

# OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

**INTERNAL AUDIT FOLLOW UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT**

**December 2018**

**Introduction**

Ahead of each Audit and Governance Committee we follow-up those recommendations raised by Internal Audit which are due for implementation. We request commentary by responsible officers on the progress to our recommendations and for those High and Medium recommendations due we verify progress to source evidence and conclude either that the recommendation is complete or incomplete.

There were **six** Mediumrecommendations due for December 2018. Please find below a summary of the **six** recommendations that were due for completion prior to the January 2019 Audit and Governance Committee. Please note that these are the six that are due for this Committee and does not mean all previous recommendations are complete. Previous recommendations may simply have a revised date that is post this Committee and therefore will be picked up at the next Committee.

* 2016-17 – One Medium recommendation has been implemented
* 2017-18 – One Medium recommendation has been implemented and another is incomplete
* 2018-19 – Two Medium recommendations have been implemented and another is incomplete

For all incomplete recommendations we will:

1. Continue to emphasise to staff to be realistic about the implementation dates when completing their management responses at the completion stage of each internal audit review
2. Issue the recommendations tracker to all the relevant Heads of services on a monthly basis from the December audit committee onwards
3. Issue reminder emails 6 weeks prior to the follow up review to ensure timely completion of each recommendation

**Flowchart of the follow up process –** below we have included a process flow chart to explain how follow up responses are obtained timescales are achieved

The charts below reference the number of recommendations due up until and including December 2018. In total there were **6** recommendations due for follow up, chart 1 demonstrates the number of recommendations due for December 2018 of which, **4** recommendations were complete.

**Please note the number of incomplete recommendations have decreased in comparison to the previous Follow up report issued in March 2018:**

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| **Month** | **No. of Recommendations incomplete** | **No. of Recommendations complete** | **% of recommendations incomplete (Incomplete/Total Recommendations)** |
| July 2018 | 7 | 11 | 39% (7/11) |
| September 2018 | 0 | 7 | 100% (7/7) |
| December 2018 | 2 | 4 | 66% (4/6) |

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| **Audit** | **Recommendation made with reference to the corresponding Internal Audit report** | **Priority Level** | **Manager Responsible** | **Head of Service** | **Original Due Date** | **Notes on Completion** |
| 2016-17  Benefits Administration | E-forms – An awareness of the need to move to e-forms is already in place within the Council yet more could be done to achieve this. Methods of increasing the number of e-forms received should be analysed. This could be through increasing the number of specific e-forms available, better advertising or through the removal paper applications forms completely as per other Councils identified through the benchmarking exercise | **M** | Tanya Bandekar | Nigel Kennedy | ~~March 2017~~  ~~January 2018~~  ~~April~~  ~~2018~~  ~~Dec 2018~~ | The Council are dependent on the ICT work plan for the ICT resource, but they have had the landlord portal live and running for several months now, so that they no longer send landlords any paper and they sign in to the portal through a Connect account to see all their details. The Team are almost at a point whereby they can allow the customer portal to go live so that they can allow customers to sign in to a connect account to view all their benefit information on line. They will be starting with a test of 25 claimants in live, they then intend to roll this out to all UC claimants first, then all others. They will then only send summary letters to customers saving paper and postage. The Council is about to procure a new CRM system and they will be using this for more on line forms, moving customers away from paper and email. They are also likely to be a pilot area for proof of concept for RPA/IA, where forms will automatically be processed on receipt. They are still awaiting approval from ICT and Corporately to move forward with the new eclaim and change of circumstances forms. They will always have paper forms for those vulnerable customers that cannot access electronic means. Customer Comms is ready to go. |
| 2017-18  Payroll | Review and update the Payroll Processing Guide with annual reviews put in place to ensure ongoing completeness and accuracy | **M** | Paul  Adam | Helen  Bishop | Oct  2018 | This has been reviewed and updated and re-communicated to relevant staff in December 2018 |
| 2018-19  Member Allowances | 1a) The Committee and Member Services Manager has already liaised with Payroll so that he can obtain monthly payroll information. It is recommended that they inspect the payroll details for a small sample of Members on a monthly basis to ensure that expected amounts are being paid  1b) The Council should decide on a course of action with regard to clawing back the overpayment  1c) It is recommended that the Constitution sets out the details regarding attendance at meetings. | **M** | Andrew  Brown | Anita  Bradley | Nov  2018 | 1a is being taken forwards as business as usual. One error - an underpayment - was spotted in October and has been resolved. These monthly checks now take place.  1b is complete and 1c is in progress however this was recently updated and being further considered regarding attendance and therefore this recommendation as a whole is considered sufficiently complete. |
| 2018-19  Member Allowances | It is recommended that the Council introduce controls to mitigate against the risk of recipients not spending the money per the approved application. Some suggestions are outlined in Appendix III.  The Council should implement a control over the amount of carry-forward permitted. Officers have proposed limiting the carry forward allowance for one year only. This is a reasonable proposal and in line with the benchmarking conducted amongst other Councils. (Appendix II) | **M** | Andrew  Brown | Anita Bradley | ~~Nov 2018~~  March 2019 | This proposal was rejected by a cross-party group of elected members and will not be a feature of the rules moving forwards. The Council has therefore decided to accept the risk identified. |

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| 2017-18  Counter Fraud | The Investigation Service should undertake a full Fraud Risk Assessment across OCC and use the results to inform the direction and resourcing of its annual work-plan. | **M** | Scott  Warner | Nigel  Kennedy | ~~June 2018~~  ~~Dec 2018~~  April 2019 | This has not progressed due to insufficient resource availability. Target date revised accordingly. |
| 2018-19  Member Allowances | 2a) Approvals from Legal and Finance should be kept for all projects, and all should be stated in a call-in email to the other Members  2b) Spot-checks on the WMB and CIL spreadsheet should be performed and documented bi-annually by the Committee and Member Services Manager to check approvals for at least 5 applications from each fund  2c) The application forms should be updated with additional questions, and the Constitution should include more detail around acceptable WMB spend. Please see Appendix I and III for guidance based on benchmarking to other Councils, and for potential updates to the application form. | **M** | Dave  Growcott | Anita Bradley | ~~Nov 2018~~  Feb 2019 | 2a) Approvals are all kept and stated and re-communication has taken place and be seen to ensure protocols are followed.  2b) This will take some time to work through and longer than estimated – we will be looking into this to set up spot-checks  2c) Currently reviewing the forms with a view to incorporate the recommendations made. |

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