

Slough Borough Council

Information needed	Details
Report To:	Audit and Corporate Governance Committee
Date:	13 November 2024
Subject:	Finance and Commercial Internal Audit Recommendations - Update
Chief Officer:	Annabel Scholes – Executive Director Finance and Commercial
Contact Officer:	Vicki Palazon – Finance Consultant (FIP and Companies)
Ward(s):	All
Exempt:	NO
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Finance and Commercial Internal Audit Recommendations – action plan

1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report sets out the progress to date and next steps to close out the finance and commercial internal audit recommendations.

Recommendations:

Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of this report;
- b) Seek assurance that management actions to address control weaknesses are progressing as part of the Finance Improvement Plan (FIP) and the revised target date for closure; and
- c) The revised dates to close recommendations recognising the need to align appropriate resources and deliver the council's financial recovery and improvement journey.

Commissioner Review

The commissioners note the content of this report.

2. Report

Background

- 2.1 There are a 50 internal audit recommendations (9 high risk and 41 medium/low risk) that remain outstanding covering the period 2021/22 to 2023/24. A review of the audit recommendations has been undertaken which identifies those risks that evidence can and will be submitted for closure during November 2024 and those that require additional activity to close out and now incorporated within the Finance Improvement Plan (FIP).
- 2.2 The following table provides a summary of the audit recommendations. For those audit recommendations which still require management action to provide

assurance to Internal Audit that management have taken action are included in Appendix 1. This includes an action plan for each recommendation, linked to the council's FIP and realistic proposed revised dates to complete the action.

Evidence to submit ready?	Risk Level	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Y	H		6		6
	M/L	1	11	1	13
Y Total		1	17	1	19
N	H		1	2	3
	M/L	6	13	9	28
N Total		6	14	11	31
Total Risks		7	31	12	50

2.3 Based on the management assessment of audit recommendations, 20 (38%) of recommendations are deemed to have sufficient evidence to submit to Internal Audit. The remaining 30 recommendations require further action.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

3.1.1 There are no direct financial implications, however failure to close down recommendations in a timely manner, continues to expose the council to financial risk exposure and an internal control framework which is not robust and fully effective.

3.2 Legal implications

3.2.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Failure to address those risks associated with the Directions from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will impact the ability to secure the Authority's compliance with the requirements of Part I of Local Government Act 1999. The Council has specific legal duties in relation to certain areas, such as managing health and safety risks and civil contingency. Effective internal audit is a key part of providing assurance on the adequacy of governance, risk management and internal control.

3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1 The internal audit recommendations have been evaluated by Internal Audit as either high, medium or low risk. Management are aware of their responsibilities in ensuring that action is taken to respond and close out the recommendations.

3.4 Environmental implications

3.4.1 There are no direct environmental implications from this report.

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

4. Background Papers

None

Appendix 1 – Finance and Commercial Internal Audit Recommendations

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA001	Asset Register (2021/22) Medium and Low Risk	The Council will complete a review of available guidance and from this produce a comprehensive Procedure Document which documents the processes to be adopted in relation to maintaining the asset register and relevant asset management systems/records as well as guidance around capital expenditure and receipts.	31/12/2022	31/03/2025	<p>Update - Guidance notes in draft (August 2024) Process & Procedures – Adding notes to the Fixed Asset Register (FAR procedures)</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalise FAR procedures incorporating capital expenditure and receipts 2. Lessons learned from closure of all prior year accounts to inform guidance notes 	14 – Fixed Asset Register	N
IA002	Asset Register (2021/22) Medium and Low Risk	Complete a review of the 2020/21 valuations and confirm these agree to the amount noted in the asset register. The Team will also ensure the £nil value assets present in the Asset Register are removed prior to finalising the Statement of Accounts. Working papers relating to calculations will be retained and workings will be subject to independent review.	31/03/2023	n/a	<p>Update - 2020/21 valuations are completed and reconciled to the asset register. Due to various adjustments and corrections, there are balancing items between the 2020/21 asset register and accounts, because the asset register had already been rolled forward into 2021/22. Nil value transactions have not been removed, as it can be important to maintain nil value items on the asset register for record keeping purposes.</p> <p>Action plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit evidence to Internal Audit including working papers available for independent review. 	2 – Statement of Accounts	Y

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA003	Asset Register (2021/22) Medium and Low Risk	Following completion of the ongoing reconciliation between Asset Management, Finance and Legal Records, the Council will introduce a periodic reconciliation process to account for in-year transactions.	31/07/2023	31/03/2025	Each year finance will liaise with property and legal to ensure that any disposals or acquisitions are accurately reflected in the statement of accounts. Action Plan 1. Submit evidence to Internal Audit on completion of all prior year accounts to assure that ongoing reconciliation is completed. 2. Incorporate into the FAR procedures and process	2 – Statement of Accounts 14 – Fixed Asset Register	N
IA004	Asset Register (2021/22) Medium and Low Risk	The Finance Team will develop a means of recording the date of last inspection for each asset. This will be used to ensure that all assets are subject to due inspection. This will be included in the revised guidance noted at MA2 and migration to using the CIPFA system as the key source of asset records	30/04/2023	31/03/2025	CIPFA provides us with Asset Manager.Net services where we have access to the AMS, Capital accounting and valuation modules where the Council maintains the capital asset database and works out the Depreciation entries and Valuation reports and other reports for the FAR , as required. There are also other Modules that the Council has access to in the Asset.NET like the Property Management module, Condition Survey module and AMP report module. Action Plan 1. Submit evidence to Internal Audit that existing working papers record last asset inspection date. 2. Incorporate into the FAR procedures and process 3. Migrate data to finance system, implement and transition to BAU	2 – Statement of Accounts 14 – Fixed Asset Register	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA005	Business Rates (2021/22) Medium and Low Risk	The Council's business rates policies will be reviewed and formally approved, with the updated policies added to the Council business rates webpages	31/03/2023	17/03/2025	<p>The council's internet page contains information on business rates and how to claim business rates and relief information although last updated 2022/23. The explanatory notes were refreshed in 2023/24 with sign posting on reliefs to government or for hardship to contact the council However, best practice would be to include council approved policies on the website and maintain annually.</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gap analysis of existing policies and procedures 2. Update / refresh / create policies and procedures 3. Full council approval 4. Update council website 	32 - Revenues and Benefits Transformation work	N
IA006	Debtors Management (2021/22) Medium and Low Risk	The Council will review all current accounts receivable guidance available to staff, including the manual and Freshdesk help cards. Out of date guidance will be updated, whilst further documents will be prepared where there are gaps in available information.	30/06/2022	01/04/2025	<p>Action Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review all accounts receivable guidance and undertake gap analysis 2. Draft procedures and process maps 3. Update Freshdesk (the council's intranet pages for the finance system) 	1 – Financial Procedures Rules 11 - Debtors	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA007	IA Follow Up Q1 (2021/22) Medium and Low Risk	The Council will assess the current training arrangements in place for budget holders and develop a programme of training to ensure that all budget holders are sufficiently skilled/ trained to perform their function	30/09/2022	31/07/2025	Freshdesk includes basic training for both finance staff and non finance staff which was last refreshed in June 2022. For staff to access Agresso, there is a requirement for staff to complete ESS or MSS training on Cornerstone, the council's training platform. Action Plan 1. Review current training material and undertake gap analysis 2. Develop training programme, material and delivery options 3. Pilot training 4. Transition to BAU (links to self service and finance core service offer activity)	23 Training programme – members and (non) finance officers	N
IA043	Treasury Management (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	The Council will agree, and then define within applicable guidance documents, whether authorisation should be obtained prior to making investments.	31/10/2023	n/a	Each investment decision is documented with appropriate evidence provided to enable a decision to be made by finance extended leadership team. This is then saved electronically before transaction is completed.	37 – Internal Controls	Y
IA044	Treasury Management (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	The process of notifying and discussing relevant staff of new loan offers prior to entering into agreements will be updated within the 'Treasury Process Notes'. The Council will also consider whether evidence of discussions (and approval) of new loans should be retained, and whether the CHAPS	31/10/2023	30/11/2024	Treasury process notes document the process to be followed including approvals for CHAPS payments Action Plan 1. Treasury Process Notes - Daily Procedures to be updated to include new loan offers	16 Treasury Management -ways of working for oversight and reporting	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
		receipts approval process is required.					
IA045	Budget Setting and Budgetary Control (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	The Council will introduce processes that ensure budget managers and holders are involved in the development and review of local budgets. This may include having managers / holders sign off on budget proposals.	31/03/2024	n/a	The 2025/26 budget setting has so far included Star Chambers, dedicated budget rooms and internal meetings to discuss budgets for 2025/26. Each Directorate has been issued with draft budgets 2025/26 with the expectation to review and explore further opportunities to reduce budgets and align with funding / resources available. Each budget holder will be required to sign off budget proposals. Whilst this evidence is sufficient to discharge this recommendation, best practice has been incorporated within the FIP.	30 MTFS ensure balanced / agreed including engagement all	Y
IA046	Budget Setting and Budgetary Control (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	The Council will introduce processes that ensure budget managers and holders are involved in the allocation of agreed savings (which are supported by robust savings plans) against their local budgets. This may include having group managers / budget holders sign off on the proposed virements which will reduce budgets for the savings required to be delivered.	31/03/2024	n/a	As part of the MTFS and 2025/26 Budget setting process, Budget holders will be required to sign off on the Budget Book for their area that will map all changes to individual budgets ensuring ownership of the budget, and the change. A control sheet has been introduced for all budget proposals, their deliverability and sensitivity and also the budgets impacted. Whilst this evidence is sufficient to discharge this recommendation, best practice has been incorporated within the FIP.	30 MTFS ensure balanced / agreed including engagement all	Y

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA047	Budget Setting and Budgetary Control (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	Following the agreement and implementation of budget setting and monitoring procedures, the Council will review available guidance and determine whether this is fit for purpose (including whether guidance reflects expectations and is sufficiently detailed).	31/12/2023	01/04/2026	<p>This recommendation relates to 2022/23, however, it is recognised through budget setting 2025/26 this processes and procedures need to be reviewed and has been incorporated within the FIP.</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Process map as is process 2. Review existing guidance 3. Complete the project '37 Internal controls' 4. Develop the core service offer (finance) including reporting 5. Develop the self service model 6. Implementation <p>Due to the dependencies with other finance improvement projects and the development of best practice and continuous improvement, this activity will not be fully implemented until April 2026</p>	<p>7 Budget Management best practice</p> <p>30 MTFS ensure balanced / agreed including engagement all</p>	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA048	Budget Setting and Budgetary Control (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	The Council will review the skills required of budget managers and holders in light of the agreed processes for budget setting and monitoring, and introduce training as required.	31/03/2024	31/03/2025	This recommendation relates to 2022/23, however, it is recognised there is a need to develop core skills and competencies for budget holders and has been incorporated within the FIP. Action Plan 1. Identify the core skills required for budget holders and those with budget management accountability 2. Create and issue a questionnaire to budget holders to baseline current understanding of core skills 3. Develop a training programme and delivery options to ensure all budget holders has core skills required. Deliver the training programme	23 Training & Development	N
IA049	Capital Expenditure (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	We will finalise capital expenditure guidance for 2023/24, including adding arrangements for monitoring of capital projects, and make this available to staff.	31/12/2023	31/03/2025	2023/24 closedown timetable includes capital closedown key tasks. Action Plan 1. Capital guidance to be drafted for 2024/25 closedown as part of closedown guidance 2. Capital expenditure guidance to be created and issued to all staff	2 – Statement of Accounts 7 Budget Management best practice	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA050	Capital Expenditure (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	We will review the capital expenditure identified as part of the audit (transactions 8020041101, 8020041101, 8020041101, 8020036716, 8020038304, 8020038671, 8020038304, 8020039540, 8020039157, 8020039199) to ensure it is valid capital expenditure and has been correctly charged to a capital project from the approved 2022/23 programme. Following this, we will implement permanent controls to prevent and detect the incorrect capitalisation of expenditure.	31/12/2023	31/03/2025	Evidence to be submitted to Internal Audit on specific transactions Action Plan 1. Review Chart of Accounts rules in finance system for coding 2. Capital expenditure guidance to be created and issued to all staff	7 Budget Management best practice 37 – Internal Controls	N
IA051	Council Tax (2022/23) High Risk	The Revenues Manager will undertake a review of current Council Tax arrears cases.	30/09/2023	n/a	All council tax arrears cases prior to audit date have been reviewed and at various stages of debt recovery. As of March 2024, £2.5m historic debt has been written off in accordance with council's financial procedures. This activity is part of BAU.		Y
IA052	Creditors (2022/23) High Risk	Develop an efficient method to onboard new suppliers	31/10/2023	n/a	Confirmation and evidence to be provided to Internal Audit that a process has been put in place and is operational.		Y
IA053	Creditors (2022/23) High Risk	Undertake a review of all supplier accounts on Agresso and remove any duplicates.	30/09/2023	n/a	Confirmation and evidence to be provided to Internal Audit that the review of suppliers has been undertaken and duplicates removed.		Y

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA054	Creditors (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	We will consolidate the Aged Creditors Manual and new Agresso AP guidance to ensure it includes current processes, systems and staff responsibilities and made available to staff via the AP shared drive.	31/12/2023	28/02/2025	<p>Action Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain the latest Aged Creditors Manual and new Agresso AP guidance 2. Review existing processes, systems and staff responsibilities 3. Consolidate the manual and guidance into one document based on existing processes 4. Communicate to staff <p>The above actions will discharge the existing recommendation, however, the FIP incorporates moving to best practice.</p>	1 – Financial Procedures Framework	N
IA055	Creditors (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	We will develop a payment run checklist to record the completion of each step of preparing and approving a payment run, including payment checks and run approvals.	30/11/2023	n/a	Confirmation and evidence to be provided to Internal Audit of the implemented payment run checklist.		Y
IA056	Creditors (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	We will review the results of the data analytics testing from the 2022/23 Creditors audit to resolve any transactional issues and take necessary action to improve controls to ensure similar issues do not occur again.	31/07/2024	14/12/2024	<p>A copy of the audit report has been received but does not contain the analytics data. On reviewing the finding the recommendation refers to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Payments to suppliers on supplier Masterfile (supplier ID's not included on the Agresso report of suppliers). This could be Adult Social Care, payroll or schools payments b) Duplicate invoices c) Blank Order Numbers – invoices with no Purchase Order 	37 – Internal Controls	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
					Action Plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review internal controls on Accounts Payable system 2. Run a data analytics sample on 2024/25 transactions to confirm whether issues identified by Internal Audit remain 3. Remedy internal controls as necessary 		
IA057	Debtors Management (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	The Agresso system will be set up to require supporting evidence to be attached to all credit notes prior to credit notes being processed.	31/03/2024	n/a	Agresso has been updated so the workflow process checks for the supporting document being attached to the request and if none is attached the task goes back to the initiator before it can be approved. Evidence to be provided to Internal Audit.		Y
IA058	Debtors Management (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	We will complete a monthly review of aged debtors, identifying any significant debts (by amount or period of time outstanding) and taking action to rectify these. This will include the agreement of a target to measure AR Team performance in recovering debts. This target will be incorporated and reported within the weekly reports.	31/03/2024	31/12/2024	Significant debts are reported each month on the service dashboard which goes to S151 and Lead Member. It contains value and actions taken. Action Plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set a realistic target 		N
IA059	General Ledger (2022/23) High risk	An exercise will be completed to identify all tasks to be completed as part of the month end process.	31/03/2023	n/a	A month end process and timetable has been implemented to close each period for 2024/25. Evidence to be submitted to Internal Audit to confirm process is operational.	37 - Internal Controls	Y

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA060	General Ledger (2022/23) High risk	The Council will complete an exercise to identify those roles/positions requiring access to Agresso finance functions and the access/functions required.	31/03/2023	01/03/2025 (with milestones reported on)	<p>It is noted that this remains a high risk recommendation. The council as part of its FIP have set up a new project – 37 Internal Controls to ensure that an appropriate internal control environment is in place. This risk has been incorporated into the FIP project to enable corrective action is undertaken promptly and that this activity is proceeding. Each role responsibility will require testing to provide full assurance and enable an internal control document to be created for maintaining.</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review / identify existing roles and responsibilities set up in the finance system (30/11/2024) 2. Confirm appropriate internal controls are assigned to these roles (31/01/2025) 3. Identify all staff with access to the finance system to confirm roles and responsibilities appropriately assigned (31/03/2025) 	37 - Internal Controls	N
IA061	General Ledger (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	The Council will prepare a schedule of Agresso finance system functions/ processes to be documented. Help cards will then be prepared and uploaded to the 'Knowledge Base' section of the Freshdesk page. (Restated from 2021/22)	31/03/2023	01/01/2026	<p>Work has commenced on procedure notes and will include Agresso finance system functions / processes to be shared on Freshdesk. This activity will be linked to overall FIP and therefore will be implemented over a longer period of time. It also recognises the finance system to move to the cloud project will take priority.</p> <p>Action Plan</p>	33 Development of Agresso system to be fit for purpose	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
					<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify finance system functions / processes to be documented 2. Review against existing available documents on Freshdesk 3. Update / refresh / create documents 4. Publish on Freshdesk and communicate 		
IA062	General Ledger (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	Following the completion of all audits, the Council will retrospectively roll-over the periods up to 2022/23. Where there have been significant changes to balances or reported information, relevant staff and Council Members will be made aware of this and the MTFS updated accordingly. (Restated from 2021/22) Management Update January 2023 The 2018/19 Accounts audit have now been completed, the subsequent years audits will be on-going during 2023 and unlikely to be completed before March 2024.	31/03/2024	n/a	The general ledger has been rolled over up to 2022/23 closing being rolled into period 202300. These roll-forwards are being reviewed and updated as each year of accounts is reached in draft format. The 2023/24 outturn report included an update to Cabinet on prior-period adjustments and their impact on earmarked reserves. Evidence to be provided to Internal Audit.		Y
IA063	Housing Benefits (2022/23) High risk	Implement a process whereby will cleanse the data available on accumulated aged debt and look to maximise recovery potential and write off any debt that we consider cannot be recovered.	30/09/2023	n/a	A resourced project plan with milestones was completed and is now incorporated within BAU. Evidence to be provided to Internal Audit.		Y
IA065	Rent Accounts (2022/23)	The Council will assign responsibility within Finance for uploading the rental, council tax,	31/03/2024	31/03/2025	Council Tax, Business Rates and Benefits postings are uploaded to Agresso on a daily basis and a daily reconciliation completed.		N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
	Medium and Low Risk	business rates and benefits postings to Agresso. This will then be uploaded to the reconciliation's documents on a daily basis for June to September 2021 and then each month thereafter, allowing the reconciliations to be completed.			Housing rents is currently being reviewed as part of the PWC reconciliation project. An action plan will be developed following the conclusion of this work. Action Plan 1. Included within the separate project 'NEC Implementation Project'		
IA066	Rent Accounts (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	Carry out daily reconciliations to ensure that any discrepancies are reviewed and resolved promptly.	31/03/2024	31/03/2025	Housing rents is currently being reviewed as part of the PWC reconciliation project. An action plan will be developed following the conclusion of this work. Action Plan 1. Included within the separate project 'NEC Implementation Project'		N
IA067	Rent Arrears Recovery – Full Follow Up (2022/23) High risk	An action plan will be put in place and monitored in order to resolve the problems and known issues surrounding the new Housing System.	30/06/2023	n/a	The action plan as part of a project plan has been implemented. Evidence to be provided to Internal Audit.		Y
IA068	Rent Arrears Recovery – Full Follow Up (2022/23)	Consideration will be made for how current and former tenant arrears reports will be produced when the new housing system is fully functional. The use and purpose of these reports will then be considered.	31/03/2023	n/a	The housing system is now fully functional and current and former tenant arrears reports are produced. Evidence to be provided to Internal Audit.		Y

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
	Medium and Low Risk						
IA069	Treasury Management (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	The Treasury Manual will be reviewed and updated, to ensure contents align to the manual purpose (i.e. treasury principles) and to include a version control.	30/09/2023	28/02/2025	The Treasury Manual is to be updated. Associated with the manual there are treasury procedure notes which have been updated during August 2024. Action Plan 1. Update and approve the Treasury Strategy (approval as part of 2025/26 budget setting) 2. Update the Treasury Manual	16 Treasury Management	N
IA070	Treasury Management (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	The Financial Accountant (Treasury) will periodically request a copy of the bank mandate and review listed signatories. Reviews will include identifying signatories that are no longer appropriate for removal.	31/10/2023	n/a	Periodic review in place. Evidence to be submitted to Internal Audit		Y
IA071	Treasury Management (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	Following the agreement of the authorisation processes, requests to approve investments and new loans will include reasons for investment / loans and interest rates. Applicable guidance documents will also be updated.	31/10/2023	n/a	Approval process in place and provision of associated paperwork to enable decision to be made. Evidence to be provided to Internal Audit.		Y

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA072	Treasury Management (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	Following the identification of loans due to mature, the Treasury team will reconcile interest payable to broker confirmations to ensure amounts have been correctly calculated.	30/09/2023	n/a	The treasury team reconcile interest payable to broker confirmations and process journals on the finance system. Evidence to be provided to Internal Audit.		Y
IA073	Treasury Management (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	Treasury management reporting to Cabinet will commence, in line with the minimum requirements as per the Financial Procedure Rules.	31/03/2024	n/a	The next mid year report to Cabinet is drafted and will be discussed at Audit Committee during November 2024. The reporting meets the requirements of the Treasury Management Code. Evidence to be submitted to Internal Audit.		Y
IA074	Treasury Management (2022/23) Medium and Low Risk	The expected content of the monthly treasury management activity reports for the Director of Finance, which will include updated cashflow forecast positions, will be agreed. The arrangements for reviewing and discussing the reports will also be agreed.	31/12/2023	31/12/2024	The Chief Finance Officer (S151) receives monthly periodic updates. A formalised process will be implemented. Action Plan 1. Formalise the reporting to the Chief Finance Officer	16 Treasury Management -ways of working for oversight and reporting	N
IA098	10.23/24 Council Tax Review (2023/24)	A review all current Standard Operating Procedures should be completed annually to ensure they comprehensively cover all relevant tasks within a function. Additional SOPs should be prepared to cover gaps in missed processes to holistically capture	28/04/2024	31/05/2025	Action Plan 1. Identify and review all current Standard Operating Procedures 2. Perform a gap analysis 3. Update / refresh / create Standard Operating Procedures 4. Approve, communicate and implement Standard Operating Procedures	32 Revenues and Benefits Transformation work	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
	Medium and Low Risk	all Council Tax functions and meet required standards.					
IA099	10.23/24 Council Tax Review (2023/24) Medium and Low Risk	Internal Council Tax team communication protocols should be agreed and documented to guide how information/knowledge will be efficiently shared and documented with different teams.	31/01/2024	31/05/2025	This action links to the previous audit recommendation. Action Plan 1. Identify, draft and implement communication protocols	32 Revenues and Benefits Transformation work	N
IA100	Cash Collection and Management (2023/24) Medium and Low Risk	The Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs) will be formally approved with evidence of this approval retained, the FPRs will then be shared with staff.	31/03/2024	28/02/2025	Cash collection options to be reviewed. The management and reconciliation of cash collection is part of the closure of prior year accounts. Action Plan 1. Identify the issues and remedial action required for cash collection reconciliation 2. Review current cash collection processes and opportunity to collect cash including invoicing for services 3. Ensure that ICON and other relevant feeder systems and the finance system reconcile and internal control framework is robust	1 - Financial Procedures	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Remedy issues identified with cash collection and management 5. Update the Financial Procedure Rules 		
IA101	Cash Collection and Management (2023/24) Medium and Low Risk	The Council will ensure that bank reconciliations are reviewed and approved in a timely manner with segregation of duties clearly evidenced.	31/03/2024	30/11/2024	Bank reconciliations are reviewed and approve timely. Evidence to be provided to Internal Audit.		Y
IA102	Council Tax Review (2023/24) Medium and Low Risk	The Council Tax team should prepare a comprehensive roles and responsibilities document for Council Tax related functions and shared with all relevant staff.	31/01/2024	28/03/2025	This will be completed as part of the implementation of the target operating model. Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define future requirements 2. Define service delivery offer 3. Benchmark and Metrics 4. Review delivery options 5. Define roles and responsibilities 6. Write a scope and test the market 7. Consultation and Union engagement 8. Implementation 	5 Capacity and skills for recovery (Transactional services)	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA103	Council Tax Review (2023/24) Medium and Low Risk	Documentation of all Draft Council Tax rates preparation and approval should be obtained, reviewed and archived for future reference.	31/03/2024	30/04/2025	Action Plan 1. Remedial action on existing collection fund 2. Set the council tax base 3. Separate project on annual billing process underway 4. Update, refresh / create documentation		N
IA104	Council Tax Review (2023/24) Medium and Low Risk	Key Performance Indicators should be formulated for evaluating Enforcement Agents performance. Minutes/ actions agreed of meetings with Enforcement Agents should be documented	28/02/2024	31/03/2025	Action Plan 1. Appoint head of service 2. Review existing contract 3. Consider options for enforcement 4. Implement		N
IA105	Q1 Follow Up (2023/24) High risk	Management will review governance documentation required for the full year 2023/24 and put these in place to ensure clarity on levels of authority and on financial responsibilities and controls.	30/11/2023	28/02/2025	Companies governance, oversight and financial matters have been assessed by a desk top exercise which has led to a project plan and actions to be implemented. This has been captured within the FIP for completion. Whilst it is recognised as high risk, this is being managed through the project to manage risks appropriately until activity is undertaken. Action Plan 1. Review of governance documentation 2. Update / create governance documentation for financial roles and accountabilities	8 - Companies	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
IA106	Q1 Follow Up (2023/24) Medium and Low Risk	We will document an annual company reporting timetable that sets out annual activities, deadlines and responsible officers, including expectations for reporting back into the Council.	30/11/2023	28/02/2025	<p>Companies governance, oversight and financial matters have been assessed by a desk top exercise which has led to a project plan and actions to be implemented. This has been captured within the FIP for completion.</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of governance documentation 2. Align reporting timetable with council's reporting requirements 3. Ensure governance aligns to Company governance 	8 - Companies	N
IA107	Q1 Follow Up (2023/24) Medium and Low Risk	All subsidiary Directors will be subject to the Council's annual appraisal process. Any development points and/or training needs established will be addressed.	30/11/2023	28/02/2025	<p>Directors are appointed to Board and subject to their own Company's arrangements. The Shareholder would be seeking assurance through Board skill audits and governance arrangements. Therefore appropriate Shareholder governance requires to be implemented.</p> <p>Directors that are employees of the council in council held roles will be subject to council processes but this should not extend to their roles as Company Directors</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where the council is Shareholder request that Company undertakes a Board skills audit 2. Company to review outcome of audit and implement appropriate training programme 	8 - Companies	N

Ref for FIP	Audit / Area	Recommendation	Target Date	Revised Target Date (FIP)	Update and action plan to discharge recommendation	Link to FIP Project	Evidence to submit ready?
					3. Council to be assured that a skills audit has been conducted and actions implemented		
IA108	Q1 Follow Up (2023/24) Medium and Low Risk	Each subsidiary SLA will be signed by senior representatives of relevant parties.	30/11/2023	28/02/2025	Action Plan 1. SLAs reviewed, refreshed and executed by both parties. Council will be Director level unless otherwise notified in governance arrangements	8 - Companies	N
IA109	Travel and Expenses Audit (2023/24) High risk	Budget holders should reconcile monthly P-Card statements and the accounts categorisation for transactions. These then should be returned to Treasury Management in a timely manner.	31/03/2024	31/12/2024	Action Plan 1. Review current process to match costs to VAT receipts 2. Implement process with budget holders	37 - Internal Controls	N