

Audit and Risk Committee

02 March 2021

Agenda item number 10

Implementation of internal audit recommendations – summary of progress

Report by Chief Financial Officer

Summary

This report gives a summary of progress in implementing Internal Audit recommendations arising out of audits carried out during 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Recommendation

To note the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report gives an update on implementing the Authority's Internal Audit report recommendations, focusing on outstanding recommendations and timescales to complete outstanding work.
- 1.2. Appendices 1 and 2 give details of the audits carried out in 2018/19 and 2019/20, in particular:
 - recommendations not yet implemented;
 - recommendations implemented since the last meeting; and
 - new recommendations since the last meeting.

2. Summary of progress

- 2.1. Since the previous report to this committee in November the outstanding recommendations remain unchanged. Good progress has been made towards the procurement training and a draft template for tender has been produced. This will be included as part of the training to be delivered before 31 March.

3. Internal Audit Programme 2020/21

- 3.1. At the committee in November it was reported that the Key Controls, Port Marine Safety Code and Planning audits were scheduled to be completed in November and December. However due to the subsequent COVID-19 lockdowns and absences within

the audit team there have been further delays. At the time of writing all of the substantive testing for Key Controls had been completed but the final report remains outstanding. The Port Marine Safety Code audit has been delayed. Work has nearly been finalised on the Corporate Governance audit.

4. Planning

- 4.1. The objective of this audit was to review the systems and controls in place within Planning, to help confirm that these are operating adequately, effectively and efficiently. This resulted in a “reasonable” audit opinion with two “important” and four “needs attention” recommendations being raised. Details of these can be found in Appendix 3. The previous audit report for Planning was issued in October 2015, with a “Reasonable Assurance” opinion with two “important” and one “needs attention” recommendations being raised.
- 4.2. Good practice was noted relating to sound controls that are in place and operating consistently. Those relating to planning applications were:
- Two validation checklists are available on the Broads Authority website, which supplement the statutory requirements set out in the Procedure Order - The Town and Country Planning - Development Management Procedure (England) Order 2015. This reduces the risk of inconsistent approach in processing planning applications.
 - Planning applications are determined by Planning Committee or Officers in accordance with the Authority's Scheme of Powers Delegated to Officers. This demonstrates that the delegated arrangements are operational and effective.
 - Delegated decision report sheet, decision notice, and Planning Committee report minutes extract are all available on the Broad Authority website under each planning application. This demonstrates a transparent and clear planning approval process.
 - The correct fees are charged and obtained before planning applications are processed. This ensures that accurate income is being received as expected.
- 4.3. Those relating to enforcement were:
- The Local Enforcement Plan is available on the Broads Authority website which explains the planning enforcement process and how this works in the Broads Authority executive area. This ensure the public are made aware of processes followed by the Authority regarding the enforcement of planning breaches.
- 4.4. Those relating to heritage and trees were:
- Once a new appraisal is adopted by the Planning Committee, changes to the conservation areas are updated on the Authority's Geographic Information

System (GIS) mapping. This reduces the risk of not capturing changes being made.

4.5. The recommendations remain on target for completion.

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Appendix 1 – Summary of actions and responses to Internal Audit 2018/19

Appendix 2 – Summary of actions and responses to Internal Audit 2019/20

Appendix 3 – Summary of actions and responses to Internal Audit 2020/21

Appendix 1 – Summary of actions and responses to Internal Audit 2018/19

Table 1

Branding April 2019

Recommendations	Priority rating	Responsible Officer(s)	BA response/action	Timetable
<p>2. Broads Authority branding - strategies, guidelines / procedures</p> <p>The Broads Authority Communications Policy be updated to include the roles and responsibilities for overseeing management of correct branding. This should be included within a separate branding section which the policy does not currently have. This should make the branding area more easily to locate within the policy and helps mitigate the risk that responsibilities for branding are unclear.</p>	Needs Attention	Head of Communications	<p>New communications strategy delayed by COVID comms activity but many elements completed and anticipate strategy will be in place by end Sept 2020</p> <p>Update:</p> <p>New 'branding' area on intranet developed that incorporates updated and new documents, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Team Guide • BA Brand guidelines • BA brand guidelines supplement • BA language style guide • Words commonly used in BA publications • BA signs guide 	<p>By 31/10/19</p> <p>Updated to 31/03/21</p>

Recommendations	Priority rating	Responsible Officer(s)	BA response/action	Timetable
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logos and templates for letterheads, reports and PowerPoint presentations. <p>Instructions for email signatures added Nov 2020. Full strategy overview not yet written due to rescheduled priorities in 2020; due to be completed by March 2021.</p>	
<p>5. Broads Authority branding - use of the Broads Authority logo</p> <p>A review and update of the communications page on the Authority's intranet be undertaken once the national parks' branding strategy and associated documents, including the local broads national park strategy and Broads Authority Communications Policy, are finalised. This should be re-launched with staff including the provision of staff and member training in relation to branding, incorporating the use of both the Broads Authority logo and Broads National Parks logo. The communications intranet page should include the communications team details; branding strategies and communications policy; and the Broads Authority New Signs guide.</p>	Needs Attention	Head of Communications	<p>Agreed. Intranet content to be produced in conjunction with strategy, guidelines and procedures. Awaiting completion of new communication strategy (see recommendation two above)</p> <p>Update: As per recommendation 2 above – all completed except overarching strategy document, now due March 2021.</p>	<p>By 31/10/19</p> <p>Updated to 31/03/21</p>

Appendix 2 – Summary of actions and responses to Internal Audit 2019/20

Table 2

Procurement - December 2019

Recommendations	Priority rating	Responsible Officer(s)	BA response/action	Timetable
<p>6. Procurement</p> <p>To consolidate the standard terms document with the contract conditions outlined in the CSOs to have an overall set of terms and conditions. These should be consolidated in conjunction with the Broads Authority's legal advisor and included within the CSOs.</p> <p>A consolidated set of terms and conditions protect the purchaser against unforeseen financial losses, e.g. goods not delivered as agreed, mitigating the risks of delay in services/goods and quality of goods which could also lead to a poor reputation.</p>	Needs Attention	Chief Financial Officer	<p>Agreed. Standard terms and conditions to be drawn up with legal provider, including conditions for contracts over £5k. Work initiated with our Legal provider.</p> <p>Update: Delayed due to ongoing work on COVID-19 response, the Statement of Accounts and budget preparation for 2021/22. Contracts available for staff to use for Engineering (Professional Services and Construction) and Services. The goods contract in process of being finalised with our Legal Provider. The use of these will be covered in the training below.</p>	<p>By 31/03/20</p> <p>Updated to 31/03/21.</p>

Recommendations	Priority rating	Responsible Officer(s)	BA response/action	Timetable
7. Procurement Procurement training is provided to all relevant members of staff, and Members, where applicable. Up to date procurement training ensures that staff are aware of and are adhering to the correct guidelines, thereby mitigating the risk of non-compliance with CSOs and OJEU requirements	Needs Attention	Chief Financial Officer	Agreed. Update: Delayed due to ongoing work on COVID-19 response, the Statement of Accounts and budget preparation for 2021/22.	By 30/06/20 Updated to 31/03/21

Appendix 3 – Summary of actions and responses to Internal Audit 2020/21

Table 3

Planning February 2021

Recommendations	Priority rating	Responsible Officer(s)	BA response/action	Timetable
1. Enforcement Where complaints are received these should be retained on file and acknowledged within three working days as stated in the Local Enforcement Plan. Acknowledging complaints on time provides early reassurance that the complaint has been received and is being dealt with. This helps to reduce the risk of the Authority receiving the same complaint multiple times thereby wasting resources in handling them.	Important	Head of Planning	Agreed	By 01/04/2021
2. Enforcement Complainants should be provided updates of the enforcement investigation being carried out by the Authority within 20 working days as stated in the Local Enforcement Plan. Providing complainant with timely updates on progress of enforcement complaint investigation will reassure the public of work carried on by the Authority in enforcing planning breaches.	Important	Head of Planning and Planning Officer (Compliance and implementation)	Agreed	By 01/04/2021
3. Planning Applications	Needs Attention	Senior Planning Officer	Agreed	By 01/05/2021

Recommendations	Priority rating	Responsible Officer(s)	BA response/action	Timetable
<p>The monthly planning fees reconciliation should be reviewed by a senior officer, other than the one preparing it, which is then signed and dated by both the preparer and the reviewer on completion to evidence this.</p> <p>Reviewing the planning fees reconciliation by a senior officer other than the one preparing it will ensure completeness and accuracy of the application fees received by the Authority and provides segregation of duties. This will mitigate the risk of financial loss to the Authority.</p>				
<p>4. Enforcement</p> <p>The process for new enforcements be completed including the timescale for completing each stage of the enforcement process.</p> <p>Having a documented process for process enforcement cases will ensure uniformity in the services provided to customers. This will mitigate against irregularity in staff handling of enforcement cases.</p>	Needs Attention	Head of Planning	Agreed	By 01/05/2021
<p>5. Enforcement</p> <p>The date the complaint is received by the Authority to be recorded in the Uniform and Idox system.</p> <p>The actual complaints received date should be recorded on the system to ensure the performance indicators stated in the Local Enforcement Plan are</p>	Needs Attention	Planning Technical Support Officer	Agreed	By 01/04/2021

Recommendations	Priority rating	Responsible Officer(s)	BA response/action	Timetable
being adhered to. This is reduced the risk of delay in investigating and responding to complainant.				
6. Enforcement Performance indicators be put in place for responding to complaints and investigating enforcement cases. Having a performance measures in place will help in determining the Authority progress against set standards in relation to the management of complaints and enforcement cases	Needs Attention	Head of Planning	Agreed	By 01/05/2021