

Progress Update on Audit Recommendations  
Appendix A

Table 1: Progress Updates on Actions Agreed from Internal Audit Reviews

Audit Review Title	Report Issued Date	Finding / Implication	Progress Update	Officer Responsible and Timescale
Pension Savings Statements - Improvement Plan	March 2023	A lack of an Improvement Plan that captures all issues / concerns arising from the annual Pension Savings Statement exercise, impacting on management's ability to effectively manage and monitor delivery of agreed actions to full implementation and the Service's ability to address the concerns identified and complete the exercise by the deadline.	The plan is to revitalise the Improvement Plan to suit a more modern way of processing annual allowances on the whole. There is a significant change to the way that Statements are calculated from 2022/23 and the information we require from employers now differs to previous years and this is being prioritised. A Monthly Data Collection (MDC) Team has been established within the Benefits Team and this MDC team are assisting in bringing monthly data up-to date which should allow us to obtain the required information more promptly.	Team Leader – Support  September 2023
Verification of Assets - Property Holdings	December 2022	Lack of an accurate and up to date record of property holdings within the Authority's Portfolio, increasing the risk of inaccurate financial records and misappropriation of assets held.	<p>We have been liaising with our property advisors Bidwells to establish which land holdings are active with each solicitor. Following this piece of work we are now engaging with the Solicitors on reconciling a few small remaining queries on information held, to remove a number of sold landholdings from their records and clarify a small number of holdings that are currently unexplained.</p> <p>Due to the nature of the work with the solicitors, finalising these remaining minor issues could take some time, we are however confident in the accuracy of the records we hold. This will be the final piece of work with the solicitors in order to complete the AMA.</p>	Head of Finance  Revised to December 2023
Treasury Management Policy	December 2022	Lack of a detailed and up to date Treasury Management Strategy that has been recently reviewed, approved and published may result in a misalignment with strategic objectives and priorities, lack of clarity with regards to processes to be adopted and individual roles and responsibilities and a failure to take into consideration any changes in legislative / regulatory requirements.	<p>The new Treasury Management Strategy was taken to the February 2023 Authority meeting and approved by members. Following the approval the strategy has been circulated to all officers involved.</p> <p>The final piece of work remaining in this area is to complete a schedule for the strategy which brings together all our procedures, and roles/responsibilities in one place.</p>	Head of Finance  Revised to December 2023

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Risk Management - Operational Procedures	November 2022	Lack of operational procedures and relevant training may result in uncertainty of roles and responsibilities, inconsistencies in processes, failure to adhere to requirements and/or a lack of appropriate approvals. In addition, in the absence of key staff, this could impact on business continuity.	<p>A new risk management software system is being implemented, with a go-live date of 24 August 2023.</p> <p>To align with rolling out the new software system, a bespoke risk management training course has been commissioned from a risk management specialist to be delivered for all relevant managers in September 2023. The Governance Team will then work with key staff to provide guidance on internal procedures and support them to build their operational risk registers.</p>	<p>Head of Governance</p> <p>Revised to September 2023</p>
Online Retirement Tool - Added Voluntary Contributions	22/01/2021	Ensure that previously identified AVC concerns are resolved to prevent any issues having an impact on the successful delivery of the Online Retirement Tool.	<p>Following the appointment of the Service Manager – Benefits, examples have been collated and are being reviewed by the Interim Assistant Director Pensions.</p> <p>An Independent Adviser has also been appointed to undertake a wider review of our AVC providers. This report is awaited and will be reviewed and actioned appropriately once received.</p>	<p>Service Manager – Benefits</p> <p>Revised to August 2023</p>
Procurement Insurance - Legislative and Regulatory Compliance	29/10/2020	<p>Legislative / regulatory compliance; absence of effective and robust management trail increases risk of potential supplier challenge.</p> <p>Contract formalities – ensuring that contracts are signed / sealed in accordance with Contract Standing Orders (CSOs)</p>	<p>The review of the Constitution (including the current CSO's) was completed and approved at the June 2023 Authority meeting.</p> <p>A Gateway approval document has now been reviewed by Internal Audit and will be submitted to SMT for approval alongside the updated CSO's.</p> <p>Internal training will then be scheduled to take place during the autumn.</p>	<p>Director, Assistant Director – Resources</p> <p>Revised to August 2023</p>

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Information Governance - Records Management / Document Retention Policy	18/08/2020	Although a Records Management Policy is in place, it is acknowledged that this is currently lacking a sufficient level of detail to make it a practical basis for determining document retention for the many different categories of records across the organisation.	Whilst completion of work in this area has been delayed due to other work priorities, the action plan is progressing, and a suite of new processes and templates are being prepared with a target of September 2023 for rollout.	Assistant Director – Pensions  Revised to September 2023

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Table 2: Actions Fully Completed Since Last Report

Audit Review Title	Report Issued Date	Finding / Implication	Progress Update	Officer Responsible and Timescale
Budget Management and Monitoring 2022/23 - Use of new financial system for financial monitoring	March 2023	Potential of inefficient use of resources and/or a risk of an error in uploads of the budget and actual figures if an automated upload process is not implemented with budget monitoring being performed within the financial management system. This may also result in delays in the identification of variances and the implementation of corrective actions.	<p>Testing on the budget journal upload was completed successfully in April.</p> <p>Due to impact of workloads during year-end, the upload of the budget journal was slightly delayed however the budget for 2023/24 has now been uploaded to the live system.</p> <p><b>AMA completed</b></p>	<p>Assistant Director – Resources</p> <p>Completed June 2023</p>
Pensions Administration System - Action Logs		Failure to maintain an accurate and up to date Action Log, including the detailed actions required, by whom and when may result in a lack of clarity with regards to the actions required and a lack of a framework upon which these can be managed / monitored.	<p>Monthly account meetings are now scheduled, and regular updates are being received. All meetings are now minuted and actions captured and monitored, and contract service levels are being reviewed at regular intervals</p> <p><b>AMA Completed</b></p>	<p>Assistant Director – Pensions/ Service Manager - Pensions Systems</p> <p>Completed June 2023</p>
Accounts Receivable - Debt Recovery Procedure		Lack of a formal Debt Recovery Procedure may result in uncertainty of roles and responsibilities, inconsistencies in processes, failure to adhere to requirements and / or a lack of appropriate approvals during the debt recovery process. In addition, in the absence of key staff, this could impact on business continuity and the successful recovery of outstanding debt.	<p>The debt recovery process has been reviewed and amended as per the agreed AMA. We now have procedures and approval processes for the debt recovery process in place that the staff involved are aware of. In addition we have created a debt recovery policy.</p> <p>Also we have started a relationship with a debt recovery agent, and agreed a process for sending debts to them in a timely manner, aligned with the draft policy.</p> <p><b>AMA Completed</b></p>	<p>Head of Finance</p> <p>Completed March 2023</p>