

Opinion: Adequate

The purpose of the review was to provide assurance to Management regarding the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for managing information; including document retention policies and procedures, in order to determine fitness for purpose in relation to regulatory compliance, Council procedures and good practice.

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

- 1) The risk that the Council may not comply with relevant legislation, policies or good practice
- 2) The risk that policies, procedures and requirements may not be clear or effective
- 3) The risk that there may not be adequate skills or knowledge to manage the information effectively or appropriately
- 4) The risk that information storage may not be adequate, appropriate or safe
- 5) The risk that stored information may not be relevant or necessary; it may be obsolete, duplicated or out of date
- 6) The risk that the quality of information stored may be poor, insufficient or not fit for purpose
- 7) The risk that the records monitoring system which identifies the location, content and retention periods of stored data may not be up to date or accurate
- 8) The risk that data may not be accessible to answer Freedom of Information requests
- 9) The risk that storage space may be incurring unnecessary costs for the Council; income generation opportunities may be missed
- 10) The risk that the records and information management system may not be adequately disseminated or prepared for future planning
- 11) The risk that fraud and corruption may be undetected
- 12) The risk that opportunities to demonstrate efficiency or value for money may not be realised
- 13) Risk assessments may not be adequately undertaken and risks not adequately managed

Audit testing results indicated that controls were fully met in seven of the aspects examined, whilst six aspects were partially met. (Risks 1, 2,4,5,7 and 9)

The audit opinion was 'Adequate'. This meant that controls are in place and to varying degrees are complied with, but there are gaps in the process, which leave the service exposed to risks. There is, therefore, a need to introduce additional controls and improve compliance with existing controls, to reduce the risk exposure for the Council.

The following Five recommendations were agreed with Management to address the areas where controls were partially met:

- All relevant guidance regarding information management should be made available to staff via the intranet. Staff should be advised via an e-mail where the relevant guides are located.
- The record log sheet for information management should be extended to cover all information that is placed into storage by Facilities on behalf of other departments. The information should be clearly labelled including contents, responsible officer and destruction dates. Information will not be stored without these details.

The Facilities Manager should also consider emailing all service managers to remind them of their responsibilities regarding stored data and archiving. This could be done at the end of the financial or calendar year.

- A check list should be made available on the intranet to facilitate the process. Furthermore, a copy of the log should be held in the relevant service database and accessible to all relevant staff.
- The Facilities Manager should explore the possibility of further efficient storage space, for example the old Environmental Health room. Any documentation placed in this area must also have a record log.
- The Facilities Manager together with the Professional Services Manager should review the current storage facilities used at the Council offices and establish whether there is any rental potential which could generate and maximise the Council's income.

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

Opinion: Good

The purpose of the review was to provide an assurance to management regarding effectiveness of the arrangements in place regarding the Council's payroll system. In particular, the accuracy, completeness and authenticity of payroll transactions, including overtime were examined.

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 inaccurate, unauthorised or fraudulent payments may be made;
- 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 overtime may not be correctly applied, approved or appropriate.
- 5) Risk that fraud and corruption may be undetected
- 6) Risk that opportunities to achieve or demonstrate efficiency or value for money may not be maximised
- 7) Risk that risk assessments may not be undertaken and risks not adequately managed

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

The audit opinion is 'good'. This meant that controls are in place to ensure the achievement of service objectives, good corporate governance and to protect the Council against foreseeable risks. Compliance with the risk management process is considered to be good and no significant or material errors or omissions were found.

No recommendations were proposed for Management action in view of the existing assessed low risk of the system, as it was felt that further additional controls would not be justifiable on grounds of value for money. No further update will therefore be provided to Members in respect of this review.

Opinion: Satisfactory

The purpose of this review was to provide an assurance regarding the effectiveness of arrangements to deliver Budgetary Changes on the Council's activities within support service, whilst maintaining an appropriate level of service delivery. To this effect, the impact of the changes on operational performance, internal control and resilience were also examined.

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 services affected by budget efficiencies may not retain adequate levels of service resilience.
- 3) Risk that the Council may not continue to meet statutory duties.
- 4) Risk that service performance levels may not be maintained as far as possible.
- 5) Risk that budget constraints may have a negative effect on staff wellbeing and motivation.
- 6) Risk that fraud and corruption may be undetected.
- 7) Risk that opportunities to demonstrate efficiency or value for money may not be realised.
- 8) Risk that risk assessments are not adequately undertaken and risks not adequately managed.

Audit testing results indicated that controls were fully met in five of the aspects examined. Controls were partially met for risks three aspect in respect of risks 1, 4 and 5.

The audit opinion was 'satisfactory'. This meant that controls exist to enable the achievement of service objectives, obtain good corporate governance and mitigate against significant foreseeable risks. However, occasional instances of failure to comply with the control process were identified and opportunities still exist to mitigate further against potential risks.

The following recommendations were agreed with Management to further enhance controls in the areas where controls were partially met:

- Management to take action in respect of the way information is recoded regarding the potential risks and implications on Service Change Impact Assessments more consistent and informative going forward.
- Management Team should arrange for and consider a review of the work done by PAs and Secretaries, with the aim of reducing the non-essential workload. In particular, consideration should be given as to whether any support should continue to be provided for officer working groups, and officers below Head of Service level.

Members would be advised of the progress in implementing these recommendations in due course.

Review of SDC Parking Income

Issued: 15th November 2012

Opinion: Satisfactory

The purpose of this review was to provide an assurance regarding the effectiveness of the arrangements in place for collecting and safeguarding the Council's Car Parking Income; including promptness and accuracy of banking and the recovery process.

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 a policy and procedures for setting car park fees and charges may not be in place or followed.
- 3) Risk that cash collection machines are not adequately maintained and insured.
- 4) Risk that parking ticket income may not be collected and recorded correctly.
- 5) Risk that parking income may not be banked promptly.
- 6) Risk that fees from car park season tickets and on-street parking permits may not be accounted for correctly.
- 7) Risk that parking fines may not be collected promptly and recover action may be ineffective and in accordance with legislation.
- 8) Risk that parking fines may be written off without proper authority.
- 9) Risk that measures may not be taken to maximise income from parking ticket income.
- 10) Risk that fraud and corruption may be undetected
- 11) Risk that opportunities to demonstrate efficiency or value for money may not be realised
- 12) Risk assessments may not be adequately undertaken and risks not adequately managed

Audit testing results indicated that controls were fully met in ten of the aspects examined. Controls were partially met for risks 3 and 4.

The audit opinion was 'Satisfactory'. This means that controls exist to enable the achievement of service objectives, obtain good corporate governance and mitigate against significant foreseeable risks. However, occasional instances of failure to comply with the control process were identified and opportunities still exist to mitigate further against potential risks.

The following two recommendations were agreed with Management to further enhance controls in respect of risks 3 and 4:

- The Senior Parking and Amenities Officer should liaise with the Insurance & Payroll Assistant to ensure that all parking machines are listed and takings are covered under the Council's insurance policy.
- The Principal Accountant should investigate further the possibility of banking only full money bags and the implications this might have on the reconciliations process and the potential risk to partly filled bags held by CSS facilitate the process. Additionally, the Principal account should determine whether any proposed changes would provide value for money for the Council.

Members would be advised of the progress in implementing these recommendations in due course.