

Subject	Agreed Management Actions Progress	Status	For Publication
Report to	Audit & Governance Committee	Date	21 September 2023
Report of	Team Leader Governance		
Equality Impact Assessment	Not Required	Attached	Na
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1. **Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To update Members on the actions being taken in response to audit review findings during the current financial year and in previous financial years.

2. **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 **Members are recommended to:**
- a. **Note the progress being made on implementing agreed management actions; and**
 - b. **Consider if any further information or explanation is required from officers.**
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3. **Link to Corporate Objectives**

- 3.1 This report links to the delivery of the following corporate objectives:

Effective and Transparent Governance

To uphold effective governance showing prudence and propriety at all times.

- 3.2 The reporting of audit findings and management actions being taken to address these is a key part of providing assurance on the adequacy of the Authority's corporate governance arrangements, particularly those relating to internal control and financial and risk management.

4. **Implications for the Corporate Risk Register**

- 4.1 The contents of this report do not link to a specific risk in the corporate risk register; instead they set out the actions being taken in a number of areas that will contribute to

addressing various risks in relation to operations and governance as detailed in the original audit reports.

5. Background and Options

- 5.1 The Authority's Local Code of Corporate Governance sets out the framework in which the Authority complies with the seven principles of good governance; one of which is "*managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management*". One aspect of achieving this is having arrangements for assurance and effective accountability in place and ensuring that any findings and recommendations made by both external audit and internal audit are acted upon.
- 5.2 The Audit & Governance Committee receives reports of the external auditor and of the Head of Internal Audit at regular intervals throughout the financial year. The report attached at Appendix A summarises the actions taken, and progress being made on implementing the actions agreed in response to audit findings during the current and previous financial years.
- 5.3 The tables in the attached Appendix A show the status and progress made since the previous report presented in July on the outstanding actions. This will continue to be actively monitored.
- 5.4 There has been very little change since the last report, however there are a number of actions that are due at the end of September which will be evident in the next quarter report.
- 5.5 At the July meeting, Members noted that on some of the actions, the date of the original report was over 2 years ago. This is the case on the two actions that remain outstanding shown in Appendix A so further detail on these is provided as follows.
- 5.6 In relation to the review of the AVC providers, delays occurred in 2021/22 and 2022/23 partly due to waiting for issues at Prudential (one of the main providers) affecting all Funds which were reported to the Pensions Regulator, to be measured and monitored. Following this, the independent review of the AVC providers was commissioned from an actuarial consultancy; however there have been difficulties in progressing this work with the firm appointed that are now being picked up by the Interim AD – Pensions and escalated as necessary in order to drive this forward.
- 5.7 In relation to the Procurement audit review completed in October 2020, as discussed at the July meeting, there have been delays in being able to complete the final action of updating the Contract Standing Orders and rolling out training and guidance for staff. The main reason for this was lack of staff resource to devote to this area during 2021 and 2022. Prior to May 2021 (when the Team Leader – Governance joined SYPA in this newly established role) there was no in-house support for procurement compliance, all activity was undertaken with support as required from the procurement team at Barnsley MBC. The actions from the audit review were planned for the TL – Governance to progress once in post; however the more pressing priorities for this officer on joining the organisation related to leading on the office move to Oakwell House. As shown in Appendix A, we are now on track to complete and close this action by December.
- 5.8 To provide some context, procurement activity for our organisation is fairly low in both volume and value due to our size. Nevertheless, it is recognised that there are weaknesses that are overdue for action and now need to be addressed as high priority. A follow-up audit review on procurement compliance has been undertaken at our request in the last year, and this involved a very thorough review that took place over a number of months that has only just reached final report stage – this is covered in the internal audit progress report elsewhere on this agenda and highlights the need for prompt action to address the findings. The agreed actions from this later report, where

not already completed, are all scheduled to be completed by 31 January 2024 at the latest and will be prioritised to ensure completion by the agreed timescale. The full details of these actions will be available for reporting to the next meeting of this Committee in December.

5.9 The progress on implementation of agreed management actions will continue to be reported to the Audit & Governance Committee at regular intervals.

6. **Implications**

6.1 The proposals outlined in this report have the following implications

Financial	No additional financial implications; the costs of the internal audit service and the fees for the external audit are met from existing budgets.
Human Resources	None
ICT	None
Legal	None
Procurement	None

Annie Palmer

Team Leader Governance

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
None	-