

Management Response to Audit Findings Report Recommendations

Appendix 1

Rec No.	Issue and Recommendation	Priority	Management Response	Implementation Date & Responsibility
1	<p>The Council identified that eight separate feeder files from two subsidiary systems relating to 2019/20 were posted in period 16 of the 2018/19 general ledger in error.</p> <p>These entries were not reflected in the accounts and have been appropriately reversed out of the ledger, so there is no impact on the 2018/19 accounts.</p> <p>Recommendation The Council should investigate this incident and implement appropriate controls to ensure a similar situation cannot occur again in the future</p>	Amber	<p>An investigation into why the role that prevents users posting into the year-end period does not cover feeders will be conducted and appropriate action taken. This will start immediately.</p> <p>Feedback will be provided to the team and relevant managers in the areas where the issues have occurred and reminders given on the requirement to enter data on a timely and accurate basis.</p> <p>Feeder owners will be reminded of their responsibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure that files are submitted in a timely manner and • that they reconcile their system to the ledger to ensure that all entries are recorded • that they notify Finance of any files that cannot be processed to ensure these are reflected in the accounts. <p>The chapter in the Financial Management Tool will be reviewed to include feeder owner responsibilities and guidance in their use.</p> <p>During the closure of accounts, regular Trial Balance reports by document type will be run to ensure that feeder files are not posted retrospectively in the old financial year.</p>	<p>Implementation Date: Immediately plus continued review during the closure of accounts.</p> <p>Responsible Officer: Finance Manager, Financial Accounts</p>

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2	<p>An asset with a net book value of £9.4m was disposed of in 2017/18 but this was not accounted for until 2018/19.</p> <p>We are satisfied this appears to be an isolated incident due to the unusual nature of the arrangement, so there is no material risk to the 2018/19 accounts.</p> <p>Recommendation The Council should ensure there are appropriate controls in place to ensure all disposals are accounted for in the correct year</p>	Amber	<p>Property Services will ensure that clear instructions are sent to Legal & Democratic Services, Property Records Team and relevant stake holders to facilitate the disposal of assets in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>Legal, Property and Finance staff will meet to share information on property transactions and ensure that processes are in place to capture relevant information and are being followed.</p> <p>Reconciliations will be undertaken during the year of disposals to identify any mismatches in information.</p>	<p>Implementation Date: March 2019</p> <p>Responsible Officer: Assistant Director, Property Services</p>
3	<p>We identified errors in the work of the valuer relating to the valuation of secondary schools, and a valuation where expenditure was used instead of profit as the basis of the valuation.</p> <p>Recommendation Appropriate review should be included as part of the valuation process to ensure</p>		<p>Property services officer valuations will be independently checked by an appropriate qualified valuer with immediate effect.</p>	<p>Implementation Date: Immediate</p> <p>Responsible Officer: Assistant Director, Property Services</p>

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	that any errors in valuation are identified and resolved			
4	<p>Our testing of the completeness of expenditure identified several items which were paid after 31 March 2019 but should have been accrued into 2018/19. The Council has performed extended analysis covering payments made during the period to 22 August 2019 which has identified £9.8m of invoices which relate to 2018/19 but were not accrued.</p> <p>Recommendation The Council should investigate why these invoices were not appropriately accrued and implement additional controls to reduce the risk of such omissions in the future.</p>		<p>The current audit and follow up investigation has identified a number of areas where the Council process for procurement and receipting of goods and services and payment of invoices are not being followed appropriately. An analysis of the data will be undertaken to identify those areas where there are significant numbers or value of invoices that have not been accounted for appropriately. Meetings will be held with those teams identified to set out the implications to the Council of not following relevant processes.</p> <p>Finance Business Partners will brief Directorate Management Teams on the issues identified and the action required and procedures to be followed to meet appropriate accounting requirements.</p> <p>The Council has organised a number of mandatory "Finance for Non-Financial Managers" training sessions which has covered the need for accounting for activities in the year that the goods/services are provided. This will be followed up with additional training for managers.</p> <p>The Voyager Newsletter sent out to staff will include articles on the issues identified and the actions that will be required to ensure future compliance.</p> <p>During the year, regular reports will be run to identify where invoices, purchase orders and goods receipts are not being recorded on a timely basis which will be followed up with the appropriate team and Directorate management team.</p>	<p>Implementation Date: Immediate</p> <p>Responsible Officer: Chief Finance Officer</p>

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			<p>There will be a hard close at a month end prior to the end of the financial year so that a check can be run on ensuring that appropriate procedures are being followed.</p> <p>At year end reports will be run to check those invoices paid early in the new year have been accounted for correctly and goods receipting of purchase orders is appropriate.</p>	
5	<p>As part of the valuation of Council Dwellings we identified that the valuer applied a £5k adjustment rate for bedrooms to the majority of archetypes</p> <p>On further review, the £5k was based on the approach taken in previous years and it was not clear that a review had been carried out to check if this value was still appropriate.</p> <p>Recommendation The Council should ensure that assumptions used in the valuation of property, plant and equipment, including council dwellings, are reviewed for appropriateness each year and updated where appropriate.</p>		<p>Management response Agreed. A review will be undertaken on the impact of the number of rooms on property prices for relevant archetypes to ensure the robustness of valuations.</p>	<p>Implementation Date: Immediate</p> <p>Responsible Officer: Assistant Director, Property Services</p>

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	In particular a review of the actual impact of the number of bedrooms on the valuation of council dwellings should be carried out in order to support the value of the adjustment.			
6	<p>As part of our review of IT controls, we identified an excessive number of users with access to critical T-codes within SAP. Our IT audit identified 109 uses with potentially inappropriate access out of 668 users tested due their higher risk nature.</p> <p>The risk is that an excessive number of users have access to critical transactions at high level of authorisation, which we would normally expect to be restricted to system administrators.</p> <p>We noted this is primarily due to the current Firefighter setup and the fact that 8 users have SAP ALL access.</p>		<p>Capita ICTDS have responded to the GT IT Audit on this point which is summarised below The majority of the transactions listed here will be assigned to BASIS only (the team who deal with the core of the system – these transactions are appropriate for this team to use) and most within their firefighter id. The rest have been reviewed after previous audits and deemed appropriate All users with access to any of these transactions will either be support personnel, or in the case of SM37, users within the business. (SM37 monitors jobs run in the background in SAP. Due to the size and complexity of BCC's ledger, it's recommended that large reports are run in the background to reduce stresses on BAU processing).</p> <p><u>Response from BCC</u> User access to critical transactions is reviewed regularly with access to areas such as SAP_ALL reviewed daily. Appropriate action is taken to remove or amend as required.</p> <p>In August an upgraded Governance, Risk and Compliance tool was implemented in SAP which will assist with user access administration and monitoring.</p>	<p>Implementation Date: Commencing September 2019</p> <p>Responsible Officer: Finance Manager SAP BSC</p>

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	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Management should review all access and reassign the relevant transactions in accordance with business need and current job duties only.</p>			