

INTERNAL AUDIT FOLLOW UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

Oxford City Council

July 2021

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Summary

FOLLOW UP GOING FORWARD - BDO RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the issue of reports, all due high and medium recommendations will be followed up within this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10 recommendations are due for follow-up with recommendations due prior to the end of **June 2021**.
- Previous recommendations may simply have a revised date that is post this Committee and therefore, will be picked up at the next Committee
- We have presented the Companies Oversight recommendations in a separate report.

Of the 10 recommendations:

- One High and Five Medium recommendations have been fully implemented, notably all the Contract Management recommendations are now fully complete
- Four Medium recommendations remain incomplete (Key Financial System - Data Analytics and Planning Services) and will be followed up in October 2021.

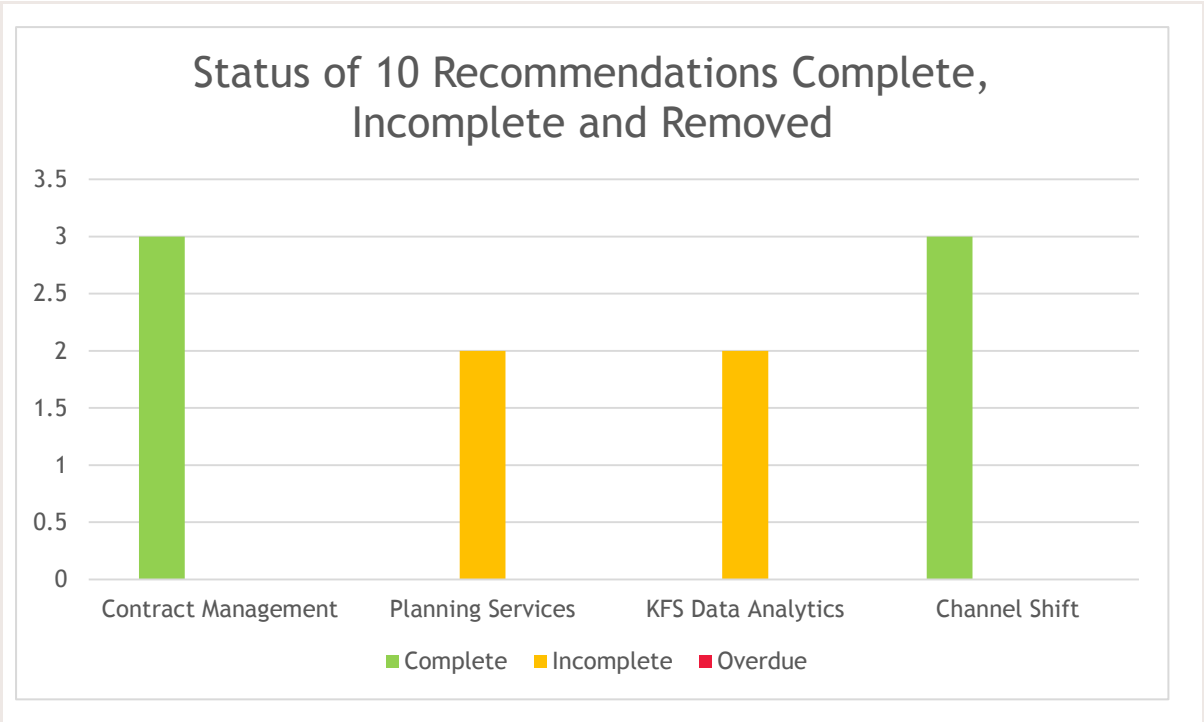
Follow up Process

As part of the follow-up process, we issued all recommendations due for implementation on or before June 2021 on 24 May 2021. Recommendations due were sent to all responsible officers and the corresponding heads of service. We gave responsible officers 6 weeks to respond. We subsequently chased officers throughout July 2021.

We are required to escalate non-responses and/or recommendations with several revised due dates to the Operational Delivery Group (ODG). We did not escalate responses to the ODG at this stage as we received all responses in a timely manner. However, recent discussions within the ODG meeting noted that the follow up tracker will be sent to the ODG for review. This is to keep all heads of services informed of the recommendations due and complete.

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



Recommendations: Complete

Audit	Recommendation made	Priority Level	Manager Responsible	Due Date	Current Progress
2019/20. Contract Management	The Contract Management Framework should be updated to reflect that KPIs are not optional and this should be communicated to all contract managers. Contract Managers should discuss how they will adapt this into their current contracts	H	Procurement Manager	30/11/2019 31/03/2020 28/02/2021 30/04/2021	<p>Council's Comments: KPIs and SLAs are now in the template procurement documents. KPIs and SLAs are captured in the new Contract Management Guidance Document and further detail will be included in the new procurement strategy in September 2022.</p> <p>IA Comments: The requirement of KPIs have been implemented across procurement documentation.</p>
2019/20. Contract Management	Annual spot-checks should be performed on a sample of contracts by the Procurement team to ensure these are in place	M	Procurement Manager	31/10/2019 31/03/2020 28/02/2021 30/04/2021	<p>Council's Comments: The first audit was completed in March with the results retained in an audit folder. These will continue to be conducted each month.</p> <p>IA Comments: Spot-checks on contracts are now being undertaken and result are retained. This is complete.</p>
2019/20. Contract Management	Spot checks should be implemented to ensure this system is in operation. Staff should be clear on where they must store results of the spot checks	M	Procurement Manager	31/10/2019 31/03/2020 28/02/2021 30/04/2021	<p>Council's Comments: Around 85 contracts have been designated to be on the "alert" list and have been activated on Experian.</p> <p>IA Comments: This recommendation is complete.</p>
2020/21. Channel Shift	Management should review the customer experience risk register and ensure that the controls currently identified on it are monitored. Progress on the implementation of each control identified should be	M	Head of Business Improvement	30/06/2021	<p>Council's Comments: Customer Experience risk register reviewed and will be reviewed each quarter as part of corporate risk register.</p> <p>IA Comments:</p>

	reviewed on at least a quarterly basis				We reviewed the customer experience risk register and noted this was up to date and due dates were set up until March 2022. The register is reviewed quarterly therefore this recommendation is complete
2020/21. Channel Shift	Any new risks associated with the Customer Experience Strategy should be added to the risk register. Any risks that have been raised on the CorVu system should also be added to the risk register to ensure there is a single document that can be used for risk management purposes	M	Head of Business Improvement	30/06/2021	<p>Council's Comments: New risks associated with the customer experience strategy have been included on the risk register and due dates have been set as far back as March 2022. The risks have been uploaded to the Cor-Vu register too</p> <p>IA Comments: We reviewed the customer experience risk register and noted this included emerging risks on customer experience strategy. The risks also appeared on the Corvu risk register therefore we are satisfied that this action has been implemented.</p>
2020/21. Channel Shift	Cost savings plans for the channel shift project as a whole should be developed to allow for regular monitoring of actual savings versus expected savings. This should be reported to management or another appropriate group such as the Corporate Transformation Board. All Projects that feed into the channel shift savings should be monitored by the responsible service area on a regular basis and reported into the overall channel shift saving targets	M	Head of Financial Services	30/06/2021	<p>Council's Comments: Savings are tracked from transformation projects through monthly meetings of the Transformation Board chaired by the CEO. The savings from channel shift are mainly arising from improvements in processing of housing benefit and council tax that have been incorporated into changes in administration of council tax reduction scheme CTRS and also the implementation of the new Revenues and Benefits system, Civica. The specific savings which are on track to be made for this year are in staffing in the Contact Centre and Housing Benefits.</p>

		<p>IA Comments: We obtained evidence of the savings spreadsheet and confirmed that these have been tracked based on the investment in Civica.</p>
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Audit	Recommendation made	Priority Level	Manager Responsible	Due Date	Current Progress
2020/21. Key Financial Systems Data Analytics	<p>Accounts Payable: Ref 2.2</p> <p>We matched the creditor references for all transactions to the creditor references in the list of suppliers and identified four which did not match.</p> <p>Management Response:</p> <p>These will be investigated further to understand why they were created in the system.</p>	M	Management Accounting Manager	28/02/2021 31/05/2021 31/10/2021	<p>Council's Comments:</p> <p>A v-fire request was raised with IT for this however there is a backlog of requests and therefore this case has not yet been investigated.</p> <p>IA Comments:</p> <p>We will follow up this recommendation in October 2021</p>
2020/21. Key Financial Systems Data Analytics	<p>Accounts Payable: Ref 2.4</p> <p>We ran a duplicate match for supplier bank details and identified a total of 149 suppliers with duplicate bank details to at least one other entry.</p> <p>Management Response:</p> <p>We will undergo a cleansing process and closedown accounts no longer in use however there was no fraudulent activity suspected.</p>	M	Management Accounting Manager	28/02/2021 31/05/2021 31/10/2021	<p>Council's Comments:</p> <p>Due to pressures faced with the new QL system, progress has not been made against this recommendation and will be made in October when our new apprentice joins</p> <p>IA Comments:</p> <p>We will follow up this recommendation in October 2021</p>
2020/21. Planning Services	<p>The Validation Strategy and the Action plan should be formally reviewed, updated and shared with staff as part of the monitoring process</p>	M	Development Management Services Manager	30/06/2021	<p>Council's Comments:</p> <p>The validation strategy is in its final stage of review. It has had to be amended to reflect the changes to policy in the Oxford Local Plan 2036. The amended document is being reviewed by some of our specialists. We have also updated some of the other documents linked to the validation strategy.</p> <p>IA Comments:</p> <p>We will follow up this recommendation in October 2021</p>
2020/21. Planning	<p>Action plans should be allocated to the relevant</p>	M	Development Management	30/06/2021	<p>Council's Comments:</p>

Recommendations: In Progress

<p>Services</p> <p>responsible officers and realistic timescales should be allocated against each action</p>		<p>Services Manager</p> <p>The Action Plan 2019-2020 already had actions allocated to officers. A number of work streams were identified and passed to working groups to implement changes. These have been completed - paperlite project for example, and recently changes to the new website have gone live to make the website more user friendly. So they have been completed. The work on the pre-app service is ongoing but was put on pause due as a result of covid. That project team have started outlining how to progress this project and this will continue. The Action Plan itself is due to change with a new round of service planning in its early stages and that is underway at the present time across all services. Therefore there will be further changes. So the team are currently working on completing these work streams from the previous plan.</p> <p>IA Comments:</p> <p>We will follow up this recommendation in October 2021</p>
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