

EFDC Internal Audit Recommendation Tracker (Overdue and High Priority)

Last updated: 13 July 2020

Audit Year (Date Report Issued)	Rec Ref	Original Recommendation	Priority	Managers Original Response	Responsible Officer / Service Director	Original Imp Date	Revised Imp Date	Status Update from Management	Status
Software Licencing Report No. 06.18/19 (February 2019)	3	Reports should be produced on a regular basis to identify the number of users with Administrative access and access requirements questioned. In addition, software utilisation should be assessed on an annual basis with limited use being investigated by ICT and discussed with the relevant department/user.	Med	Agreed	Software Asset Licencing Officer/ Service Manager Business Support and ICT	30/09/19	04/04/20 31/08/20	<p>Oct 19: Software utilisation assessments are already occurring for many products, both on a quarterly basis as a part of our SAM managed service compliance reviews and internally when licence or maintenance renewals become due.</p> <p>ICT is exploring the opportunities with the current system supplier (HOTH) regarding which elements it can deliver on, including software licences, asset inventory and supplier contracts.</p> <p>Dec 19: An initial meeting has been held with the system supplier and will be taken forward in conjunction with procurement.</p> <p>Feb 20: A project is underway to re-implement HOTH, which will include an ICT Asset Management/licensing module as standard, as well as reporting tools. ICT are also in the process of building a portfolio of our 90 plus applications, including user groups, licenses etc. Both of these pieces of work feature in the proposed revised ICT Strategy which is due to go to Cabinet in March 2020.</p> <p>Jun 20: A soft launch of the revised version of HOTH is due for the end of June; as per the timeline in the ICT Strategy.</p>	Overdue

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								<p>Further modules will then follow (such as assets), slightly behind course, as resources have been focused on the technology response to CV-19.</p> <p>Jul 20: The revised HOTH was launched 25 June 2020. Work is now progressing with regards to implementing the assets module.</p>	
<p>Personal Data shared by Email with Members Report No. 24.18/19 (March 2019)</p>	1	<p>The Council should ensure that all Members are issued with an Epping Forest District Council email address and that all communication from Officers is sent via this corporate email address. Until the corporate email accounts have been introduced officers should use the Mimecast secure email facility when sending any personal/sensitive data to Members. As part of the wider review of IT provision, consideration should be given to issuing Members with a corporate device (phone, tablet etc) to access their corporate emails, similar to that in place at Broxbourne and Harlow Councils.</p>	Med	<p>Members will be issued with an EFDC password and a corporate device.</p>	Service Director- Customer Services	31/05/19	<p>30/09/19 04/12/19 31/03/20 30/09/20</p>	<p>Jun 19: The roll-out of 'locked-down' devices has commenced, and the vast majority of Members are now in receipt of and i-pad for this purpose. The work around e-mails has been paused. It is recognised that there needs to be more flexibility for Members to enable them to access e-mails on their personal phones so they can undertake their duties effectively. Officers are assessing options to allow this flexibility whilst retaining the necessary security. An update on the final position will be provided by September 2019.</p> <p>Oct /Dec 19: The solution has been installed and tested on a testbed of members and will be rolled out in January 2020.</p> <p>Feb 20: The solution for Members who wish to receive Council e-mails on their personal devices was rolled out in January and is continuing. The use of private emails will cease at the end of March, to</p>	Overdue

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								<p>afford the IT team sufficient time to resolve any outstanding issues with iPads and personal devices.</p> <p>Jun/Jul 20: There remain concerns over the solutions available in totality to Members. A new package is being brought together after discussions between Senior Management and the Portfolio Holder. It is anticipated that the new package will be developed by September 2020.</p>	
Health and Safety Corporate Approach Report No. 14.18/19 (April 2019)	2	H&S Corporate Strategy, Policy and supporting procedures should be reviewed at appropriate level and refreshed if necessary.	Low	There is in the Commercial and Regulatory Services Service Plan for 2019/20 a requirement for corporate risk assessments to be reviewed by March 2020. This requirement will be extended to include a review of the Corporate strategy.	Service Director Business Services	31/03/20	31/10/20	<p>Jun 20: The Council has recently appointed an additional H&S officer to provide the capacity to enable this and other outstanding actions to be progressed, alongside day to day activity.</p> <p>Jul 20: A review of the corporate H&S Strategy is being undertaken by the Strategic H&S Group</p>	Overdue
Business Rates – Council Wide Approach Report No. 13.18/19 (April 2019)	2	Representatives from the Local Gazetteer and Licensing teams should be invited to attend the information sharing working group to discuss the commercial property information they hold within the GeoPlace and M3 databases and how this might	Low	Due to long-term sickness the organiser will not be able to re-commence this working group until late summer.	Business Rates Specialist	30/09/19	01/04/20 31/10/20	<p>Oct 19/Feb 20: Due to long-term sickness it has not been possible to re-commence this working group.</p> <p>Jun /Jul 20: The Business Rates Specialist returned to work in April 2020 and the priority has been dealing with the Council's response to central government's grants initiatives for small businesses.</p>	Overdue

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		better be used to the benefit of the Council including but not limited to maximising business rates income. Data Protection Officers / Legal representatives should also be involved to help ensure that any actions recommended by the Forum are GDPR compliant.							
Business Rates – Council Wide Approach Report No. 13.18/19 (April 2019)	3	The Business Rates Team to request bespoke reports to be written from the M3 system used by the Planning Team that only identifies information in respect of commercial properties which would eliminate the need for the Business Rates Team spending their time sifting through lengthy reports.	Low	Accepted – officers will look at options information from M3 and adapt the reports accordingly	Revenues and Benefits Manager	30/06/19	01/10/19 01/04/20 31/10/20	Jun 19/Dec 19/Feb 20: There has been no progress with the Planning M3 system due to the lack of resources and the migration of staff into the Business Support Unit. Jun/Jul 20: The Business Rates Specialist returned to work in April 2020 and the priority has been dealing with the Council's response to central government's grants initiatives for small businesses.	Overdue
Business Rates – Council Wide Approach Report No. 13.18/19 (April 2019)	5	The format of the Planning Information Input Log should be amended so that it takes account of information received from other Council departments (such as Economic Development, Local Gazetteer, Licensing	Low	Accepted - officers will look at options for pulling this information together and adjust processes accordingly	Revenues and Benefits Manager	31/05/19	01/10/19 01/04/20 31/10/20	Jun 19: There has been little progress in developing the Planning Information Input Log, due to the lack of resources. The team has received a considerable amount of information from the Council's Licensing Team, which they are comparing to the information	Overdue

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		and Legal for example). The Business Rates Manager should review the Information Input Log on a more regular basis so that he can encourage the business rates officers to keep up to date with processing tasks.						held by the Business Rates system. Oct /Dec19: Due to long-term sickness it has not been possible to progress this. Feb 20: There has been some progress on aspects of this work, although it has not been possible to complete it yet. Jun/Jul 20: The Business Rates Specialist returned to work in April 2020 and the priority has been dealing with the Council's response to central government's grants initiatives for small businesses.	
Council Tax and Business Rates Report No. 11.18/19 (May 2019)	4	Similar to the control operated over Council Tax, the Business Rates Team should undertake a periodic review (ideally annually) of reliefs claimed to ensure that businesses remain eligible.	Low	A program of canvassing will be undertaken for 2019/20	Services Director (Customer Services)	31/03/20	30/09/20	Jun/Jul 20: The program was due to be introduced in December 2019, before annual billing, but was delayed due to the lack of resources. Ideally it would then have been introduced immediately after annual billing, but this has not been possible due to Covid-19 and the administration of Business Support Grants. The canvass will be carried out before 1 October, in time for the second half-year.	Overdue

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Review of FirstPort Property Services invoices 2018/19	3	There should be a Staff Communication from Business Support to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the procedures for ordering, receipting and processing invoices • new suppliers should be set up promptly and preferably in advance of invoices • staff should not hold onto invoices • staff should request that suppliers include a contact name or department on invoices. 	Low	A staff communication is being drafted.	Service Manager Business Support and ICT/ Service Director – Business Services	31/07/19	30/11/19 31/04/20 31/03/20 31/07/20	<p>Oct 19: The communication has been drafted. This will be shared with Internal Audit prior to issuing to ensure all issues identified during the current Invoice Payments audit are captured.</p> <p>Dec 19/Feb 20: The communication will be issued once the supporting firmstep form has been finalised with ICT so that instructions for completion of the form can be included in the communication.</p> <p>Jun/Jul 20: Development of the firmstep form is underway with the IT team. This has been delayed due to the ICT response to Covid-19.</p>	Overdue
North Weald Airfield 2018/19 Report No. 20.18/19 (April 2019)	4	Airfield Manager to liaise with Finance and IT to include facility to enable landing fees to be paid on the Council website or via card payments. A date should be agreed regarding when it is practical for the new arrangements to be publicised and enforced.	Med	A report addressing this issue will be made to Cabinet with a fee regime introduced following call in.	Airfield Manager	05/09/19	31/12/19 31/05/20 31/07/20	<p>Oct 19: The Airfield Manager is currently working with the Payment Solutions Team to identify the most appropriate methods of collecting fees. The report for Cabinet has been formulated and submitted.</p> <p>Feb 20: Work is still ongoing, and the aim is to implement a scheme in April/May 2020.</p> <p>Jun/Jul 20: It has not been possible to undertake the necessary training due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. The payment method requires some changes that are currently being looked at by the Payment Solutions Team.</p>	Overdue

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North Weald Airfield 2018/19 Report No. 20.18/19 (April 2019)	5	Airfield Manager to liaise with IT regarding the fixing of the NWA webpage. This will enable instructions regarding payment of landing fees and a link to the Council website to enable prior payment or card payment to be included.	Med	The airfield manager will meet with IT to address this matter.	Airfield Manager	30/07/19	31/12/19 31/04/20 31/03/20 31/07/20	<p>Oct 19: The content for the Airfield's microsite has been submitted to PR and we are awaiting feedback.</p> <p>Dec 19/ Feb 20: The basics of the website are complete, and the content is ready to be input. The Council is changing website host and meetings with potential new host are currently taking place.</p> <p>Jun 20: The website is currently in the test phase and due to go live once all changes to the microsite have been made.</p> <p>Jul 20: The website was transferred to the testing server 6 July 2020 and is currently in testing phase.</p>	Overdue
Health and Safety – Satellite Offices 2019/20 Report No. 06.19/20 (February 2020)	2	Managers are formally reminded of the need to bring risk assessments up to date and for these to be reviewed and updated at least annually thereafter, or earlier if circumstances change. Centrally an officer is designated to carry out quarterly check that satellite office/depot risk assessments are up to date.	High	All team managers have been instructed with immediate effect to record all training and training needs, risk assessments and upload these onto a matrix based on that of Oakwood Hill. They will also be tasked with discussing H&S at each team meeting and all records will be required to be sent to their Level 2 Service Manager ahead of the quarterly Corporate Safety Team to be checked for compliance with HSAWA	Contingency Planning and Corporate Safety Officer.	30/03/20	31/12/20	<p>Jun 20: The Council's immediate response to Covid19 has caused a significant shift in working arrangements which has altered the risk in relation to this recommendation. The current risks in satellite offices has reduced as work from these locations has been either suspended or reduced. The focus of H&S officers has been in ensuring that staff are working safely from home and all staff are being asked to complete a home safety assessment. An additional Health and Safety Officer has recently joined Epping Forest District Council and a priority task will be</p>	Overdue

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		<p>A Lone Working Risk Assessment is undertaken at Norway House</p> <p>A fire risk assessment be undertaken at the Oakwood Hill Depot to assess whether there is an increased risk whilst the current building works are taking place.</p>		Fire Risk assessment in the hands of Facilities Management.				<p>addressing these outstanding recommendations, once work on ensuring staff are working safely at home has been completed.</p> <p>Jul 20: This is being prioritised by the Corporate Health and Safety Group</p>	
Health and Safety – Satellite Offices 2019/20 Report No. 06.19/20 (February 2020)	6	At least quarterly, the Contingency Planning and Corporate Safety Officer to receive the training matrices referred to above, to ensure that the appropriate H&S training is being identified and delivered in a timely manner.	Med	All points above are relevant to this and will ensure all training needs are identified in a timely manner.	Contingency Planning and Corporate Safety Officer.	30/03/20	31/12/20	Jun/Jul 20: Linked to the action above. A corporate health & safety officer post has been created and they will implement the issues arising from this audit. The person commenced on 2 June 2020, and a complete review of the audit will be conducted as priority.	Overdue
Homelessness 2018/19 Report No. 23.18/19 (February 2020)	2	The Benefits team and Housing Options team to work together to increase the uptake of Discretionary Housing Payments through regular meetings and raising awareness of potential suitable DHP applicants.	Med	<p>The Housing Options Team is coming to the end of a restructure consultation which will rebrand the team into the Housing Needs Service with 3 distinct teams: Homelessness, Rehousing & Temporary Accommodation.</p> <p>A Homelessness Team Manager is in the process of being recruited and the restructured Homelessness Team will include a Private</p>	Service Manager Housing Needs and Older People's Services	01/04/20	30/09/20	May 20: The recruitment to a Private Sector Lettings Officer is currently on hold as a result of the current CV-19 crisis. However, discussion between the Revenues and Benefits and Housing Needs & Older People's Service Managers about how best Housing Needs and Benefits can work more effectively to increase the impact of DHPs for local residents are ongoing although it is worth mentioning that the DHP allocation has reduced from	Overdue

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				<p>Sector Lettings Officers tasked with establishing, branding & promoting a private rented sector access schemes to support & increase homelessness prevention activity. This will have a close link with colleagues administering DHPs as the quick assessment and payment of DHPs will be an integral part of increasing access to private rented accommodation for clients.</p> <p>Depending upon recruitment it is hoped to launch a new scheme wef 1st April 2020. In the meantime, Homelessness Officers have been reminded to apply for DHPs in all appropriate cases for clients.</p> <p>A relationship between homelessness and DHP colleagues already exists and consideration is being given to the colocation of a DHP Officer within the team once a week to strengthen relationships and encourage an increased uptake of DHP provision.</p>				<p>£250K to £143K in 2020-21 as a result of sustained underspending of full allocation in previous years.</p> <p>Homelessness recovery planning is underway as a result of the public health crisis & the impact this will have on varying cohorts of clients and I am still keen that the links between Housing Needs and Benefits are strengthened in order to provide a coherent, joined up approach to the prevention of homelessness.</p> <p>Jun/Jul 20: Work continues around understanding the payment of DHPs and challenging refusals where payment could prevent homelessness. HB Team Manager also providing training for homelessness officers in order to make more effective use of this resource.</p> <p>Homelessness recovery planning is underway as a result of the public health crisis & the impact this will have on varying cohorts of clients and I am still keen that the links between Housing Needs and Benefits are strengthened in order to provide a coherent, joined up approach to the prevention of homelessness.</p>	

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Change and Patch Management 2019/20 Report No. 07.19/20 (February 2020)	4	Further develop the reporting utilities in the service desk application (Hoth) to identify assets with 'audit' dates over a year old, with missing or empty data fields, when purchased, end of life approaching, and other useful management information.	Low	EFDC is currently re-implementing its IT Service Management system (HOTH) which includes the restructuring and categorisation of asset data. Asset data will be further validated through IT service management interactions and a full audit will be undertaken as described above, to validate data accuracy.	IT Management Consultant; Service Manager Business Support and ICT	31/03/20	31/08/20	<p>Jun 20: A soft launch of the revised version of HOTH is due for the end of June; as per the timeline in the ICT Strategy. Further modules will then follow (such as assets), slightly behind course, as resources have been focused on the technology response to CV-19.</p> <p>Jul 20: The revised HOTH was launched 25 June 2020. Work is now progressing with regards to implementing the assets module.</p>	Overdue
Data Retention and Disposals 2019/20 Report No. 09.19/20 (February 2020)	1	Corporate data retention and disposals policy and procedures should be produced, published on the intranet and communicated to staff. The policy should be developed with reference to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) guidance, setting out the purpose, scope, roles and responsibilities relating to data retention, covering all data types, and be subject to annual review by the Information Governance Group (IGG).	High	The policy will be developed as part of the Information Governance Group.	Business Services Director (As Chair of IGG)	31/07/20		<p>Jul 20: A Strategic Information Governance Group (IGG) has been established whose role will include overseeing the Information Governance framework (including policies), setting standards and monitoring the work programme. An operational IGG will be responsible for day to day operations and providing management information to the Strategic Group.</p>	In progress

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Data Retention and Disposals 2019/20 Report No. 09.19/20 (February 2020)	2	Services should review the bases for keeping all data types (manual, electronic and emails) in line with legislation and service requirements and formalise these in a service specific data retention schedule. Advice should be sought from ICT as necessary This should include a mechanism for checking compliance with the retention and disposals guidelines.	High	This will be overseen and monitored by the Information Governance Group.	Business Services Director (As Chair of IGG)	30/09/20		Jul 20: Services are in the process of updating their Register of Processing Activities (RoPAs) which includes a review of service specific data retention requirements. These will be monitored by the Strategic Information Governance Group.	In progress
Key Financial Controls – Housing Rents and Arrears 2019/20 Report No. 12.19/20 (March 2020)	1	The Service Manager – Housing Management and Homeownership to oversee the process to ensure that policies, together with related procedure notes for all aspects of rent setting, collection and arrears management are drafted/updated and maintained up to date. A formal deadline is set to complete the updating of all rent and arrears policies and procedures.	Med	Plans are in place to update policies relating to rent arrears and collection. Procedure notes around rent setting are in the process of being drafted. An action plan has been produced to ensure this happens within an appropriate timeframe	Service Manager, Housing Management and Homeownership	01/07/20		Jul 20: The Housing Rents Policy and the Tenancy Policy are to be presented to Cabinet 20 July 2020. Other policies are to be presented to Cabinet in September 2020.	Complete (and will be removed after the Cabinet meeting)