Report for Resolution

Report to Audit Committee

26 October 2010

Report of Audit Manager

Subject Annual Report on Internal Audit 2009/10

Purpose

To inform members of the work of the internal audit and financial consultancy section for 2009/10.

Recommendations

Members are asked to receive the annual audit opinion and review the work of internal audit for 2009/10.

Financial Consequences

The financial consequences of this report are none directly, but the work of audit helps to promote proper financial arrangements throughout the council.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to achieve the strategic priority "Aiming for excellence – ensuring the Council is efficient in its use of resources, is effective in delivering its plans, is a good employer and communicates effectively with its customers, staff and partners."

Contact Officers

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Background Documents

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Report

Background

- 1. Internal audit is part of the corporate governance and internal financial control arrangements within the council.
- 2. Under the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2006, the council is required to "maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices in relation to internal control".
- 3. The guidance accompanying the regulations states that proper internal audit practices are those contained within the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government 2006.
- 4. Under that code the person responsible for managing the internal audit function is required to submit a formal annual report to members which should:
 - Include an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's internal control environment
 - Disclose any qualifications to that opinion, together with the reasons for the qualification
 - Present a summary of the audit work undertaken to formulate the opinion, including reliance placed on the work by other assurance bodies
 - Draw attention to any issues particularly relevant to the preparation of the statement on internal control
 - Compare the work actually undertaken with the work that was planned and summarise the performance of the internal audit function
 - Comment on compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government.

Audit manager's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment

- 5. The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate the risk of failure to achieve corporate and service policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.
- 6. The audit manager's opinion is based on the findings of internal audit reviews, including following up previous recommendations and recommendations made by the Audit Commission in annual governance reports.
- 7. Follow up work is formally reported upon and depending on progress may result in the original opinion being revised.
- 8. The opinion for 2009/10 includes reviews that were started in 2009/10 but reported on in 2010/11.

9. There has been a mix of opinions awarded, ranging from limited to good assurance. The opinions are shown in annex 1 and annex 2, but are summarised below:

10. Good assurance:

 Framework for governance of key partnerships and HCA strategic partnership.

11. Moderate or adequate assurance:

- Treasury management
- · Accounts payable
- Council tax
- Housing rents
- Income system
- Car parks income
- Insurance arrangements
- · Budget monitoring
- St Andrews Hall
- Norman Centre
- Data quality/national indicators
- · Concessionary bus fares
- City of Norwich Partnership

12. Limited assurance:

- Accounts receivable
- · Housing benefits
- Housing voids
- Tourist information centre
- Cemeteries
- 13. A summary of the significant weaknesses from the above reviews is shown in **annex 1**, together with recommendations and management responses.
- 14. For every review recommendations are agreed with management if possible for inclusion in the final report. Each audit is followed up to review whether the agreed management actions have been implemented, the results of which are reported to management.
- 15. During 2009/10 two members of the audit team continued to spend considerable time on NELM claims, working with NELM and the Audit Commission to ensure that all the issues raised are fully addressed in order to minimise the risk of loss of funding. This had a severe impact on the resources available for the audit plan, and despite outsourcing a number of audits the plan was not achieved.

- 16. In addition, it was not possible or practical to review fundamental systems relating to NNDR; payroll, due to pressure of work in HR in relation to their restructure; and asset management, where at the time limited progress had been made on the proposal to address the relevant issues (this proposal was partly to address the findings of an earlier audit review which resulted in no assurance on controls).
- 17. For the above reasons, the audit manager can only provide **limited assurance** on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment.

Annual audit plan - progress

18. The table below compares the days planned for the different areas of work with days actually delivered.

Description	Days in Plan	Days Delivered	Percentage
Systems audits	430	236	55%
Other non-systems and consultancy work	150	342.6	228%
Allowance for unplanned work	50	42.9	86%
TOTALS	630	621.5	98.6%

- 19. Further details of progress against the annual audit plan for 2009/10 are in **annex 2**, showing the planned and actual days for systems and regularity audit work.
- 20. Annex 2 also shows the other areas of non-audit and consultancy work, which goes to make up the total workload of the section.
- 21. Annex 2 shows that there were 600 planned available audit days, against a requirement in the plan of 630 days. The deficit was felt to be manageable at the time, but it became apparent during the year that work on NELM was taking far longer than anticipated, therefore some reviews were outsourced to Deloitte, Securus and Zurich.
- 22. **Annex 3** shows how the planned chargeable days of 600 were calculated, followed by the actual figures for each category which total 621.5 days.
- 23. Despite the fact that the actual internal audit days delivered were higher than anticipated, and the use of external resources, the audit plan was not fully completed, mainly due to the work on NELM.
- 24. The audit manager considers that sufficient progress was made against audits in the plan to draw a conclusion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment.

Issues relevant to the annual governance statement

- 25. The Audit Commission has previously reported on the diversion of audit resources to non-audit work and the risks that this presented to the completion of the audit plan. The known resource shortfall in 2009/10 was addressed by the use of Deloitte, Securus and Zurich for a number of key audits; however, the audit plan was not completed. This will be reported in the annual governance statement.
- 26. The audit manager's 'limited assurance' opinion will be reported in the annual governance statement.
- 27. None of the audit reviews resulted in a 'no assurance' opinion. However, three key systems (accounts receivable, housing benefits and housing voids) resulted in limited assurance, and are referred to in the annual governance statement.

Performance of internal audit

28. The performance of Internal Audit is measured against the criteria below.

Measure	Target	Actual
Percentage of audits reported on	90%	64%
Percentage of staff chargeable time	74%	75%
Average time taken to produce draft reports	20 days	23 days

- 29. While the percentage of audits reported on is below the target, the audit manager considers that enough progress had been made in order to form an overall opinion.
- 30. The figure for the issuing of draft reports was affected by a number of factors: the non-availability of some managers to discuss audit findings due to their involvement with budget cuts; further work requested by the audit manager prior to the issuing of reports as further information came to light; and in some cases the time taken to issue final reports is included in the figure.
- 31. Work will be progressed in the current year to develop more measures for internal audit under the action plan from the triennial review.

CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit

32. As previously reported to members, the Audit Commission's triennial review of internal audit found weaknesses in compliance with the code. An action plan to address the weaknesses has been drafted and work to improve compliance will be progressed during 2010/11. This will be reported in the annual governance statement.

Significant Findings and Recommendations 2009/10

Audit	Idit Significant weakness Recommendation		Response	Action Date	
Treasury management (moderate assurance)	Treasury management records are not regularly reconciled to the GL records for investment / borrowing balances and interest earned / paid	Investment / borrowing balances and interest will be agreed on a monthly basis to the GL, and a full reconciliation, will continue to be made after each year end.	Agreed	April 2010	
Council tax (adequate assurance)	No significant weaknesses				
Insurance arrangements (adequate assurance)	No significant weaknesses				
Budget monitoring (moderate assurance)	No significant weaknesses				
Housing rents follow up (was moderate assurance)	No significant weaknesses, but work on some recommendations still outstanding, therefore opinion remains as moderate assurance				
Housing benefit follow up (was limited assurance)	The reconciliation between the housing benefits system and the subsidy claimed is not appropriately completed and reviewed. Due to outstanding work above and on other medium priority recommendations, opinion remains as limited assurance	Undertake the reconciliation between the housing benefits system and the subsidy claimed, as a minimum, on a quarterly basis. This reconciliation should be evidenced and dated by both the preparer and reviewing officer. Establish a formal reconciliation schedule to ensure the reconciliations are completed regularly.	Agreed. We will endeavour to undertake the tasks within the next 3 months; however we are reliant on the systems team and Steria to produce the required reports on the dates requested as per the job schedule.	June 2010	

Audit	Significant weakness Recommendation F		Response	Action Date
Income system (moderate assurance)	The cashiers dual control system for the strong room, safes and combinations requires review	The exchange controls will be formalised for the Cashiers strong room, safe keys and combinations dual control systems	Will review by end of Oct 2009 and put necessary measures in place	October 2009
,	Planning reception, back office till - lack of procedures and risk assessment	Procedures will be established and a risk assessment will be carried out	Agree.	Immediate
Accounts payable follow up (moderate assurance)	Internal controls do not provide full assurance that all purchase invoices have been accounted for	Reconcile supplier statements from major suppliers on a monthly basis (to ensure that all purchase invoices have been accounted for)	Monthly statements will be requested and reconciled for our Top 10 suppliers (by value) to identify any missing invoices.	August 2010
	The authorised signatory list was not kept up to date. Authorisation controls not operating as expected (N.B. the manual ordering system has been replaced – orders are now placed via Oracle Financials – the following recommendation relates to this replacement system)	The Oracle system should be changed in order to only allow orders against approvers' cost codes.	Not agreed. There is a significant amount of set up and then maintenance required to do this. The benefit it brings is outweighed by the resource required to maintain the system. Oracle approvers will be reminded to check the code on the requisition and if it is not one of their codes they should reject it	-
	There is no independent review of changes or additions to the supplier master file	Ensure that changes and amendments to the supplier master file are independently reviewed. Evidence of the review should be retained. As payments by BACS increase, it is particularly important that suppliers' bank details are correct and that there are adequate controls over any amendments to these details.	For the team leader to review each account that it is set up is not practical. Agree that regular reviews should take place and that spot checks should be introduced. Procedure notes already provide guidance on how and when to accept new and amended bank account details.	October 2010

Audit	Significant weakness	Recommendation	Response	Action Date
Accounts receivable follow up (limited assurance)	The Council is currently in breach of Payment Card Industry (PCI) legislation	Ensure compliance with relevant Payment Card Industry (PCI) legislation by August 2010	Waiting for amended software from a supplier to meet some of the requirements - we will not be compliant until this has been installed. There is also a need to buy additional hardware/software for mobile working, linked in to the Gov Connect requirements which is being treated as high priority work, but not able to comply by August	December 2010
	There is inadequate segregation of duties in relation to accounts receivable activities	Review current roles and responsibilities to ensure that there is adequate segregation of duties between staff raising invoices and staff reducing, cancelling or writing off debts. Review access rights to Oracle AR and use of management reports from the system to monitor transactions by staff.	Strict segregation of duties across a team of only 3 individuals (2.4 FTEs) is difficult. The varied nature of the roles means that it is not possible to separate the processing of invoices, credit notes, write offs and receipts. I propose to spot check different transaction types which have posted, as part of my monthly reconciliation	October 2010
	The control of the debt collection process is inadequate – some outstanding debts have been on the ledger for a number of years	Give serious consideration to redesigning the debt collection process	Debt chasing is now more planned and timely and is being enhanced. Ongoing monthly discussions with service areas and legal services have paid dividends but the process can be improved. Lack of available resource is often a restriction. Working closely with the service accountants will bring more involvement in the recovery decisions we take.	-

Audit	Significant weakness	Recommendation	Response	Action Date
			Debt collection agency used for our domestic debtors. Management reporting will be addressed in Q2 2010	September 2010
Car parks income (limited assurance)	A post with a key finance role had been vacant for a number of years and was being filled by agency staff.	The operations and finance assistant post holder tasks will be directly strengthened and supported by the business manager	Post was made permanent. Currently unable to recruit staff due to staff vacancy freeze. When appointed, post holder will sit with business	Awaiting HR
	Inadequate segregation of duties.	Independent supervision and validation of all tasks will be put in place	management. Day to day management has been included in new post job	
	The procedure manual requires reviewing and updating.	The procedure manual will be reviewed and updated with all the missing tasks	description	
	The Hectronic machine (off street) software reports are unprotected and data can be manipulated.	The Hectronic reporting will be carried out by a supervisor; the data will not be manipulated in any way but kept for reconciliation purposes in its original state.	Parking Manager to investigate access to Hectronic cash collection reports	July 09
	Weaknesses around stock control system for the cash collection sheets received from the contractor	Six point plan for the operation of a secure stock control system and procedures to be created	Secure storage has been identified and a booking out system will be put in to place	July 09
	There is no formal overall reconciliation document of all parking income and discrepancy reporting is incomplete.	Four point plan for discrepancy investigation, inclusion in reconciliation and independent random checking and prompt processing of overall reconciliation at month end and be formally authorised	Post holder has been reminded that the discrepancy report should be completed properly. Journal reconciliation will be completed and approved	Immediate
	There is no stock control of new and old cheque books. The bank reconciliation is not authorised.	Procedures will be created Bank reconciliation will be independently authorised.	Agreed	July 09
	There are no records for operations' safe key holders, key exchanges and no independent safe checks.	Procedures will be established for all the processes and regular independent safe checks of cash will be carried out	Agreed. Independent safe checks have now been done and recorded	July 09
	Inadequate processing and authorisation of payments to County relating to park and ride	Procedures will be created for all the processes and will be regularly checked by a line manager to ensure completeness	Agreed	June 09

Audit	Significant weakness Recommendation F		Response	Action Date	
	Reconciliations between the GL and income data is not carried out promptly.	Cost centres will be reconciled to ensure posting errors are identified and promptly corrected	Agreed	In place Jan 09	
		The GL posting errors will be corrected	Agreed	April/May 09	
Tourist Information Centre (limited assurance)	Some compensation payable in respect of the TIC ceasing to operate retailing activities remains outstanding.	Invoice to be raised with a covering note explaining the problem	TIC Manager will progress this charge in line with the recommendation.	February 2010	
	TIC took over responsibility for staff travel in August 09. This expenditure requires prompt uploading to the general ledger. To date this has not occurred.	Financial services will ensure that the corporate travel uploads from TIC are correctly formatted, authorised by the TIC manager and are progressed monthly to the financial services service accountant	TIC manager has reviewed this and will ensure that in future all details are sent to financial services monthly.	January 2010	
	All staff who take credit/debit payments must sign up to our policy on complying with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCIDSS). Forms for some staff remain outstanding.	To ensure payment card industry compliance, sign up forms will be completed by all the TIC staff and passed to the Chief Cashier.	Agreed, all current sign ups have now been received by TIC Manager and will be forwarded to Chief Cashier.	January 2010	
	The PDQ terminal (used to swipe debit/credit cards and print receipts) prints the full card number on the TIC's copy. When customers pay by card over the phone, the details are noted on a transactions form, which requires strict controls to be in place	There will be an exploration of options available to make TIC PCIDSS compliant	Chief cashier has confirmed that HSBC can reprogram the TIC PDQ machine so that the merchant copy details only last 4 digits of the credit/debit card. Agreed to progress. All forms which request credit/debit card details have been revised	January 2010 January 2010	
Cemeteries (limited assurance)	Operational proposals reported to executive and scrutiny not fully implemented.	Fully implement the report proposals	Immediate instructions from ESDM that all plots must be 4 interments. Committee report to be created to manage this and all other issues	June 2010	

Audit	Significant weakness	Recommendation	Response	Action Date	
	No overall reconciliation on each file of income/expenditure with a final total identifying cost/refund to the council	A reconciliation sheet of all income received and expenditure for each contract funeral will be created, identifying the final cost to the council and authorised by the budget holder when completed	Agreed.	June 2010	
Data quality/ national indicators (adequate assurance)	No significant weaknesses				
Governance of key partnerships (good assurance for the corporate framework and HCA; moderate assurance for CoNP	No significant weaknesses				
Housing voids (limited assurance)	The accuracy and completeness of the void performance BVPI 212 figures cannot be substantiated	Ensure that the 'work completion dates' being recorded on Academy are accurate. Ensure properties are only excluded from the BVPI 212 monitoring whilst undergoing 'major works' and any normal void period starts once this is complete.	Update void process to include reconciliation of void spreadsheet with Academy voids and ensure monthly reconciliation verifies data. Ensure BVPI definition is being followed in all cases	July 2010 June 2010	
	Insufficient segregation of duties operating over the voids process	Restrict Academy access as appropriate and review access levels on a regular basis	Agreed. Restrict access accordingly and keep under review.	June 2010	
	There is no reconciliation taking place of voids on Academy to those recorded on the void master spreadsheet	Reconcile and evidence on a monthly basis	Update void process to include reconciliation of void spreadsheet with Academy voids and carry out process on a monthly basis with signoff by Head of Service	July 2010	

Audit	Significant weakness	Recommendation	Response	Action Date
	The process for assessing action to deal with long term voids needs to be more effective	Review process to assist with timely decision making	Property appraisal matrix already provides timely decision making process	_
	The risks identified in the risk registers from 2009/10 service plans, should accord with those recorded in the strategic risk register	Ensure risks are identified and mitigated and risks with high scores are escalated as appropriate	New performance management system will assist with risk control. Risk awareness included in team briefings. Ensure risks in the service plan are evaluated corporately	June 2010
Norman Centre (moderate assurance)	No significant weaknesses			
The Halls (moderate assurance)	There is no evidence of procedures covering external bar stock checks or the actions to take on receipt of the reports	Procedures to be implemented to cover external stock checks and any implications for internal check, ie frequency and reconciliations	Agreed	October 2010
Concessionary bus fares (moderate assurance)	The contract for administering the scheme on our behalf is still not finalised or signed	The outstanding issues of the draft contract will be promptly resolved and the contract will be finalised and signed by both parties	Contract now returned to contractor for completion	July 2009
,	No designated signatory in the absence of the head of transport	An additional authorising signatory will be established for the CBF scheme as financial services staff will no longer authorise CBF documents	Transportation manager nominated. Service accountant will create extra payments signatory	July 2009 Immediate
Stray dog scheme	The council does not appear to have a formal policy on the level of service to be provided and the charging structure	A formal review of the service provision for dog capture/release will be carried out to decide if the service is to be statutory or continue with the current comprehensive service. The policy will also include guidance on the charging/provision of services that are currently free of charge	It is accepted there is no formal policy for the service. This has been recognised within the current service and team plans with the action identified to have a formal policy in place by April 2010	April 2010

Audit	Significant weakness	Recommendation	Response	Action Date
	The audit only found evidence of informal risk assessments	A formal health and safety risk assessment is carried out without delay to document the necessary requirements for the post	Risk assessments for all operational functions undertaken and include appropriate control measures.	July 2009
Electricity supplies	A new energy supply contract was let through ESPO, using data from our previous main supplier, but sites using other suppliers were omitted	Payments to all suppliers outside the ESPO contract will be reviewed and added to the contract at the earliest opportunity.	Head of procurement and service improvement has confirmed that this is already happening, but will be given a higher priority.	Ongoing - aim to complete by April 2010
	As payments are still being made to suppliers outside the contract, including some by direct debit, there is a risk that that sites could be paid for twice or by a more costly tariff.	The direct debit to the previous supplier will be stopped, any further invoices will be reviewed to ensure they are not duplicates/site closures and if not will be paid by cheque.	Agreed. Checks to be made and analysis of future invoices to be resourced to ascertain validity of cost. DDs to be stopped following outcome of these checks	Analysis by end January 2010 Arrangements for changes to payments by end February 2010
	Inefficient budget monitoring due to the use of a manual system	Electronic billing by the new supplier will be promptly implemented. In addition, the supplier's flexible reporting facility will be used to support speedy budget holder approval process.	Agree with team the timeline for moving to electronic billing. Dependent on Steria workload and nature of task.	Report on progress end January 2010
	Budget holders do not have the opportunity to approve electricity invoices before they are paid. Delays in updating the ledger and reconciling the holding account. There is not a robust system for informing suppliers of changes	Review the way electricity charges are managed within financial services and service centres to ensure that electricity charges are approved prior to prompt ledger upload and there is a corporate method for changes/ amendments to meters/readings. Budget holders will be involved	Carry out review and agree approach with Asset & City Management and Procurement on carrying out readings, collation of meter readings and feedback into billing.	Review by end January 2010
	Testing of invoices showed 11 sites that no longer existed, were vacant or not in use, or no longer the council's responsibility, resulting in overpayments by the council.	Credits will be obtained for the 11 sites identified in this audit as being overpaid. Debtor invoices will be raised for previous suppliers	Review credits required with team resource and progress.	End March 2010

2009 Audit Plan Days 20 20 10 20 20 10 20 20 10 20 10 20 20 160 10 10 10 10 10 10 70	1.8 6.1 32.4 40.3	Outsourced - complete. Adequate assurance
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10 20	1 0	Complete. Moderate assurance
20		Slip to 2010/11
		Completed in 2010/11. Limited assurance
70	0.9	Slip to 2010/11
	18.6	
1		
10		Slip to 2010/11
10		Slip to 2010/11
15	15.3	Completed in 2010/11. Moderate assurance
10		Slip to 2010/11
0	1.1	Complete
45	16.4	
15	13.2	Completed in 2010/11. Moderate assurance
10	23.5	Complete. Limited assurance
25	36.7	
30		Involvement in three investigations
20	53.0	Includes unplanned reviews of electricity supply and
		stray dogs - reports issued
10	4.5	Outsourced - complete. Adequate assurance
10		Outsourced - complete. Good assurance
10	11.1	Main area of work on PCI compliance
80	76.4	
15		Outsourced - complete. Limited assurance
5	10.6	Complete. Moderate assurance
15		Slip to 2010/11
35	10.7	
15		
		Draft report issued in 2010/11. Moderate assurance
		Draft report issued in 2010/11. Limited assurance
	0.3	Outsourced - complete. Moderate assurance
		Outsourced - complete. Limited assurance
		Complete. Was limited, now moderate assurance
		Complete. Moderate assurance
	5.8	Post-audit work not requiring reports
	36.9	
15		
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Annex 2

Audit Plan 2009/2010 (cont.)	2009	/10	
	Audit Plan	Actual	
	Days	to Wk 52	Position at October 2010
Non-audit & consultancy work			
New Deal - Grant Claims	60		Assumed involvement would end Jan 10
Corporate Governance	30	38.0	AGS; use of resources
Fraud related, incl. NFI 2008/09	30	36.2	Wider scope of NFI in 2008 & 2009
Risk Management	10	18.4	Corporate risk arrangements
Interreg Claims	10	9.3	Audit of all schemes now complete
Contracts - Financial Appraisals/Tenders	10	11.7	Monitoring contractors for departments
Advice, unplanned work, requests	50	42.9	Includes some work on transformation projects
Total for non-audit/consultancy work	200	385.5	
Total Allocated Days	630	621.5	
Resourcing the audit plan	Planned	Actual	
Days available for the audit plan	600	621.5	See annex 3 for details
Days needed to achieve the plan (above)	630		
Projected deficit	30		

AUDIT & FINANCIAL CONSULTANCY

ANALYSIS OF TIME (EMPLOYEE RESOURCE DAYS) - 2009/10

		PLANNED TOTAL	ACTUAL TOTAL
1. A	AVAILABLE WORKING DAYS		
	Total Days (52 x 5 = 260 x 3.8 FTEs)	988	989.6
	Less: Bank Holidays	36	36.0
	Annual Leave	120	112.7
	Elections	1	1.2
	Sick, Special Leave, etc.	20	12.5
	Available Days (@ Current Level)	811	827.2
2 <u>N</u>	NON-CHARGEABLE TIME		
2	2.1 ADMINISTRATION / MGT		
	Administration - General	76	61.3
	Section Meetings	9	1.6
	Service Centre Management	66	95.6
	SUB - TOTAL	151	158.5
2	2.2 TRAINING ETC		
	Training - Courses	20	10.3
	SUB - TOTAL	20	10.3
2	2.3 OTHER GENERAL OVERHEAD		
	IT Support / Time Recording	25	24.5
	Folder Structure Adminstration	15	12.4
	SUB - TOTAL	40	36.9
	Total Non Chargeable Days	211	205.7
	Total Chargeable Days	600	621.5
9/	% NON-CHARGEABLE (DAYS)	26%	25%
% CHARGEABLE (DAYS)		74%	75%