

Appendix 1 Outstanding Medium Rated Agreed Management Actions

Audit Title	Target Date	Person Responsible	Internal Audit Finding	Agreed Management Response	Date of Last Update	Update Detail
Capital Expenditure (26.18/19)	28/2/2019	Sushil Thobhani	<p>Capital Project Business Cases</p> <p>We selected a sample of five projects which have project start dates between April and October 2018 from the Programme Management Office's Project Tracker.</p> <p>The projects selected were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Slough Academy Talent Management;</li> <li>•SEN &amp; PRU Expansion Programme – Thomas Grey and Milan Centre Refurbishment;</li> <li>•Alternative replacement care provision;</li> <li>•Early Years' service capital development; and</li> <li>•Montem/TVU demolition.</li> </ul> <p>We confirmed for each project, a Capital Business Case had been completed.</p> <p>We identified in four cases, a standardised template had been fully completed. In the outstanding case (relating to the Montem/TVU demolition project), we noted that the business case was in a different format.</p> <p>We were advised by Procurement Specialist that this template was a new template that has recently been developed and that this template had been completed as part of a pilot run.</p> <p>Through our review, we confirmed each of the five business cases raised had cited the need for procurement to be engaged with.</p> <p>In four instances a Procurement Business Case had also been raised and we confirmed the procurement path for the project had been stated.</p> <p>The Business Case also detailed approval from members of the Procurement Review Board evidenced through signature in each case.</p> <p>We also obtained evidence to confirm the procurement route as approved by the members of the Procurement Review Board had been completed. We noted in one instance, a Procurement Business Case had not been raised. Through further inspection of the original Capital Business Case, we identified that this related to additional funds (£244k) being raised for an ongoing project.</p> <p>Through discussion with Procurement Specialist, we were advised that in this case, a Procurement Business Case had not been escalated to procurement and therefore did not receive approval over the tendering requirements.</p> <p>We were subsequently advised by the Procurement Specialist that as per OJEU rules, where additional funds are required, if these are more than 50% of the original project, this contract must go back out for tender. In this case, the amount was under this amount.</p> <p>However, we were subsequently advised by the Procurement Specialist that the procurement department is often not engaged to confirm the procurement path to be followed is appropriate.</p> <p>We noted as part of our review of training provided, there is limited guidance in place with regards to engaging with procurement when raising business cases.</p> <p>An action has been raised in this regard (please see action two). Where not consulted, there is a risk of financial losses being incurred where Procurement are not engaged with to ensure sufficient value for money is obtained for the Council. As per above, we were advised that the Council are considering the use a new Business Case template.</p>	<p>The Council will put in place a joint Capital and Procurement Business Case.</p> <p>Prior to being utilised, the new Business Case will be formally reviewed by both the PMO and Procurement team to ensure it captures all necessary information.</p> <p>Following approval, the Business Case will be made available for use via the Staff Intranet and will be used in the approval process of all capital projects.</p>	30/1/2020	<p>SMT - This action has been restated in the 19/20 but it is unclear if this desirable. As PMO's would need to be clear about their procurement route before having the Capital Expenditure approved</p>

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Debtors Management	31/10/2019	Barry Stratfull	<p>We confirmed that the Council has in place a debt recovery policy, however through discussion with Head of Transactional Finance identified that this is not being followed as the policy is not fit for purpose and is out of date. Through discussion with the Service Lead – Finance, we were advised that the Service Assurance Technical Specialist has drafted a revised policy that is due to be escalated to Cabinet in January 2019. Due to staff absence, we were unable to obtain a copy of the draft policy to review for adequacy.</p> <p>As part of our sample testing outlined below, we noted that following the Accounts Receivable Team sending a final reminder letter, there is currently no consistently applied procedure to ensure debts are chased in a systematic manner to ensure all debts are chased as appropriate.</p> <p>Without a clearly defined debt recovery policy, there is a risk that practices administered with regards to debt recovery are not consistently applied. This may lead to inadequate chasing of debt leading to financial losses where debt cannot be recovered.</p>	<p>The Council will produce a revised Debt Recovery Policy.</p> <p>The Policy will be reviewed and approved via appropriate forums which include the Operations Board as to ensure oversight from arvato.</p> <p>The policy will be designed to provide guidance to staff chase debt in a systematic manner.</p>	30/1/2020	DMT - Head of Transactional Finance is tasked with completing action by 31st March
Governance - Overview & Scrutiny	30/4/2019	Dean Tyler	<p>Through discussion with the Scrutiny Officer, we were advised that the Annual Scrutiny Report for 2017/18 had been submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting dated 12 April 2018. Although draft minutes were not available for this Committee at the time of review, we confirmed that the report's submission was scheduled on the agenda for the meeting and was contained within the paper pack.</p> <p>Through review of the Forward Work Programme 2017/18, we identified that the annual report was included and was due for completion on 14 April 2018. As such, we confirmed that the preparation of the Annual Scrutiny Report 2017/18 was completed on schedule.</p> <p>We obtained the full Council's 24 April 2018 meeting minutes and through review confirmed the report had been submitted to the Council and had been unanimously endorsed by the members, noting that all members of the OSC were also present as members at the full Council meeting.</p> <p>Through review of the annual report, we confirmed that the key objectives of the OSC and of the three sub-panels were provided and that they were aligned with the remit and Terms of References for the groups as within the Constitution. We therefore reviewed the report against these objectives and confirmed that the completion of key objectives had been evidenced within, and that the report referred to the work undertaken by each of the sub panels. For example, through our review of 2017/18 OSC minutes we had noted that there had been two 'Call-in' events that had happened, where OSC members had raised Council decisions for scrutiny and decision. We confirmed that both 'call-in' events had been included in the report and that the outcomes of these had been outlined in the report.</p> <p>Through review of the Council meeting minutes dated 24th April 2018, we could not identify any evidence to confirm the Council had provided the OSC with feedback upon review of the Annual Report, only that the report had been endorsed by members.</p> <p>Through discussion with the Scrutiny Officer we were informed that there is limited feedback obtained from the Council, with most evaluative work being fulfilled internally by the Committee themselves.</p> <p>We noted that the report referred to the Committee's requirement to evaluate their own effectiveness, using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Is it (the Committee) effectively holding decision-makers to account?</li> <li>•Is it helping to improve services?</li> <li>•Is it building links between the Council, its partners and the community?</li> <li>•Is it helping to improve the quality of life for local people?</li> <li>•Is it adding value?</li> </ul> <p>Through subsequent review of the report, we identified that an explicit effectiveness review concerning the above criteria has not taken place. Rather, the report refers to the performance of the Committee and Panels through a description of the key work done through the year.</p> <p>However, without this explicit evaluation being performed or feedback being received, either from the Council or internally from the OSC, there is a risk that the functions of the OSC and their sub-panels are not being adequately evaluated. As such, performance-based issues may not be identified and consequently rectified in a timely manner. There is therefore the risk that the Council is not effectively administering their function where appropriate evaluation has not occurred.</p>	<p>As part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee annual report process, the report will explicitly review the Committee's own effectiveness against the group's objectives, and this will feed into a 'Lessons learnt' action plan that will better enable the Council to review and comment on the report to provide feedback.</p>	31/1/2019	Management action re-assigned to user: Dean Tyler

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HR Policies and Procedures	31/3/2019	Dean Tyler	Through discussion with the OD/HR Lead, we identified that an overarching procedural document was not in place to inform staff of the process for creation, approval, review and communication of policies and procedures (including the consultation process as part of new and reviewed policies and procedures). This can lead to an inconsistent approach being undertaken, leading to the mismanagement of policies and procedures. This was also evident from our sample testing of ten policies and procedures during the review, whereby we noted inconsistencies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The Policy Schedule page had not been used for one policy which had been updated after the new Schedule page was introduced (Smart Working Policy and Procedure);</li> <li>•Evidence of approval by the People Services SMT was only retained for one policy; and</li> <li>•There was only evidence of updated/new policy communication to staff for six policies.</li> </ul> If there is an overarching procedural document to inform staff these inconsistencies can be avoided, resulting in a more robust set of up to date informative policies and procedures, enabling staff to effectively carry out their duties.	The Council will formulate an overarching procedural document to inform staff on the processes for the creation, approval, review and communication of all Council policies and procedures. This will include the consultation process as part of new/reviewed policies and procedures.	28/11/2019	Management action re-assigned to user: Dean Tyler
James Elliman Homes (8.19/20)	31/12/2019	Colin Moone	We obtained the SLA in place between the Council and JEH and through review noted that it included the relationship between the two organisations with regards to services provided, charges, required information, use of sub-contractors and notices. In addition to this, we found that the agreement detailed the specific services to be provided by the Council's accounting and finance, asset management, communications, facilities and property and lettings areas. Through further review and discussion with the Service Lead for Governance, we noted that the SLA has not been formally signed by either a representative from the Council or by JEH. We were further advised that a copy of the SLA had been signed, however this could not be located. If the SLA is not formally signed off by both representatives of the Council and James Elliman Homes and retained, there is an increased likelihood that the SLA may not be perceived as binding, thus leading to potential issues in the provision of SBC staff for JEH.	The chair of the JEH Board will ensure that the SBC / JEH SLA is formally signed by authorised representatives from each body. This will also be regularly reviewed, with progress against agreed actions also presented.	21/2/2020	This action will be completed by 28th Feb 2020
Management of Housing Stock	31/3/2017	Karen Lewis	We reviewed the Tenancy Strategy and Policy 2013-2018, accessible via the Council's website, and confirmed that this covered in sufficient detail the areas required by the Act. However, we noted that it still made reference to the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan, which have since been replaced by the Five Year Plan, and the Slough demographic and housing context data referred to within the document was from 2012.	The Tenancy Strategy and Policy will be reviewed and updated to ensure it is aligned to the strategic priorities set out within the Five Year Plan. The strategy will then be issued to CMT and Cabinet for approval, and subject to the required consultation. Once finalised, it will be updated on the Council website and then reviewed annually thereafter.	13/2/2020	This will be completed by December 2020
Neighbourhood ASB Enforcement	31/10/2017	Ian Blake	Through discussion with two of the Enforcement Team Leaders, we identified that monthly supervisions were not being held monthly. There is therefore the risk that cases may not be appropriately responded to without regular oversight from Team Leaders. Through review with the Tenancy Team Leaders, we confirmed existence of a system control within Capita requiring Team Leaders to review cases at monthly intervals. However, following review of the ASB Policy, Team Leaders must ensure that, as part of this review, consistent application of the policy is monitored, and non-compliance flagged for corrective action.	Team Leaders will ensure that ASB cases are reviewed monthly, and following review and approval, and subsequent dissemination of the ASB Policy, that consistent application of the policy is monitored.	22/1/2020	email to Ian Blake
Purchasing Cards	31/3/2018	Sushil Thobhani	We discussed the lack of update with the Head of Procurement who stated that Procurement are reliant on Finance for reports on expenditure from Agresso, and the lack of oversight and communication of responsibilities for this process. This has meant that the Council have not been publishing expenditure on purchase cards. The code requires that Local authorities must publish details of every transaction on a Government Purchasing Cards and therefore could have an impact on the perceived transparency of the organisation if up to date data on expenditure is not available.	As part of the Councils Transparency code, the Council will publish expenditure on purchase cards, broken down by merchant, on its public internet site.	30/1/2020	DMT - Barry to send info to CP to publish on intranet to complete action by 31st March 2020
SUR	31/1/2019	Stephen Gibson	Approval of Plans As identified as part of finding 3, we identified that JV Partner meetings are not occurring as the membership of the two would be overlapping. The JV partners who can approve draft indicative plans would be present at the Business Board meetings. We were advised by the General Manager (SUR) that in addition to the approved minutes, where decisions of approval are made, a decision note is signed and agreed by the JV Partners. We requested the decision notes associated to the approval of Draft Indicative SDPs/ CPPs and Draft Formal SDPs/ CPPs and were advised that these could not be obtained at the date of review as the formal Board minutes are located with the company secretary and are in archive due to building works at the PSPs office. In the absence of decision notes, we reviewed the latest governance tracker dated 31 August 2018 and confirmed that each of the projects had been approved by the Business Board. However, without the decision note, we cannot confirm the accuracy of the Governance Tracker, nor can we confirm whether the appropriate individuals had approved the plans. As such, we cannot provide assurance that JV Partners had approved the plans in line with the Partnership Agreement. If plans are not approved in line with the Partnership Agreement, there is a risk that inadequate scrutiny and oversight has taken place in the planning of SUR schemes.	The Council will seek assurance that the plans have been approved by JV Partner members prior to the planning of projects. SUR will create a shared drive (restricted to relevant personnel) to enable access to legal documentation.	19/2/2020	Management action re-assigned to user: Stephen Gibson

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SUR	31/12/2018	Stephen Gibson	<p>We obtained the most recent three available meeting minutes of the BB dated March 2018, May 2018 and July 2018. We reviewed to confirm compliance against the terms set out within the partnership agreement. Through our review, we confirmed the Board have met in line with their required quarterly meeting frequency.</p> <p>We additionally confirmed that they hold a consistent discussion aligning to the delegation policy with specific reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Governance;</li> <li>•Board approvals;</li> <li>•Development Manager's report enabling oversight of ongoing projects;</li> <li>•Community Benefits;</li> <li>•Financial planning and reporting;</li> <li>•Commercial site developments; and</li> <li>•Risk management.</li> </ul> <p>We noted, however the required quorum has not been met. More specifically;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•In March 2018, one Council representative was present and two PSP representatives;</li> <li>•In May 2018, only one Council and PSP representative was present; and</li> <li>•In July 2018, one Council representative was present and two PSP representatives.</li> </ul> <p>Through review of the Partnership Agreement, for meetings to be quorate, two Council representatives and two PSP Representatives, one of whom shall be the Chair (or his alternate) must be present.</p> <p>We were advised by the General Manager (SUR) that this was due to staff unavailability. As part of finding 4, we identified that the membership of the SUR Board is obtaining ample notice of the meetings with calendar invites distributed in January 2018 for the meetings outlined above. As such, we can discredit this as a cause of the meeting attendance.</p> <p>The General Manger advised by not meeting due to the attendance not being quorate, the operational capacity of the SUR may be hindered (for example by delaying approval for STPs and CPPs).</p> <p>However, if the Business Board meetings are not quorate, there is a risk that collective oversight is not sought through the Business Board's decision making and approval processes. Additionally, the Board are making decisions without appropriate authority given that the required attendance is not achieved.</p> <p>We also identified a lack of continuity of membership with amendments to personnel noted at the January, May and July 2018 meetings. Whilst we note that staff turnover and required changes to the roles of members on the Business Board is necessary, the continuity of long term members should be considered when appointing future representatives.</p>	The Board will ensure that at least two representatives from each Partner will attend Business Board meetings.	19/2/2020	Management action re-assigned to user: Stephen Gibson