

Thurrock Council

Standards & Audit Committee

Internal Audit Progress Report 2020/21

Date of Committee: 25th November 2021

Introduction

The internal audit plan for 2021/22 was presented to the Standards & Audit Committee on 11th March 2021.

Table showing reports issued as Final, in Draft and Work in Progress (WIP)

Assignment	Status	Opinion	Actions Agreed (by priority)		
			High	Medium	Low
Audits to address specific risks					
Planned Maintenance (Housing)	Final	Green	0	1	4
BSI ISO 9001 Quality Review – Active & Country Parks	Final	Advisory	0	0	1
BSI ISO 9001 Quality Review - Fleet	Final	Advisory	0	0	1
BSI ISO 9001 Quality Review – Infrastructure & Work Environment	Final	Advisory	0	0	1
BSI ISO 9001 Quality Review – Play Area Maintenance	Final	Advisory	0	0	1
BSI ISO 9001 Quality Review – Street Cleaning	Final	Advisory	0	0	1
Premises Licencing	Draft with client	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Induction/Probation (Onboarding)	Draft with client	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Climate Change	Draft with client	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Duplicate Payments	Draft	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Housing Rents	WIP	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Children & Adults Commissioning of Services	WIP	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Homelessness	WIP	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Housing Voids	WIP	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

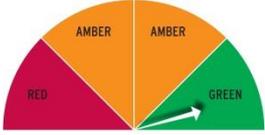
Work and other issues for which no reports are generated

The work around the payment by results funding provided as part of the troubled families programme continues. However, this is likely to be impacted as the Internal Auditor who undertook this work has left the Authority. In addition, this Auditor undertook the BSI ISO 9001 work which will also be impacted.

Changes to the Annual Plan

There have been no significant changes to the plan although Corporate Finance asked for the review on Financial Sustainability to be deferred due to their work on closing the accounts.

Key Findings from Internal Audit Work

Assignment: Planned Maintenance (Housing)	Opinion: Green	
<p>Headline Findings: Our review of the Planned Maintenance (Housing) identified 1 medium and 4 low recommendations around the adequacy of the control framework. The review looked at the following risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process for identifying repairs may not be adequately designed or may not be operating effectively. • Identified repairs may not be scheduled and carried out within a reasonable time. • Adequate financial control processes may not be in place to ensure the council gets value for its money. • Planned maintenance contracts may not be effectively managed to ensure delivery of quality service. • Performance may not be monitored and reported to senior management. • The planned maintenance programme may not be managed efficiently resulting in costs escalations and budget overruns. • Appropriate governance processes may not be in place to ensure the effective management of the council's planned maintenance programme. <p>Good controls were identified across all these areas. There has not been an audit in this area for a number of years so there were no recommendations to check.</p>		
Action and Response	Responsible Officer	Date
<p>Action – A full stock condition survey should be carried to generate up to date stock condition information that provides an objective basis for planning works and developing applicable maintenance programmes.</p> <p>A clear policy regarding timeframes for undertaking stock condition surveys should be developed and documented to provide clear guidance to staff.</p> <p>Response - The housing department undertook a stock condition survey in 2017/18 for 30 % of our stock. We are currently in the process of preparing a tender for a new stock condition survey to be undertaken over the next 9 months again this will be for a 30% sample.</p> <p>This stock condition survey data will be utilised to inform further capital and revenue work streams that also cover planned maintenance where applicable.</p> <p>New assets management policy is currently in development and due to be published by April 2022.</p>	<p>Asset Investment & Delivery Manager</p>	<p>June 2021</p>

Assignment: BSI ISO 9001 – Quality Review – Active & Country Parks	Consultancy	Opinion not provided
<p>The standard requires that “Top management should review, at planned intervals, the Quality Management System (QMS) components including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Objectives; • Internal Audits (including control of non-conformities, corrective and preventative actions); • Customer Feedback/satisfaction and communication; • Infrastructure and work environment; • Management Review (including Analysis of information); and • Senior Management. <p>This helps the organisation to ensure that the QMS continues to be suitable, adequate and effective and is aligned with the strategic direction of the organisation”.</p> <p>Headline Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation changes and policies have been incorporated into strategies and policies; • Team planning was evident and management plans in place for each area of business; • Roles and responsibilities were understood by staff; • Safety training was undertaken and ongoing, but electronic records were hard to find; • Vehicles, plant and equipment were available and maintained by Fleet Services, although an improvement plan for remote sites may need to be revisited; • Operations were delivered as planned within limitations at Langdon Hills due to a lack of resources; • Performance and budgets were monitored regularly at management meetings; • Fees and charges were advertised and benchmarked, however income potential did not appear to be fully explored or resourced; • System and service improvements were evident including future proofing; • Change management was ongoing; • Risk assessment was effective and part of the planning process; • Customer satisfaction was effective and improvements implemented. <p>Observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training records need to be stored and easily accessible on Objective; • Recommendations to improve safety of the equipment needs to be reviewed; • Maximising income has not been fully explored due to resourcing issues at Langdon Hills Country Park. 		

Assignment: BSI ISO 9001 – Quality Review – Fleet	Consultancy	Opinion not provided
<p>The standard requires that “Top management should review, at planned intervals, the Quality Management System (QMS) components including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Objectives; • Internal Audits (including control of non-conformities, corrective and preventative actions); • Customer Feedback/satisfaction and communication; • Infrastructure and work environment; • Management Review (including Analysis of information); and • Senior Management. <p>This helps the organisation to ensure that the QMS continues to be suitable, adequate and effective and is aligned with the strategic direction of the organisation”.</p> <p>Headline Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation changes and policies have been incorporated in to strategies and policies; • Team planning was evident and management plans in place for each area of business; • Roles and responsibilities were understood by staff; • Safety training was undertaken and ongoing; • Vehicles, plant and equipment were available and maintained by Fleet Services; • Operations were delivered as planned; 		

- Performance and budgets were monitored regularly at management meetings;
- Fees and charges were advertised and benchmarked;
- System and service improvements were evident including future proofing;
- Change management was ongoing;
- Risk assessment was effective and part of the planning process;
- Customer satisfaction was effective and improvements implemented.

Observations:

- Maximising income has not been fully reached due to COVID-19.

Assignment: BSI ISO 9001 – Quality Review – Infrastructure & Work Environment	Consultancy	Opinion not provided
<p>The standard requires that “Top management should review, at planned intervals, the Quality Management System (QMS) components including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Objectives; • Internal Audits (including control of non-conformities, corrective and preventative actions); • Customer Feedback/satisfaction and communication; • Infrastructure and work environment; • Management Review (including Analysis of information); and • Senior Management. <p>This helps the organisation to ensure that the QMS continues to be suitable, adequate and effective and is aligned with the strategic direction of the organisation”.</p> <p>Headline Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation changes and policies have been incorporated into strategies and policies; • Team planning was evident and management plans in place for each area of business; • Roles and responsibilities were understood by staff; • Safety training was undertaken and ongoing; • Vehicles, plant and equipment were available and maintained by Fleet Services; • Operations were delivered as planned; • Performance and budgets were monitored regularly at management meetings; • Fees and charges were advertised and benchmarked; • System and service improvements were evident including future proofing; • Change management was ongoing; • Risk assessment was effective and part of the planning process; and • Customer satisfaction was effective and improvements implemented. <p>Observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising income has not been fully reached due to COVID-19. 		

Assignment: BSI ISO 9001 – Quality Review – Play Area Maintenance	Consultancy	Opinion not provided
<p>The standard requires that “Top management should review, at planned intervals, the Quality Management System (QMS) components including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Objectives; • Internal Audits (including control of non-conformities, corrective and preventative actions); • Customer Feedback/satisfaction and communication; • Infrastructure and work environment; • Management Review (including Analysis of information); and • Senior Management. <p>This helps the organisation to ensure that the QMS continues to be suitable, adequate and effective and is aligned with the strategic direction of the organisation”.</p> <p>Headline Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key strategies were being revised: Local Development Plan and Active Play Strategy; 		

- Team planning was evident;
- Roles and responsibilities were understood by staff;
- Safety training was undertaken and ongoing, however, accessibility to staff certificates was difficult;
- Vehicles, plant and equipment was available and maintained by Fleet Services;
- Operations were delivered as planned;
- Performance and budgets were on target;
- Fees and charges were not applicable to this area;
- System and service improvements were evident including future proofing;
- Change management was ongoing;
- Risk assessment was effective and part of the planning process;
- Customer satisfaction was effective and improvements implemented;
- Procurement is managed centrally and through Fleet and Stores, however the impact of leaving the EU may add to future costs.

Observations:

- Safety training certificates were not easily accessible.
- There may be implications re leaving Europe, and time taken to receive the parts/equipment needed. Costs may rise.

Assignment: BSI ISO 9001 – Quality Review – Street Cleaning	Consultancy	Opinion not provided
<p>The standard requires that “Top management should review, at planned intervals, the Quality Management System (QMS) components including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Objectives; • Internal Audits (including control of non-conformities, corrective and preventative actions); • Customer Feedback/satisfaction and communication; • Infrastructure and work environment; • Management Review (including Analysis of information); and • Senior Management. <p>This helps the organisation to ensure that the QMS continues to be suitable, adequate and effective and is aligned with the strategic direction of the organisation”.</p> <p>Headline Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation changes and strategic policies were reviewed recently; • Team planning was evident at a strategic and operational level; • Roles and responsibilities were understood by staff; • Vehicles, plant and equipment was available and maintained by Fleet Services; • Safety training was undertaken and ongoing; • Operations for Street Cleaning functions were delivered as planned and recorded; • Performance indicators were on target, regularly monitored and reported; • Fees and Charges were costed, and details available to the public; • System and service improvements were evident including technological systems and future proofing; • Change management was ongoing during Bartech trials; • Risk assessment was effective and part of the business planning process; • Customer satisfaction was effective and improvements implemented through the corporate mechanism; • Records were maintained on Objective EDRMS management system. <p>Observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training records for Waste operatives need to be accessible and reported to Fleet regularly, in order to maintain the DCQ license requirements in a timely manner. • PPE equipment should be recorded and monitored in a more robust manner, however, a new Stores Manual is being produced which will aim to strengthen the controls around requisitions and approvals. 		