INTERNAL AUDIT FOLLOW UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

Maldon District Council

February 2022

IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST

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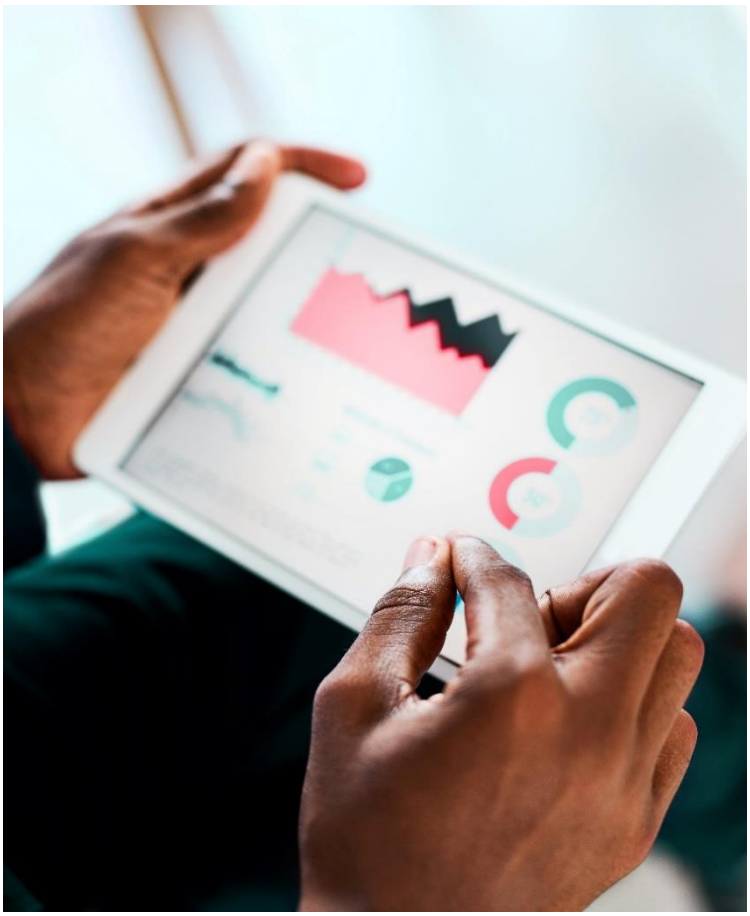


SUMMARY

2018/19	Total Recs	H	M	L	To follow up	Complete		Overdue		Not Due	
						H	M	H	M	H	M
Safe and Clean Environment	6	-	5	1	5	-	4	-	1	-	-
Total	**6**	**-**	**5**	**1**	**5**	**-**	**4**	**-**	**1**	**-**	**-**

2019/20	Total Recs	H	M	L	To follow up	Complete		Overdue		Not Due	
						H	M	H	M	H	M
Flood Risk Management	4	-	4	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-
Total	**4**	**-**	**4**	**-**	**4**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**4**	**-**	**-**

2020/21	Total Recs	H	M	L	To follow up	Complete		Overdue		Not Due	
						H	M	H	M	H	M
Safeguarding	5	1	3	1	4	1	1	-	2	-	-
CIPFA FM Preparedness	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Workforce Management	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Information Management	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-
KFS - Payroll	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Affordable Housing	3	1	2	-	3	-	2	1	-	-	-
Knowledge Management	3	-	3	-	3	-	2	-	1	-	-
Total	**16**	**2**	**10**	**4**	**12**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**3**	**-**	**-**

FEBRUARY 2022	Total Recs	H	M	L	To follow up	Complete		Overdue		Not Due	
						H	M	H	M	H	M
Partnerships	4	-	3	1	3	-	1	-	1	-	1
Covid Response Plans	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Management of Property	4	1	3	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	3
Main Financial Systems	4	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Policy Review	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Strategic Performance - Community	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
IT Strategy & Transformation	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total	**17**	**1**	**10**	**6**	**11**	**-**	**1**	**-**	**1**	**1**	**8**

SUMMARY

2019/2019

3 high and 13 medium recommendations were raised in 2018/19. One recommendation has been reviewed since the previous PGA:

- Safe & Clean Environment – One medium priority recommendation remains overdue.

2019/20

5 high and 34 medium recommendations were raised in 2019/20, 35 of which are considered implemented and previously reported to the PGA. The remaining four relate to Flood Risk Management. One of these recommendations became due since the last PGA, however, has not been implemented and is reported below as overdue. The remaining three have previously been reported as overdue with a revised implementation date and we will follow these up prior to the next PGA meeting.

2020/21

2 high and 10 medium recommendations were raised in 2020/21. The current position of these recommendations are as follows:

- Knowledge Management – One medium priority recommendation had a target implementation date of December 2021 which has been amended to December 2022. This is reported as overdue.
- Affordable Housing – One high recommendation remains overdue. The finding was broken down into three recommendations, one of which has been implemented and is reported as complete, with the remaining two still overdue.
- Safeguarding – Two recommendations have been recorded as completed since the last PGA and one recommendation is overdue. The remaining recommendation is not due until April 2022 and will be followed up in Q2.

2021/2022

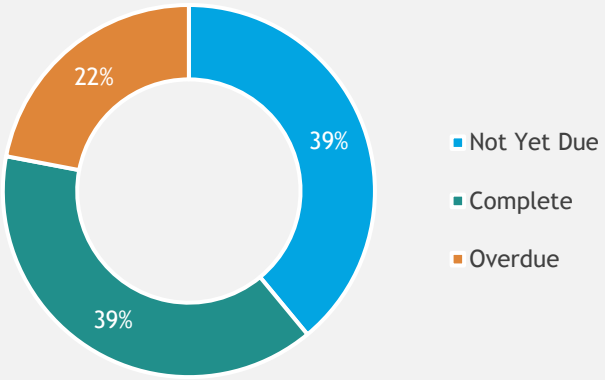
1 high and 20 medium have been raised in 2021/22. Of these two have become due since the last PGA. The current position of these recommendations are as follows:

- Partnerships: One medium recommendation has been completed and evidence has been received, therefore we have recorded this action as implemented. The remaining recommendation was due in November 2021 and has an amended implementation date of 7 February 2022. We have recorded this as overdue.

REQUIRED AUDIT COMMITTEE ACTION:

We ask the Audit Committee to note the progress against the recommendations.

Total Cumulative implementation 20/21 and 21/22



RECOMMENDATIONS: COMPLETE

AUDIT	ACTIONS AGREED	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
		2020/21			
Affordable Housing	1.3 The Housing Service Business Plan should be finalised and disseminated to relevant staff	High	Damien Ghela	Completed	1.3 The Housing Business Plan for 20/21 was completed and shared with managers and staff but did not receive Official sign off. Work has begun on the updated plan for 2022/23 *Audit Comment: We received evidence of the updated Housing Business Plan for 20/21. Whilst this should have received formal approval, focus should be on the 22/23 plan with the Council ensuring formal sign-off is in place before it is disseminated.*
Affordable Housing	The Commuted Sums Strategy should be drafted and approved as soon as possible and disseminated to relevant Council staff.	Medium	Matt Leigh	Completed	Affordable Housing and Commuted Sums Strategy now in place. *Audit Comment: The Commuted Sums Strategy has been provided to audit.*
Affordable Housing	The Strategic Housing Board meetings and accompanying terms of reference should be reviewed and meetings re-instituted as soon as possible.	Medium	Damien Ghela	Completed	ToR is included which is now subject to revision based on comments from the first meeting. A program for meetings over 2022 will shortly be issued to partners. *Audit Comment: ToR was provided to Audit.*
Safeguarding	The Council should ensure that both a C1A and SETSAF1 form are in place, as opposed to only having one or the other. Additionally, the Council should keep a clear record of all investigative activity, decision making and communication with relevant parties involved in the safeguarding case e.g. police or Essex Social Care.	High	Damien Ghela	Completed	Both forms are in place within the Council's Intranet Safeguarding pages. Hard copies of the documents are also in the MDC Safeguarding policy. *Audit Comment: Both forms were provided to audit and seen to be in place.*
Safeguarding	To ensure the management of	Medium	Damien Ghela	Completed	A new case management system is up and running and

	safeguarding cases is more robust until the Council starts using the Freshservice system, the Council should update its current safeguarding spreadsheet to include unique references numbers for each case. Additionally, all evidence relating to each case should be held in the safeguarding team's secure network drive, using a system or reference numbers to uniquely identify each case. Finally, staff should be reminded of the importance of documenting and timestamping all actions taken in relation to all safeguarding cases.				working well. The system is fulfilling its remit of being auditable and allowing for greater accuracy is managing Safeguarding concerns. *Audit Comment: Evidence of the system being in place and operational was provided to audit as part of the follow up process.*
		2021/22			
Partnerships	Guidance should be produced which clearly defines the requirements for both formal and smart partners or Statutory/Non statutory - whichever provides the best definition.	Medium	Georgina Buttons	Completed	Partnerships database is now updated and descriptions are included. *Audit Comment: Central register of Partnerships was seen by audit.*

RECOMMENDATIONS: OVERDUE

These recommendations have been marked as overdue as they have previously revised their implementation date. Therefore, they have now missed at least two implementation dates.

AUDIT	ACTIONS AGREED	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
			2018/19		
Safe and Clean Environment	The Council should create an environmental and waste management strategy of their own. This could incorporate the Inter-Authority Agreement, however should have a wider view of environmental management as a whole. This strategy should outline what the Council would like to achieve in the medium to long term in regards to the environment, with specific targets and actions to assist in implementing the strategy, as well as an intermittent review to ensure the Council is working towards implementing the strategy.	Medium	Paul Dodson	~~2019/2020~~ ~~March 2022~~ 31 March 2023	The Audit action for an Environment and Waste Management Strategy morphed into a Climate Change Strategy with a much wider scope and remit that takes it beyond its original remit. The formation and agreement of MDC's Climate Change Strategy is now being led by Georgina Button and is monitored within the Corporate Performance targets under the title - Preparation And Adoption Of Climate Action Strategy And Climate Action Plan As such, there needs to be a refocus/restart on specific departmental strategies for Environmental Services and Waste Management Services. The Environmental Services Strategy can be delivered more easily within the next financial year 26/03/23. However, Waste Management is undergoing a sea-change, led by the Governments new aspiration for how waste services should be delivered. In addition to this, we are also beginning to scope a new waste contract as the old one will soon expire. Both these points will massively influence any MDC Waste Strategy. Therefore, I am proposing a shorter looser Waste Strategy focusing on short term issues which can then grow to support any new national and contractual requirements. This can be delivered by 26/03/23 but a wider strategy may not be deliverable until a new contract is in place and Government policy has been adopted. *Audit Comment: An implementation date of March 2022 was provided for the November 2021 PGA. However, this latest update indicates it will now be March 2023 due to the Strategy being included as part of the development of the Climate Change Strategy. Due to the time that has elapsed since*

					this recommendation was made, and the internal developments regarding development of different strategies, there should be consideration as to whether this recommendation should be closed with the view that a Climate Change and Sustainability audit is due to be undertaken as part of the 22/23 Internal Audit Plan.
			2019/20		
Flood Risk Management	The Council should, with its partners, review and update the Strategic Flood Protection Plan and create a flooding management risk register detailing the key risks, controls and action owners.	Medium	Damien Ghela	~~March 2021~~ ~~December 2021~~ 30 April 2022	The Master Flood Plan has been updated by Partners with current infrastructure projects. The Flood Plan should now be added to a wider Strategic Document on flooding which has yet to be produced.
			2020/21		
Affordable Housing	1.1 Ongoing reporting and monitoring of delivery against action plan and the affordable housing targets should be undertaken.	High	Damien Ghela	~~Sept 21~~ ~~17 Dec 21~~ 30 April 2022	1.1 Ongoing monitoring and reporting of Affordable Housing Delivery is taking place but needs to be brought into Senior Leadership reports (E.g. The Balance Scorecard). This will require a new KPI to be set up. Practical work on setting up the KPI has still not taken place but monitoring and reporting of the information is occurring and delivered by John Swords.
	1.2 The Housing Strategy extension should be finalised as soon as possible, and an accompanying action plan included which links with the actions in the Housing Service Business Plan.			~~Dec 21~~ 30 April 2022	1.2 We have not been able to put these strategies forward for approval due to competing priorities. We are hopeful we will be able to complete submission by end of Mar 22.
Knowledge Management	Ensure all BCPs are updated and held centrally	Medium	Hannah Wheatley	~~Dec 21~~ 31 December 2022	This audit action can only be completed once it's been agreed if hybrid working will be made permanent as this affects where and how staff work in an emergency. A working group has been set-up to review all BCPs and this action will be resolved by 31st December 2022 (allowing time for hybrid working to be rolled out and all BCPs to be updated accordingly).

Safeguarding	The Council should update its record of volunteering organisations to clarify: whether volunteers would be coming into contact with children, young persons or vulnerable adults, who the onus of performing a DBS check rests with, whether volunteers have had a DBS check and whether supervision is required.	Medium	Damien Ghela	~~December 2021~~ 31 March 2022	Various Service areas across the Council do maintain lists of volunteer and partner organisations they work with. However, agreement is still required as to where a master list of organisations sits and processes to ensure it is regularly reviewed. *Audit Comment: An updated Partnerships database is in place following the Partnership audit and therefore may want to be considered as part of the completion of this recommendation.*
			2021/22		
Partnerships	The Council should ensure the three thematic strategies are updated to reflect the new objectives identified in the latest Corporate Plan and that partnerships are appropriately mapped out	Medium	Georgina Button	~~30 November 2021~~ 7 February 2022	We have arranged it so that we will separate out the single upload and publish 2 of the 3 updated strategies - this week. The Place thematic strategy will be updated once the member of staff returns from sick leave. This is the only one outstanding.

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