

INTERNAL AUDIT FOLLOW UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

61 Oxford City Council
2022/2023

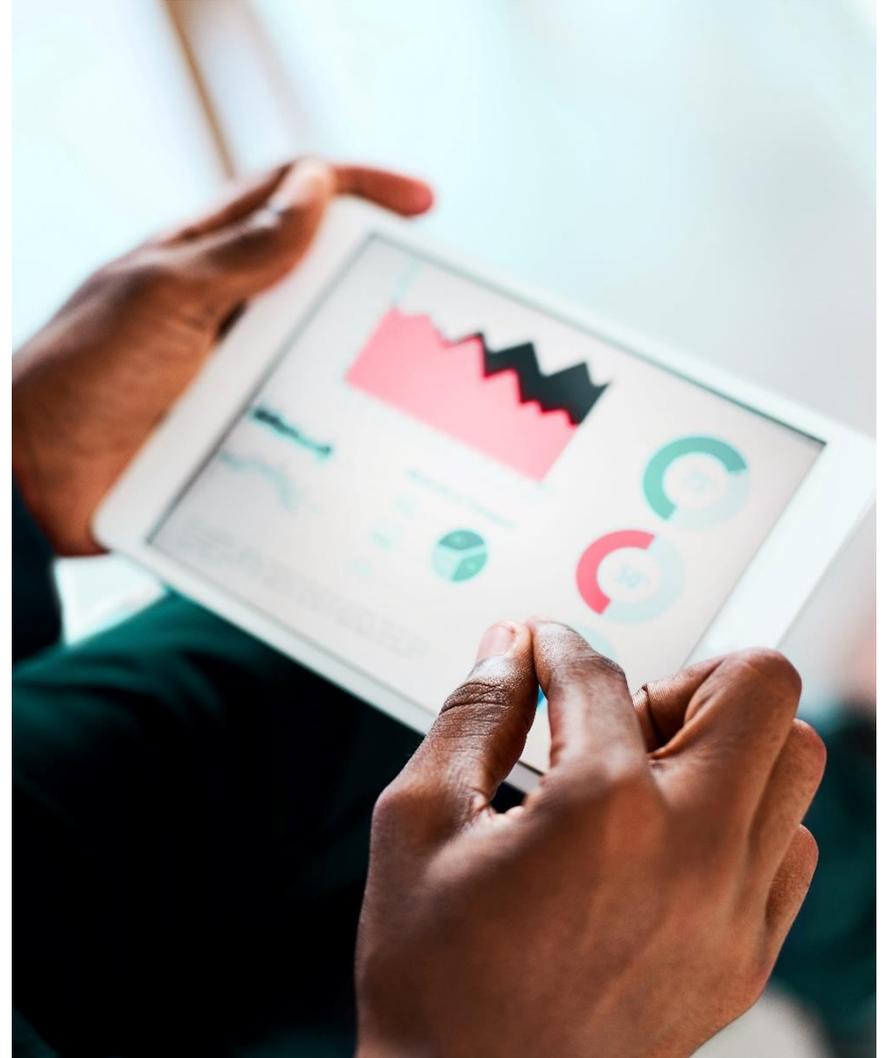
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SUMMARY

2022/2023	Total Recs	H	M	L	To follow up	Complete		Moved to Medium		Overdue		Not Due	
						H	M	H	M	H	M	H	M
Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery	4	-	2	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Private Rented Sector	21	17	4	-	10	6	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
Total	25	17	6	2	11	6	3	2	-	-	-	-	1

SUMMARY

2021/2022

Please find below a summary of the status of implementation of recommendations arising from reports issued in 2022/2023.

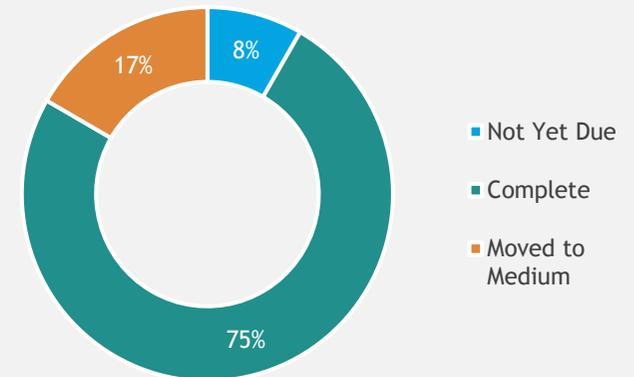
- ▶ Six High and two Medium recommendations from the Private Rented Sector review have been implemented, including a review of all 977 property lets to verify that all documentation is held on the central filing system. A further two High recommendations have been downgraded to Medium as progress has been taken towards implementing the recommendations, reflecting the reduced risk.
- ▶ One Medium recommendation from the Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery review has been implemented.
- ▶ All recommendations that have a revised due date or not due will be followed up as they fall due at subsequent Audit & Governance Committee meetings.

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REQUIRED AUDIT COMMITTEE ACTION:

We ask the Audit Committee to note the progress against the recommendations.

2022/2023 Cumulative implementation



RECOMMENDATIONS: COMPLETE

AUDIT	ACTIONS AGREED	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
2021/22. Private Rented Sector	A file should be created for each letting within a centralised location on the Private Rented Sector network and all checks undertaken per property including the assessment of the landlord should be retained on file (subject to relevant retention policies).	HIGH 	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager	30/06/2022 31/10/2022	Management Comments: Centralised files, on the M Drive, have been created for all 977 property lets with all documentation relating to the properties saved on it. Internal Audit Comments: We observed the file structure through a screenshare and confirmed that it had been established and that documentation had been saved on it.
2021/22. Private Rented Sector	The file should retain the following documents as a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation that a prosecution check was completed Declaration/approval that the landlord is fit and proper Signed and dated Code of management Completed property conditions checklist Tenancy agreement Approval to register the landlord within Private Rented Sector	HIGH 	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager	30/06/2022 31/10/2022	Management Comments: All 977 property let cases have now been checked. Of these, 313 have been completed with all documentation, 352 require more information from the landlord or tenant and 278 tenancies have now ended. For the 352 requiring further information, landlords have been contacted to obtain any missing documentation. The team have a tracker in place for each property recording the documentation that remains outstanding. Internal Audit Comments: We confirmed that the review of all 977 property lets has been completed and observed a small sample of files to confirm that the relevant documentation was stored on it.
2021/22. Private Rented Sector	Existing landlords on the Private Rented Sector register should complete a self-declaration confirmation annually this should be signed, dated by the landlord and checked by an appropriate officer prior to being retained on file	HIGH 	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager	30/06/2022 31/10/2022	Management Comments: From the check of 977 property let cases, the 313 that have all documentation include a fit and proper self-declaration. Where these are missing in the 352 cases where full documentation has not been obtained, the landlord has been contacted for the self-declaration. To have a successful application a signed self-declaration form must be provided. The team have a tracker in place for each property recording the documentation that remains outstanding. Internal Audit Comments: We confirmed that the review of all 977 property lets has been completed and observed a small sample of files to confirm that the fit and proper declaration was stored on it. We also reviewed emails issued to landlords requesting the documentation.

2021/22. Private Rented Sector	SharePoint access should be created between the Private Rented Sector team and HMO enforcement (Post the Office 365 implementation) team whereby the HMO team publish a list of rogue landlords and those subject to financial penalties monthly. Subsequently, the Private Rented Sector team should check the listing against their current landlords.	HIGH 	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager	30/06/2022 31/10/2022	Management Comments: Licences required to access environmental health enforcement action records have been acquired. The team have read only access. Internal Audit Comments: We undertook a walkthrough of the SharePoint drive via a screenshare and confirmed that the access had been provided and that the team can access the necessary records.
2021/22. Private Rented Sector	Tenancy agreements should be signed by both parties and retained on the property file	HIGH 	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager	30/06/2022 31/12/2022	Management Comments: From the check of 977 property let cases, the 313 that have all documentation include a signed tenancy agreement. Where these are missing in the 352 cases where full documentation has not been obtained, the landlord has been contacted for the signed agreement. The team have a tracker in place for each property recording the documentation that remains outstanding. Internal Audit Comments: We confirmed that the review of all 977 property lets has been completed and observed a small sample of files to confirm that the tenancy agreements were stored on it. We also reviewed emails issued to landlords requesting the documentation and the tracker that is used to monitor the outstanding documentation for each property.
2021/22. Private Rented Sector	Up to date tenancy agreements should be retained on file for all occupancies made	HIGH 	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager	30/06/2022 31/12/2022	Management Comments: All signed tenancy agreements are held on the centralised filing structure. Internal Audit Comments: We confirmed that the review of all 977 property lets has been completed and observed a small sample of files to confirm that the tenancy agreements were stored on it. We also reviewed emails issued to landlords requesting the documentation and the tracker that is used to monitor the outstanding documentation for each property.
2021/22. Private Rented Sector	The guidance should be reviewed for duplication and ensure there are consistent messages throughout all guidance available. The guidance notes should be aggregated to form consistency and one overarching guidance on the private rented sector schemes	MEDIUM 	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager	30/06/2022 31/12/2022	Management Comments: Guidance is now in place via the property checklist which includes details of what documentation needs to be provided. This is used and saved to the property file for each new case. Internal Audit Comments: We reviewed the property checklist and confirmed that it is in place, creating consistency across the documentation required from landlords/tenants.

2021/22. Private Rented Sector	The Council should update the guidance ensuring it reflects current practices and policies should be reviewed annually	MEDIUM 	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager	30/06/2022 31/12/2022	<p>Management Comments: Guidance via a checklist in in place for all new cases and the template will be reviewed annually. There has been a recent change in the structure of the Private Rented Sector team a Task & Finish Group have been set up to review documentation and templates.</p> <p>Internal Audit Comments: We reviewed the checklist that is in place for new properties and were informed that this document would be reviewed annually.</p>
2021/22. Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery	<p>Management should look to implement a unified Disaster Recovery Plan that is aligned to and supports the Council's priorities and includes, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recovery procedures for the Council's IT infrastructure, hardware and systems • The procedures for invoking the Council's IT Disaster Recovery plan • The contact details for all key members of IT, the Council, Oxford direct Services and Third Party suppliers (to include in the DR plan as well) • The location of alternative sites • This should also include a unified list of systems which are to be restored in order of priority and should be subject to review on an annual basis in line with the annual review of the business continuity plan. 	MEDIUM 	Rocco Labellarte, Chief Technology Officer	30/11/2022	<p>Management Comments: The Disaster Recovery Plan was updated in November 2022 with a list of systems and sites included in the appendices to the document. Additionally, the Cyber Incident Response plan identifies the Cyber Incident Response team and their responsibilities in the event of an incident.</p> <p>Internal Audit Comments: We reviewed the updated Disaster Recovery Plan and the Cyber Incident Response Plan and confirmed that the items listed in the recommendation had been included within these documents.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS: MOVED TO MEDIUM

These recommendations have been moved from High to Medium as progress has been made against the recommendation which has reduced the risk.

AUDIT	RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
2021/22. Private Rented Sector	Landlord payments reports should be extracted via the relevant systems (Agresso or QL) and checked quarterly to ensure they are in line with the payments outlined on the tenancy agreement	 ↓ 	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager	30/06/2022 31/10/2022 31/03/2023	Management Comments: The checks of the 977 cases have been prioritised therefore, the checks of all 2021 payments is ongoing. Resources have been allocated for the full check of 2021 payments to be completed. Now, all payments are verified that they are being issued to the correct individual and, in 10% of cases, an extra check is undertaken to ensure a tenancy agreement is in place. This process has been in place for several months. Internal Audit Comments: We reviewed the payment checking documentation and confirmed that the relevant checks had been undertaken.
89 2021/22. Private Rented Sector	There should be an automated process where the Private Rented Sector team are alerted when the tenant is no longer residing within the property prior to reaching the end of their tenancy agreement term	 ↓ 	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager	30/06/2022 31/10/2022 31/03/2023	Management Comments: The Private Rented Sector team have liaised with the QL Project team to assess the viability of developed an automated process for noting the end of a tenancy agreement. This is currently being investigated to be set up. Internal Audit Comments: We were satisfied that there had been progress in implementing this recommendation due to the communication with the QL Project team, to create automatic alerts in the system to notify the end of a tenancy agreement term.

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