

Replacement Payroll and Human Resources Management System

Update to be provided by the Head of Financial Services

Payroll/Human Resources System replacement

At the last meeting it was reported that the timescales for replacing the current Payroll/HR systems were being reconsidered by the project group (the current system and working arrangements have internal control issues attached, although this has been the case for several years). A target implementation date of January 2008 has now been agreed; this is in recognition of the need to move forward on weekly to monthly pay and to progress job evaluation, with the updating (and simplification of) the Council's pay structures and policy. Whilst this will mean that the internal control issues are not resolved quickly, there may be some scope to address them partly through different means and changing the working arrangements and practices within the Exchequer section; this will be explored.

Finance and NNDR System Interfaces

At the last meeting Members also queried the progress being made on the interfaces between the Finance IT system and the National Non Domestic Rates system. These links have not yet been completed, mainly due to competing work pressures for both Financial and Information Services; year end/closure of accounts is now taking priority. Progress on the interfaces and other outstanding similar tasks is being monitored through joint meetings between Finance and Information Services, however, and this will feed through into the quarterly performance review meetings.

Contaminated Land – Internal Audit Job No: 03/0538

Update provided by the Head of Health and Strategic Housing

The Council has interests in contaminated land both in service delivery and as a landowner. In relation to service delivery, the Council is the primary regulator of contaminated land but also has important roles through development control and building control.

An internal audit was conducted early in 2004 to examine the controls already in place and the further actions required to safeguard the Council's interests. A plan of agreed actions was produced as a result of the audit and progress against these actions was audited in July 2005.

The following table documents progress since the follow-up audit and the current stage of implementation. Progress has been made against most actions with several being fully implemented. However in some areas progress has been slower than expected due simply to heavy workload and competing demands. The greatest demands have been for specialist work to assist Development Control with planning applications and the pressing need to manage land contamination risks associated with the Council-owned site at Middleton Wood.

Progress against actions involving inter-service working arrangements has been slow. It is apparent that, when short deadlines were agreed for completion of actions 006354, 006356 and 006367 the scale of the work was not fully recognised. In fact steady progress has been made in raising awareness levels, running training sessions and developing appropriate corporate processes with individual Services. In some ways the Council is already relatively well advanced compared to other local authorities.

The reasons stated for slow or no progress are underlain generally by inadequate specialist staffing capacity to meet contaminated land demands and priorities. This matter has been raised in Star Chamber and Budget & Performance Panel.

Contaminated Land – Internal Audit Job No: 03/0538

Audit Ref.	Agreed Action	Status At Last Review	Progress Since Last Review	Current Status	Comments
006338	<p>Health and Strategic Housing will seek to work with both Planning and Building Control functions to jointly document procedures for dealing with land contamination ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - responsibilities are clear; - all contaminated land issues are addressed; - consultation is appropriate and timely; - the most appropriate legislation is invoked as necessary; - staff resources are rationalised and used cost-effectively; - information is shared as required; and - provisions are in place to review procedures regularly and update them following changes in legislation. 	In process of being implemented	Steady progress	In process of being implemented	Steady progress by Environmental Health and Building Control. A regional working group is developing key documents that will be needed to deliver fully against this action.
006341	The work programme within the Contaminated Land Strategy is to be revised and will clearly document actions required with target dates and officers responsible for delivery, taking into account resources required, and available, to ensure targets set are realistic.	In process of being implemented	Completed	Fully implemented pending an update required to address changes in legislation due in April 2006.	
006342	Resource requirements will be reviewed annually and reports will be fed into the budget process as appropriate.	Fully implemented	None required	Fully implemented	Resource requirements have been reviewed and a substantial shortfall in capacity remains evident. This has been reported at Star Chamber and Budget & Performance Panel. No solution has been identified and this matter is likely to be raised in the next budget round in Autumn 2006.

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Audit Ref.	Agreed Action	Status At Last Review	Progress Since Last Review	Current Status	Comments
006356	Services will be made aware of legislation, policies, best practice and guidance through the Contaminated Land Working Group and consultation process for the Environmental Protection Strategy. Services will be encouraged to develop procedures through the Working Group, revision of the work programme and development of protocols.	In process of being implemented	Slow but steady progress	In process of being implemented	Intermediate stages of this action involve Environmental Health working to support other services in awareness raising, training and developing documented systems.
006354	A Contaminated Land Working Group is to be formed with clear aims and objectives from the outset ensuring resources are used effectively. Relevant Services will be encouraged to send appropriate representation to aid the decision-making process.	Partially implemented	No change	No change	Implementation is partially dependant on completion of action required for 006356 (item 4 above).
006370	The costs and benefits of educating the public, businesses etc. on contaminated land issues to promote responsible land ownership will be considered.	Partially implemented	No change	Partially implemented	The follow-up audit noted that "There are currently no resources to implement this agreed action as all existing resources are engaged on statutory duties". This remains the case.
006362	Subject to the corporate availability of the GIS the Contaminated Land Officer will seek to ensure all information and knowledge within the Authority relating to contaminated land is effectively collated and shared.	In process of being implemented	Steady progress	In process of being implemented	This action has involved developing a solution that provides secure and easy access to complex information via specialist technology without the need for retraining staff. Completion is expected shortly.
006367	Standard forms will be developed through the Contaminated Land Working Group. An incident reporting system will be developed across Services and systems integration issues will be addressed.	Still to be implemented	No change	Still to be implemented	Implementation is dependant on completion of action required for 006356 (item 4 above).
006369	Formal confirmation on the adequacy of back-up procedures will be sought.	Partially implemented	Completed	Fully implemented	

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Audit Ref.	Agreed Action	Status At Last Review	Progress Since Last Review	Current Status	Comments
006379	Procedures to deal with environmental information requests will be reviewed, through the Contaminated Land Working Group and liaison with the Information Management Officer, with a view to developing a corporate consistent approach ensuring responses are based on complete, accurate and up to date information.	In process of being implemented	Steady progress	Partially implemented	The Council's information systems have been strengthened and corporate processes for managing responses to environmental information requests are being developed.
006380	A register of information to and from the Environment Agency will be maintained, the scope of the register to be documented.	Partially implemented	Completed	Fully implemented	
006376	The Contaminated Land Officer will identify areas of potential concern relating to the Authority's responsibilities and liabilities as landowner. Health and Strategic Housing are to engage a consultant for an expert second opinion on options and implications with a view to presenting a report to Members for a decision on the way forward.	Still to be implemented	Slow progress	Still to be implemented	Work is in progress to obtain specialist legal advice. Internal staffing resources are insufficient to deliver full information on the potential sites of concern within the Council's own land holdings. In addition the resources needed for a specialist risk management study are not available within existing budgets.

Vehicles and Plant – Internal Audit Job No 03/0527**Update provided by the Head of City Council (Direct) Services**

Audit Ref.	Agreed Action	Status At Last Review	Progress Since Last Review	Current Status	Comments
006172	Loss reporting procedures will be clearly defined and will include responsibilities regarding informing the Insurance Officer in Financial Services.	Agreed action is still to be implemented	Completed	Fully implemented	This has now taken place and the Fleet Manager is responsible for updating procedures.
006115	Responsibilities for initiating, carrying out, reviewing and disseminating the results of risk assessments will be clearly defined.	Agreed action is still to be implemented	Completed	Fully implemented	In place
006152	Wherever possible signage will be placed at plant issue points reminding employees of their responsibility to carry out safety checks prior to use. The standard forms for recording vehicle safety checks upon taking responsibility for a different vehicle will be fully utilised across the Service.	Agreed action is still to be implemented	Steady progress	In process of being implemented	Plant is only issued to staff who are trained to use it. Standard forms for recording vehicle safety checks have been revised by the Fleet Manager and being rolled out across all service areas.
006317	The Service will develop contingency plans for emergencies (e.g. fuel strike) which may affect service delivery and communicate roles and responsibilities to appropriate staff.	Agreed action is still to be implemented	Completed	Fully implemented	Included within business continuity planning exercise.
006099	The Service specific Health and Safety policy will be updated on an ongoing basis and made available to all employees, evidenced through signatures.	Agreed action is still to be implemented	Ongoing	Ongoing	Health and safety policy to be reviewed on an annual basis (ongoing) and made available on intranet (June 2006)
006165	The Service will develop, and make employees aware of, documented security procedures which outline responsibilities.	Agreed action is still to be implemented	Completed	Fully implemented	The area of concern here was grounds maintenance and a system has now been put in place.

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Audit Ref.	Agreed Action	Status At Last Review	Progress Since Last Review	Current Status	Comments
006123	Invitations to suppliers tendering for entry on the Service's select lists will include the requirements that suppliers are responsible for maintenance, ensuring all plant supplied conforms with the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regs. 1992 or PUWER as appropriate and is accompanied by the appropriate certification.	Agreed action is still to be implemented	No change	Still to be implemented	Will be built into future invitations to tender.