to roll out to the wider portfolio.
R5	Involve area committees in strategic asset management. (GREEN)	Medium	Steve Sprason		Area Committees already have delegated to them responsibility for the strategic management of Community Centres, Parks etc. Processes will be put in place to engage with Area Committees in relation to the Council's wider portfolios and in the development of property related policies and procedures.	27/04/2010		Refreshed AMP will be consulted on with new Neighbourhood Forums prior to formal adoption.

R6	Clarify plans for improving the condition of the property assets. (GREEN)	Medium	Steve Sprason/John Bellenger		The confirmation of the Strategic Asset Management Plan will bring greater clarity to short, medium and long-term investment and disinvestment decisions.	27/04/2010		Asset Management Plan currently being refreshed for 2011-2013, including new Action Plan (which will incorporate HRA assets). Draft AMP will be circulated for consultation April 2011 and then formally consulted on prior to adaptation by Full Council. The Council has agreed the allocation of £7m to fund a prioritised planned maintenance programme for all general fund assets covering the period 2011-2015
R7	Make investment decisions that encompass the costs, risks and benefits over the whole-life of the asset. (NOT ASSESSED)	Medium	Steve Sprason			27/04/2010		Strategy and Resources board no longer exists, Corporate Asset Management Group will take on this responsibility
R8	Continue to expand its knowledge about the fitness for purpose and value for money of its assets (AMBER)	Medium	Steve Sprason		Proposals are being developed to migrate to the CAPS Uniform property management system that will greatly assist in drawing together existing disparate sources of property data. Suitability surveys will be commissioned and property considerations will be integrated into service planning.	27/04/2010		As part of the roll out of planned maintenance proposals full condition surveys will be undertaken from April 2011. Suitability assessments are in progress in relation to discrete property categories e.g. community centres, as part of developing our approach to community asset transfer.
R9	Clarify its approach to the balance between profit and loss on the commercial estate. (AMBER)	Medium	Steve Sprason		A "profit centre" approach will be established in respect of discrete property portfolios eg City Centre Retail, Agricultural etc so as to be able to allocate expenditure, including costs of management against income.	27/04/2010		Business Process Improvement (BPI) workshops were undertaken between August-November 2011, to identify and map out the process of income and expenditure within the Investment Portfolio. Recommendations will be formulated and presented by July 2011.
R10	Establish a set of performance indicators that measure the contribution property makes to corporate performance management practices. (AMBER)	Medium	Steve Sprason		The strategic work referred to in R2 above will include high level proposals for the future performance management of the Council's property portfolio. We will immediately be looking to develop key corporate indicators in relation to capital receipts, revenue income etc that will be reported on a regular basis to the Corporate Performance Board.	27/04/2010		Performance indicators have been agreed and form part of Corporate Assets Service Plan. We now contribute to the CIPFA national indicators
R11	Set targets that stretch the Council to improve value for money from its property. (AMBER)	Medium	Steve Sprason		These will be developed in conjunction with R10 above.	27/04/2010		Performance indicators have been agreed and form part of Corporate Assets Service Plan.
R12	Expand the benchmarking of the performance of the property portfolio against other service providers.(AMBER)	Medium	Steve Sprason		The Council has joined the IPF Asset Management Planning Network and will look to develop benchmarking activities through that forum. Additionally, an intention to subscribe to ACES (Association of Chief Estate Surveyors and Property Managers in the Public Sector) with a view to identifying local networking and benchmarking activities.	27/04/2010		Corporate Assets provide data into the CIPFA benchmark indicators.
R13	Undertake regular monitoring and reporting of performance (AMBER)	Medium	Steve Sprason		We will look to develop formal consultation process with internal; customers and occupiers of our buildings as part of the delivery of property services, business planning activities and service Asset Management planning.	27/04/2010		Corporate Assets will look to develop a premises questionnaire, which is in scope for the FM Review currently underway.
R14	Use feedback, compliments and complaints information from occupiers and visitors to buildings to identify improvements. (AMBER)	Medium	Steve Sprason		In addition to the high level reporting to Corporate Performance Board referred to above we will look to develop regular performance reporting to CEB and senior management.	27/04/2010		Corporate Assets will look to develop a premises questionnaire, which is in scope for the FM Review currently underway. Corporate assets are part of the Council's corporate complaints, comments, compliments procedure. There is now regular reporting through the corporate asset management group and to corporate management team
R15	Use the scrutiny function to challenge and review the performance of the asset base. (GREEN)	Medium	Steve Sprason		We will look to build scrutiny challenge into both strategy development and property challenge/review.	27/04/2010		Asset Management Plan currently being refreshed will use the scrutiny function as part of the process of consultation and adoption. Scrutiny also regularly get involved in asset based projects e.g. offices for the future.
Triennial Review of Internal Audit - to Audit cttee 15 Jul 2010								
R1	The Charter should make the role of Internal Audit (IA) more explicit in any consultancy work. (1.1.1g)		Chris Dickens			15/07/2010		COMPLETED

R2	Oxford City Council's Fraud and Corruption Policy should state that IA will be notified of all suspected or detected fraud, corruption or impropriety rather than may be informed of frauds. (1.4.2)		Carol Quainton			15/07/2010		COMPLETED
R3	IA should develop a comprehensive set of targets to measure performance: i. which are developed in consultation with each Council; ii. Which are included in service level agreements, where appropriate; and iii. Against which the Head of Internal Audit measures, monitors and reports appropriately on progress A periodic review of the service against the strategy and the achievement of its aims and objectives should be introduced (11.3.2)		Chris Dickens			15/07/2010		COMPLETED
Interim Memo - to Audit cttee 23 Sep 2010								
R1	Ensure we find a mutually convenient time to undertake the walkthrough and controls testing of systems in 2010/11.		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		All walkthrough and interim audit work has now been completed, and all officers were available at appropriate times
R2	Ensure internal audit work is completed before the end of the financial year to which it relates.		Nigel Kennedy	Agreed		31/03/2011		The final internal audit reports are now being finalised, and External Audit have had sight of all final reports to ensure their interim work is fulfilled
R3	Ensure controls are evidenced.		Nigel Kennedy	Agreed	Evidence of the operation of controls is not retained. For example depreciation is calculated automatically by the system and sample checked no evidence of this check was available	31/03/2011		All working papers and workings will be checked and evidence of these checks will be in place as part of the closedown process
R4	Ensure all journals are reviewed and authorised by a different officer prior to input.		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		There is a new journal procedure in place and all journals are now approved prior to input and additional sample checks are carries out on a monthly basis
R5	Ensure reconciliations are carried out in accordance with agreed timetables.		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		All reconciliations are upto date and are now monitored on a monthly basis to ensure all items are investigated on a timely basis
R6	Ensure this difference is investigated and resolved by 23rd September 2010.		Anna Winship	Agreed	This is in relation to the bank reconciliation as at 31st March 2010. Officers have spend considerable time on resolving the issues and demonstrating that there is only a small difference	31/03/2011		Bank reconciliations are completed on a monthly basis and all differences are investigated on a timely basis
R7	When documentation is archived care should be taken to ensure that it can subsequently be retrieved.		Anna Winship	Agreed	The council has written to the archiving company requesting a different method of cataloguing	31/03/2011		This is in relation to retrieving paid invoices once they have been scanned. We have contact the company and now hope to have a better methodology for this going forward
R8	Ensure the fleetplan reconciliation is reviewed and signed as evidence of that review. Provide source documentation to help the review.		Paul Jemetta	Agreed		31/03/2011		The fleetplan reconciliation are reviewed and this is now evidenced.
R9	Ensure that the housing rents reconciliation is reviewed and signed as evidence of that review.		Susan Smart	Agreed		31/03/2011		The Housing Rents reconciliation is now reviewed and evidenced
R10	Ensure bank reconciliations are clear in layout.		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		The layout of the bank reconciliation has now been changed to ensure clarity and ease of understanding
R11	Ensure review of Housing Benefit parameter input is evidenced.		Pauline Hull	Agreed		31/03/2011		This is now in place
R12	Ensure review of new HB assessors work is evidenced.		Pauline Hull	Agreed		31/03/2011		This is now in place
R13	Ensure review of the reconciliation of Academy to Agresso are evidenced.		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		reconciliations are reviewed and evidenced, however some of this evidence is electronic, but has been agreed as acceptable
R14	Ensure evidence of payroll nominal role checks is kept and available for audit.		Sean Hoskins	Agreed		31/03/2011		This is now being completed and will be available for future audits
R15	Ensure review of the reconciliation of car parking money received to the bank/general ledger is evidenced.		Denise Sheppard	Agreed		31/03/2011		reconciliations are reviewed and evidenced, however some of this evidence is electronic, but has been agreed as acceptable
R16	Agree an amount under which differences between cash collection and audit tickets are not investigated.		Andrew Bradfield-Barns	Agreed		31/03/2011		A limit of £10 has been set, but in the case of a pattern emerging then further investigation will be carried out regardless of the value

Audit Opinion Memo - Oct 2010, agreed with finance team 14 Jan 2011

R1	The Council should provide a listing of the debtors/creditors at year end and income/expenditure for the year under audit to enable us to pick items included in the balance in the financial statements		Anna Winship	Agreed		01/07/2011		It has been agreed that on the 1st April a full listing of ledger transactions will be provided to the DA to enable them to pick their sample in preparation for their time on site
R2	Rather than evidence prepared by a member of staff, keep and produce evidence for transactions from external sources where possible		Anna Winship	Agreed		01/07/2011		this has been acknowledged and highlighted as part of the working paper requirements for all staff and responsible officers. Throughout the closedown process this will be reviewed to ensure working papers are adequate
R3	Rather than ledger prints, keep and produce evidence for transactions from external sources where possible		Anna Winship	Agreed	as previous recommendation	31/03/2011		this has been acknowledged and highlighted as part of the working paper requirements for all staff and responsible officers. Throughout the closedown process this will be reviewed to ensure working papers are adequate
R4	Ensure final working papers provided for audit support the relevant year's figures in the Accounts		Anna Winship	Agreed		01/04/2011		this has been acknowledged and highlighted as part of the working paper requirements for all staff and responsible officers. Throughout the closedown process this will be reviewed to ensure working papers are adequate
R5	For journal and some creditor testing, keep supporting information to confirm validity of transactions rather than needing to go back to the originator		Anna Winship	Agreed	The time taken to respond to audit queries was delayed because working papers were kept in the service areas	31/03/2011		All working papers will be kept electronically and they have been requested to be returned to Management Accountants to ensure that they are adequate and immediately available. This process will be reviewed throughout the closedown process
R6	Ensure enough resources are in place to answer audit queries quickly		Anna Winship	Agreed		01/07/2011		Adequate resources will be available throughout closedown and the audit period. The audit will be carried out between 1st July and mid August
R7	Make the published budgetary information more informative to the general reader by explaining how it is produced, what assumptions are used and provide explanations for changes and how they reconcile to the financial statements produced by the Council		Martin Westmoreland	Agreed		31/03/2011		These recommendations will be incorporated within the budget book process for 2011/12
R8	Ensure revenue transactions are not confused with balance sheet ones		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		All entries and working papers will be reviewed as part of the closedown process
R9	Review all rent deposit amounts to ensure they are accurate		Anna Winship	Agreed	One of the rent deposits that was tested was found to be held at the wrong value	31/03/2011		A full review will be undertaken of these deposits as part of the closedown process
R10	Approve appropriations from reserves		Martin Westmoreland	Agreed	The Council do not currently approve appropriations to or from reserves.	31/03/2011		An approval process has now been initiated, and all transfers to and from reserves need to be approved accordingly
R11	Ensure NNDR figure in the Accounts agrees to receipts in the financial year.		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		NNDR reconciliations will be fully upto date and all items outstanding explained at the year end
R12	Ensure the Council tax refund and cash reconciliations do not need balancing items		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		Council tax cash and refund reconciliations are upto date, there are some small outstanding items which need to be resolved prior to year end
R13	Ask the valuer for the useful life of each asset in years		Richard Hawkes	Agreed		31/03/2011		The instructions provided to the valuers has included the request for UEL for all assets
R14	Ensure all income for the relevant financial year is recorded in the Accounts		Denise Sheppard	Agreed		31/03/2011		As part of the closedown process the cash collected will be posted to the correct periods
R15	Ensure the Service expenditure analysis complies with the latest BVACOP		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		As part of the closedown process the SerCOP analysis will be reviewed to ensure this is accurate
R16	Ensure timely payroll reconciliations are undertaken		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		Payroll reconciliations are now upto date and a items are identified and investigated on a timely basis
R17	Ensure the year end debtors control account reconciliation includes all relevant transactions		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		As part of the closedown process, this will be completed and we will ensure that the reconciliation is fully balanced
R18	Ensure evidence is kept to support the useful life of assets		Richard Hawkes	Agreed		31/03/2011		The instructions provided to the valuers has included the request for UEL for all assets
R19	Ensure any liabilities raised are the Council's responsibility		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		All entries and working papers will be reviewed as part of the closedown process
R20	Ensure all income is accurately recorded in the Accounts		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		All entries and working papers will be reviewed as part of the closedown process

R21	A written agreement should be put in place between Oxford Citizens Housing Association and the City Council to avoid any disputes on recoverability		Graham Stratford	Agreed		31/03/2011		An informal agreement is in place.
R22	Ensure evidence of all expenditure incurred in the financial year is recorded		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		All entries and working papers will be reviewed as part of the closedown process
R23	Ensure creditors and debtors are classified correctly		Anna Winship	Agreed		31/03/2011		All entries and working papers will be reviewed as part of the closedown process
R24	The fleet charges incurred by Oxford City Homes to be allocated to various cost centres should be recalculated based on current cost information		Martin Westmoreland	Agreed		31/03/2011		The recharges have been reviewed as part of the budget setting process for 11/12

Annual Audit Letter - to Audit cttee 22 Nov 2010

R1	Continue the work to improve fixed asset accounting and management with Finance and Estates working together		Anna Winship	Agreed	Asset valuations disclosed on the balance sheet were correct. There was not an error of £4.6m; this was just a mistreatment on disclosure note 6.12. A 100% review of asset lives has been undertaken and, where necessary, corrected.	22/11/2010		Reconciliations between asset systems are being carried out on a quarterly basis. In the past year new procedures have been instigated to improve fixed asset management, including closer liaison with other teams within the Council (eg Community Housing), improving property records (eg the change note procedures), and the continuing Voluntary Registration Process which involves checking existing OCC property records against the new titles that are being created. These are ongoing
R2	Improve bank reconciliation procedures to address the issues we have reported		Anna Winship	Agreed	The bank reconciliation is up to date. The format of the bank has been amended during the review of the process carried out to complete the bank reconciliation. Cash receipts are allocated on a timely basis and all outstanding items are investigated and reconciled	22/11/2010		Bank reconciliations are now upto date and reviewed on a timely basis, some small, older items need to be cleared but will be done by the year end
R3	Retain evidence to support the awarding of single person discounts		Anne Harvey-Lynch	Agreed	This is now in place and checks are made with the following systems: Express Electors; HB Academy; ESP Bus Pass; I-world	22/11/2010		Checks are in place to ensure single person discount is awarded appropriately
R4	The Council obtain a record of laptop allocations and confirm their location. This information should be available to evidence the management of assets		Simon Park	Agreed	All PC and Laptop Assets recorded with user and location details	31/01/2011		All PC and Laptop Assets recorded with user and location details, and all infrastructure assets to be documented (with photographic evidence) with location details
R5	Reconcile the Whole of Government Accounts with the financial statements as soon as practicable to ensure that any variances can be readily identified		Anna Winship	Agreed		01/06/2011		This will be completed as part of the closedown process in line with the deadlines for completion of the Whole of government Accounts
R6	Evidence the operation of internal control and in particular ensure that reconciliations are signed off as evidence of the review.		Anna Winship	Agreed	Evidence of review is a key recommendation from both Audit Commission and Internal Audit. All procedure notes have been amended to include the necessity for this.	31/03/2011		Ongoing work is being undertaken to recognise all reconciliations and ensure their timely completion and review. A database is being set up and reported monthly to aid this work
R7	Include all actions in the Council's Audit Recommendation Tracker to ensure the Council monitors responses and achieves the improvements identified		Jackie Yates	Agreed		31/12/2010		The tracker is now completed and updated with management responses for each audit committee
R8	Continue to monitor implementation of IFRS		Nigel Kennedy	Agreed		01/06/2011		Updates are being reported to Audit & Governance committee on a regular basis, with full details of progress

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