

Teignbridge District Council

Audit Scrutiny

13 February 2025

Part 1

INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

Purpose of Report

To advise members of the internal audit work status.

Recommendation(s)

The Audit Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the report.

Financial Implications

None. The internal audit service is within budget.

Legal Implications

None. The Council is meeting its statutory duty to undertake an internal audit in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Risk Assessment

Risks are taken into account when planning internal audit work.

Environmental / Climate Change Implications

None.

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Executive Member

Councillor John Parrot – Executive Member for Corporate Resources

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Internal audit provides an independent opinion on the Council's risk management, control environment, and governance. A [plan of audit work](#) was approved by members in August 2024. This report shows progress against that plan. It also summarises the findings of completed audits.

2. AUDIT PLAN PROGRESS 2024-2025

SYSTEM		STATUS	ASSURANCE
<u>Core Financial Systems</u>			
Main Accounting / Budgetary Control	DAP	Scoping in progress	-
Creditor Payments	TDC	Scoping in progress	-
Debtors	DAP	Scoping in progress	-
Payroll	TDC	Planned Q4	-
<u>Other Systems / Projects</u>			
Housing Temporary Accommodation	DAP	June 2025	-
Housing Finance	DAP	June 2025	-
Housing Household Support Fund	TDC	Completed	Excellent
Procurement	DAP	Fieldwork in progress	-
Ombudsman Complaint Code	TDC	Planned Q4	-
Democratic Services Review	DAP	Fieldwork in Progress	-
Data Protection	(TBC)	Planned Q4	-
Climate Change	DAP	Scoping in progress	-
Business Continuity Management	TDC	Fieldwork in Progress	-
Emergency Planning	TDC	Completed	Good
Purchasing Cards (new system)	TDC	Completed	Good
Partnerships & Funding Arrangements	TDC	Completed	Good
Communications – Social Media	TDC	Planned Q4	-
Waste and Recycling	DAP	Completed	Good
Risk Management	TDC	Planned Q4	-
National Fraud Initiative	TDC	Ongoing	-
Fraud Risk Analysis	TDC	Ongoing	-
Governance	TDC	Ongoing	-

2.2 The Assurance Opinion descriptions for the work listed above are as follows:

Key to Assurance Opinions:		
Excellent	★★★★	The areas reviewed were found to be well controlled, internal controls are in place and operating effectively. Risks against achieving objectives are well managed.
Good	★★★	Most of the areas reviewed were found to be adequately controlled. Generally risks are well managed but some areas for improvement have been identified.
Fair	★★	Basic control framework in place, but most of the areas reviewed were not found to be adequately controlled. Generally risks are not well managed and require controls to be strengthened to achieve system objectives.
Poor	★	Controls are seriously lacking or ineffective in their operation. No assurance can be given that the system's objectives will be achieved.

2.3 Follow up checks are also undertaken to review progress with action plans agreed during audits. These are included in the summary below.

3. CONCLUSION

Internal Audit work is progressing according to plan with the exception of the areas put back to June 2025 at the request of the service due to other pressures. Assurance has generally been positive. These are likely to be carried forward to next year's plan. Otherwise, remaining work is expected to be completed in time for the annual assurance opinion.

Internal Audit Findings – Overview 13 February 2025

PROJECT TITLE	SUMMARY
<p>Emergency Planning</p> <p>Audit Opinion: Good ☆☆☆</p>	<p>There is a comprehensive emergency response and recovery plan in place comprising of five parts. It was jointly developed by the Devon Emergency Planning Partnership (DEPP) which is made up of all Devon authorities, including Torbay and Plymouth, formalised by a Memorandum of Agreement. The plan is currently under review and will be finalised in 2025, together with a training and exercising programme. Part 5 outlines the named roles and contact details specific to each individual council which is held securely and regularly updated.</p> <p>The emergency response and recovery plan was tested in a mock emergency exercise involving the council, Devon County Council, Torbay Council, Police, Fire Services, NHS, and voluntary groups and was last used as part of the Exeter unexploded ordnance incident in February 2021. The lessons learnt are being fed into the current review of the plan. The council has used the principles of the plan since with the flooding, storms, and snow incidents over the last two years as evidenced in the events of the Kenton flooding in 2023. Once the emergency response and recovery plan current review has been finalised, an exercise will take place to test.</p> <p>All DEPP partners are members of the Devon, Cornwall, and Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum (DCIOS LRF). There is a 'Local Authority Co-operation in Devon during an Emergency' mutual aid agreement in place signed by all Devon authorities Chief Executives dated 23 May 2008 to support each other during the response, recovery, remediation, and regeneration phases. This agreement is currently being reviewed by DEPP.</p> <p>The key responder roles are undertaken by long serving council officers with experience of incidents and major incidents such as the Dawlish Seawall. The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer commenced their role in January 2024 and has received ongoing training throughout the year provided by DEPP and DCIOS LRF including interactive scenario exercises. More training will take place once the emergency response and recovery plan review has been finalised.</p> <p>Recommendations include for the review of the emergency and response plan, mutual aid agreement and training and exercising programme to be finalised. Also, for the developed emergency planning competency and capability matrix to be completed and maintained to evidence that officers are competent to fulfil the roles required of the emergency response and recovery plan.</p>

PROJECT TITLE	SUMMARY
<p>Waste and Recycling</p> <p>Audit Opinion: Good ☆☆☆</p>	<p>Waste and recycling is one of the most visible and high profile services provide by unitary and district councils. Teignbridge operates a fleet of waste vehicles from its depot in Brunel road and collects in excess of 48,500 tonnes of domestic waste from around 60,000 households.</p> <p>The following key risks formed the basis of testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If overall management is not optimised, the service may incur greater costs, place employees and services users at risk of harm, and suffer reputational damage. • If recycled waste is not managed effectively, this could have environmental impacts and cause reputational damage <p>To assess how well these risks are mitigated, testing included a high level overview of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Framework (Strategies/Policies/Procedures) • Infrastructure (depot location and overall suitability) • Waste Fleet (size, suitability, servicing and maintenance) • Budgeting (monitoring, reporting, overspends and pressures) • Performance indicators and benchmarking • Use of GPS software to optimise rounds • Risk Assessments • Inductions and training of drivers and loaders • Engagement with customers (comments and complaints) • Awareness raising with regard to recycling • Income generation (sale of recyclables and garden waste collection) • Recycling banks (use, location, fly tipping issues) <p>Findings: the waste and recycling service is working effectively and provides the community with a good service.</p>

PROJECT TITLE	SUMMARY
<p>Waste and Recycling (cont)</p> <p>Audit Opinion: Good ☆☆☆</p>	<p>The service operates under a joint strategy overseen by the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee and has local policies and plans in place to govern operations and set longer term goals such as carbon reduction.</p> <p>Operations are run from well-placed depots, however these face longer term challenges to their operations which are likely to require major investment going forward. This is a known issue, and independent reports have already been received looking at both the main depot and the baling centre, with action already underway with regard to making improvements to the baling centre.</p> <p>The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DSA) Operator Compliance Risk Score has assigned a score of 'green' to the waste fleet, which includes separate scores for both traffic and roadworthiness. The in-house garage and workshop ensure that scheduled maintenance as well as any ad hoc repair work can be undertaken in a timely way.</p> <p>Budgets are monitored regularly; improvements to some budget monitoring reports are being addressed.</p> <p>Performance metrics are monitored and reported, and further work is ongoing to develop performance reporting systems, which will then be rolled out to the rest of the Council.</p> <p>Health and safety documentation was found to be in place and included plans, risk assessments, and safe systems of work.</p> <p>Staff induction and training is in place, however the development of a service system for centrally recording staff training remains under development.</p> <p>The service is performing well with regard to recycling targets</p> <p>Management and staff were fully supportive of the audit providing the required information in a timely way and responding promptly to recommendations, for which we are grateful.</p>

PROJECT TITLE	SUMMARY
Follow Up Audits The effectiveness of audits is increased if agreed actions are implemented. The audit cycle allows for a follow up check to be made on any important recommendations at an agreed time after each review. Details of recently completed follow ups are shown below:	
Car Park Follow Up Audit Opinion: Good ☆☆☆	Original audit: February 2024 Followed up: November 2024 and January 2025. 1 of the 10 recommendations actioned and implemented. The responsible officer will be attending the meeting to provide an update.
Managing Health and Safety within the Council Audit Opinion: Fair ☆☆	Original audit: May 2024 Followed up: August 2024 and November 2024, and January 2025. 7 of the 25 recommendations actioned and implemented. 18 remain on-going with progress being made.
Housing H&S Compliance Audit Opinion: Fair ☆☆	Original audit: February 2024 Followed up: May 2024, June 2024, August 2024, and December 2024. 10 of the 11 recommendations actioned and implemented. 1 remains on-going: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those properties managed in house, there should be housing compliance policies and procedures to ensure that officers are clear about their roles and responsibilities for managing compliance, and health and safety obligations, including timeframes for inspection certifications. Currently in draft and working on accompanying procedures and monitoring systems.