



**Opinion:** Full Assurance.

**Previous Review:** No previous review

The purpose of this review is to provide assurance regarding the effectiveness of the governance and financial aspects of the Sevenoaks District Council Property Investment Strategy and attainment so far of set objectives and to ensure that these arrangements are fit-for-purpose to deliver service objectives and comply with Council procedures.

To this effect, the following key risks and controls were examined:

1. Risk that the Council may not comply with relevant legislation, policies or good practice.
2. Risk that the property investment strategy may not have effective governance arrangements in place.
3. Risk that the strategy may not have effective funding
4. Risk that monitoring and report the activity may not be effectively recorded
5. Risk that opportunities to achieve or demonstrate efficiency or value for money may not be maximised, for example an investment opportunity may not deliver the expected return.
6. Risk that fraud and corruption may be undetected, for example, an investment proposal is not properly authorised.
7. Risk that Operational and Strategic risk assessments may not be undertaken in accordance with Council policy and risks not adequately managed.

Audit testing results indicated that controls were fully met in all of the aspects examined.

The opinion of the auditor was that there is **Full Assurance** in place to ensure achievement of service objectives pertaining to the audited system. This means a sound framework of control is in place that meets the Council's or service objectives. All expected controls tested are in place and are operating effectively.

There were no audit recommendations arising from this report.

**Review of Environmental Health  
Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire  
Process 2017/18**

**Issued 18 January 2018**

**Opinion:** This report was for information and guidance purposes only - No opinion has been provided for this review

**Previous Review:** No previous review

The purpose of this audit review is to provide reasonable assurance to Senior Management that there are sound arrangements in place, for the collection and analysis of the Environmental Health Shared Service (EHSS) customer satisfaction questionnaire (CSQ) data, and that it is pragmatic and used to inform continuous service improvement.

Although there is no mandatory requirement for the EHSS to undertake CSQ, we appreciate the general purpose for doing them, mainly to inform continuous service improvement.

The areas for consideration included:-

1. The existing customer satisfaction process
2. How is the information used for service improvements
3. How is this reported to senior management/portfolio holder
4. What other options should be considered
5. Regular review of the process

This review provided advice on how the use of CSQ, may be used to improve and support EHSS delivery in the future. As a result, this review does not follow the usual internal audit reporting protocol as assurance ratings and a management action plan has been excluded from the report.

Senior management and portfolio holders do not receive regular information specifically on CSQ outcomes in a period. However, they are aware of the general performance of the EHSS via the monthly reporting against performance indicators.

The general perception of the EHSS delivery performance, by management has been that Environmental Health (EH) Officers have a high level of customer care skills. Staff are very knowledgeable and have kept up to date with the legislation/regulation framework in which they operate, and this is communicated to customers when dealing with service requests. EH officers and management have demonstrated their willingness to get to the bottom of root causes of issues raised by customers. Most communication with customers is direct, either with a face-to-face meeting or by telephone.

## Review of Payroll 2017/18

Issued 6 March 2018

**Opinion:** Full Assurance.**Previous Review:** Full Assurance

The purpose of this review is to provide assurance regarding the effectiveness of the accuracy, authenticity and completeness of the payroll system, in particular starters and leavers and to provide assurance regarding compliance with HMRC regulations.

To this effect, the following key risks and controls were examined:

1. Risk that the Council may not comply with relevant legislation, policies or good practice, such as the proper PAYE collection of tax and national insurance and other HRMC regulations.
2. Risk that the Council may not make payroll payments on a due and timely basis.
3. Risk that the payroll system may not correctly reconcile to the main accounting system resulting in potential misstatements in the accounts.
4. Risk that starters and leavers may not be correctly set up or removed.
5. Risk that opportunities to achieve or demonstrate efficiency or value for money may not be maximised, for example by greater use of on-line transactions and access.
6. Risk that fraud and corruption may be undetected, for example in regard to allowances claimed or “ghost employees” or other inaccurate, unauthorised or fraudulent payroll payments being made.
7. Risk that Operational and Strategic risk assessments may not be undertaken in accordance with Council policy and risks not adequately managed.

Audit testing results indicated that controls were fully met in all of the aspects examined.

The opinion of the auditor was that there is **Full Assurance** in place to ensure achievement of service objectives pertaining to the audited system. This means a sound framework of control is in place that meets the Council’s or service objectives. All expected controls tested are in place and are operating effectively.

There were no audit recommendations arising from this report.

## Review of Members' Expenses 2017/18

Issued 13 March 2018

**Opinion:** Substantial Assurance.

**Previous Review:** No previous review

The purpose of this audit was review the processes for paying Members expenses to ensure authorisation, accuracy and completeness of claims for reimbursement.

To this effect, the following risks were examined:-

1. Risk that the Council may not comply with relevant legislation (Members allowances) (England) Regulations 2003), policies or good practice
2. Risk that the Council may not have an appropriate or documented and accessible process in place
3. Risk that expenses are not requested (by Members) in a timely manner
4. Risk inadequate documentation to evidence expenditure
5. Risk that reimbursement does not take place in a timely manner
6. Risk of inadequate authorisation of expenses
7. Risk that fraudulent expense claims could be made
8. Risk assessments may not be undertaken and risks not adequately managed

From the audit testing results we generally found that, arrangements are in place to allow the effective, efficient and robust evaluation and payment of Members expenses. There were two areas we felt could benefit from some improvement. These were to consider enhancements to the current claim form (advisory below), and verification and correction of the current IT allowance payable.

Whilst reviewing payroll records it became apparent that the annual IT allowance detailed in Appendix G differed by £5 from the amount currently being paid. Further testing was undertaken in this area, which established that all other allowances were being paid in accordance with Appendix G.

The following recommendation (medium) and one advisory have been agreed with Management to address the above.

- The Head of Finance should liaise with the Chief Finance Officer, Democratic Services and Payroll to ensure that all agreed allowances correlate with each other following amendments.

**Advisory**

- The expenses form should be reviewed to ensure that it is up to date and carrying the current SDC logo. Improvement of the form layout could also ensure that the process is as efficient and effective as possible.

## Appendix B

Since audit testing there have already been some changes to the form with others expected to follow shortly.

Members will be advised of the progress in implementing this recommendation in due course.