

Report No. BRK/14/01 – Final Report issued 25 June 2013

Audit Report on Marketing and Communications

Audit Scope

The scope of the audit covered:

- Policy and procedural guidance governing marketing and communications;
- The Council’s approach to the use of social media;
- Addressing stakeholder enquiries;
- Branding of marketing and communications and compliance with design criteria; and
- Financial management of marketing and communications.

Assurance Opinion

Unsatisfactory Assurance	Limited Assurance	Adequate Assurance	Good Assurance
			

Rationale supporting the award of the opinion

The system of internal control is, overall, deemed adequate in managing the risks associated with Marketing and Communications that fall within the scope of this audit. The assurance opinion has been derived as a result of three medium and four low priority recommendations being raised upon conclusion of our work concerning Marketing and Communications provisions. The medium priority recommendations relate to:

- An action plan should be put in place for the proposed consultation on the public attitude to Council communications and the proposed introduction of a new Digital Strategy. This has been raised in relation to the risk that the Council will not have adequate communications in place following the decision to suspend publication of The Voice magazine, and that the public consultation process requested by the Council will not be effective.
- The Communications Strategy and the supporting policy documents should be reviewed and updated. This is in relation to the risk of the Strategy not being aligned with the Corporate Objectives, and inconsistent practices developing with regards communications with key stakeholders.
- Where applicable, receipt of income prior to advertisements being placed in The Voice magazine in a timely manner. This is linked to the risk of customers failing to pay the Council for adverts that have already been published and is applicable should the Council reconsider further publications of The Voice magazine.

The level of assurance remains the same as the previous audit undertaken for this area, with the direction of travel remaining unchanged despite an increase in the number of recommendations raised.

Positive Findings

We found that the Council has demonstrated the following points of good practice as identified in this audit and we will be sharing details of these operational provisions with other member authorities in the Consortium:

- A secure shared space has been made available for the Key Officer Group, managers with key roles within the Council, and the shared manager service to post notices and share documents.
- A wide variety of media is used to communicate with the public, including Twitter, Facebook, blogging sites, emails, Flickr, posters, leaflets, press releases, local parish magazines, community newsletters, and town parish noticeboards.
- A comprehensive social media policy is in place, covering areas including the written 'tone of voice' to be used in social media communications, content and creation of content, appropriate usage levels of different platforms, social media campaigns, the process during periods of purdah, and the monitoring of social media content.
- The team uses a free social media account management tool to manage the Council's corporate Twitter and Facebook accounts, and also to keep track of material posted by other accounts concerning the Council.
- A staff protocol is in place regarding the performance of branding design consistency checks and branding work by in-house staff.

It is also acknowledged that there are areas where sound controls are in place and operating consistently:

- The Communications Team uses the staff intranet, known as The Biz, The Place, which is a site for managers to share and discuss information, and emails to communicate with staff, as well as assisting in the production of Executive Briefings given by the Chief Executive.
- The Communications Team has received training in media services, on topics such as community and digital engagement for local authorities, and use of social media.
- Financial reports are regularly produced, and a quarterly budget monitoring process is in place to identify significant under or overspends (in line with the Council's budget monitoring arrangements).

Control weaknesses to be addressed

During our work we have identified the following key area(s) where we believe that the processes and arrangements within the Marketing and Communications function would benefit from being strengthened, and as a result of these findings, three medium priority recommendations have been raised, in relation to the following issues:

- There is currently no action plan in place for the proposed consultation on the public attitude to Council communications and the now rejected Digital Strategy;
- The Communications Strategy and the supporting policy documents require updating and approval; and,
- It was noted that payment for advertisement had not been received in advance of the advertisement being placed.

Four low priority recommendations have been raised in respect of social media account creation forms being retained, the maintaining of records of media enquiries received and legal advice obtained, the password protection of social media accounts, and following correct processes for procuring the design, printing and delivery of the November/December 2012 issue of The Voice magazine outside of contract.

Summary of the adequacy and effectiveness of controls

	Area of Scope	Adequacy of Controls	Effectiveness of Controls	Recommendations Raised		
				High	Medium	Low
Adequacy and Effectiveness Assessments	Policy and Procedural Guidance	Green	Amber	0	2	0
	Social Media	Green	Amber	0	0	2
	Stakeholder Enquiries	Green	Amber	0	0	1
	Branding and Criteria	Green	Amber	0	0*	0
	Financial	Green	Amber	0	1	1
	Total				0	3

* - An issue has been raised in reference to this area and is included under the area of Social Media.

High Priority Recommendations

No high priority recommendations have been raised as a result of this audit

Management Responses

Management have accepted the recommendations raised.

Report No. BRK/14/02 – Final Report issued 8 July 2013

Audit Report on Economic Development

Audit Scope

The scope of the audit covered:

LEP-ACTive (Local Enterprise, Growth and Efficiency Programme)

- Confirming the existence of a sound business case for LEP-ACTive;
- That an action plan is in place for gearing up to the commencement of LEP-ACTive;
- Governance arrangements have been defined and agreed for overseeing delivery of LEP-ACTive;
- Adequate resources; both financial and officer time have been identified and approved to successfully deliver the LEP-ACTive project;
- That LEP-ACTive is actively promoted in order to achieve its desired objectives and ultimately those of the Council;
- Outcomes are reported to the senior management, members and other key stakeholders and;
- Risks associated with managing the project are effectively managed.

REV-ACTive

- Reliance has been taken from the work performed by the DCLG’s internal auditors have undertaken an Article 16 audit on the REV-ACTive Project, completed in March 2013, and from the Pre-Audit Questionnaire prior to commencement of their review.

Assurance Opinion

Unsatisfactory Assurance	Limited Assurance	Adequate Assurance	Good Assurance
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Rationale supporting the award of the opinion

The audit work undertaken by Internal Audit has identified that there is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve the client’s objectives. The control processes tested are being consistently applied and as a result of this audit no recommendations have been raised concerning the LEP-ACTive Project.

We have also taken account the two observations raised through the Article 16 audit carried out by the DCLG European Regional Development Fund Audit Authority, concerning the REV-ACTive project. One risk, relating to the delayed formalisation of a project change request made to the Growth Delivery Team for the East of England (East-GDT), and one finding that merited attention, regarding a lack of coordination between the output figures as recorded by the project and those recorded on the Management, Control and Information System (MCIS) system, were raised in the course of this audit.

These have not yet been implemented as the draft report; issued on 28th May 2013, had still to be finalised. However, the outcomes of their audit considered the project ‘well managed’, ‘delivering in line with expectations’ and was ‘low risk’.

Positive Findings

We found that the Council has demonstrated the following points of good practice as identified in this review and we will be sharing details of these operational provisions with other member authorities in the Consortium:

- A project schedule has been put in place, based on the ACTIVE project management framework, with 35 milestones in place for the nine project phases or activities to be completed.
- Actions to be taken in order to meet each of the milestones have been set out, along with the quality criteria to be used, the team member responsible, and the date by which the milestones are to be achieved, in order to meet the targets upon which the funding of the project is conditional.
- Two marketing contracts for the project have been created for tendering, and a draft Marketing and Communications Strategy, created specifically by the LEP-Active Team (and solely independent of the Council's main marketing strategies) and a publicity policy, are in place.
- A project risk register has been created and 11 project-specific risks have been identified, with mitigation plans, the risk owner (the Programme Manager), timeframes in which they are applicable, early warning indicators, and risk ratings, in place for each of these.
- The costs and staffing resources required for the project have been presented to and approved by the Council, which set out the projected income and reduction in costs budgeted for 2012-2016, which aim to make the service self-financing and create savings, whilst still working to achieve the Council's strategic objectives of supporting the local economy and becoming more entrepreneurial.
- Research was conducted into the economic context of the programme such as lack of finance available for small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and wider economic problems in the UK, the prospects for and barriers to the growth of the low-carbon economy in the UK, and the need for greater awareness of the benefits of green business practices and sustainability.

It is also acknowledged there are areas where sound controls are in place and operating consistently:

- A comprehensive business case has been created, which is aligned with the Council's strategic objectives and key aims.
- Terms of reference for the three project groups have been created (Strategic, Operation, and Grant Review), setting out the Strategic Board and membership which will oversee the project on behalf of the Council, and charts of the staffing and management of the operational team.
- Monthly Operational Team meetings are being held, and the Project Manager's Highlights Report on progress towards targets and risks is created to be presented to the Strategic Board, which is to meet quarterly from July 2013.

Control weaknesses to be addressed

No high or medium priority recommendations have been raised as a result of this audit into LEP-Active. It was noted that at the time of the audit, although the project has commenced, the terms of reference for the project governing bodies, the Strategic Board, the Operational Team, and the Grants Panel, have yet to be approved. The draft versions have been signed by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Strategic Board and full approval is scheduled to be obtained at the first meeting of the Strategic Board on 10th July 2013. Therefore, no recommendation has been deemed necessary.

Assurance has been taken from the ERDF audit authority report on REV-Active, which raised two recommendations, as referred to above.

Summary of the adequacy and effectiveness of controls

	Area of Scope	Adequacy of Controls	Effectiveness of Controls	Recommendations Raised		
				High	Medium	Low
Adequacy and Effectiveness Assessments	Business Case	Green	Green	0	0	0
	Action Plan	Green	Green	0	0	0
	Governance	Green	Green	0	0	0
	Resources	Green	Green	0	0	0
	Promotion	Green	Green	0	0	0
	Reporting / Monitoring	Green	Green	0	0	0
	Risk Management	Green	Green	0	0	0
	Total				0	0

Given the quality of the internal control system in operation, it is pleasing to note that it was not necessary to raise audit recommendations upon conclusion of our review work.

Report No. BRK/14/03 – Final Report issued 19 September 2013

Audit Report on Development Control

Audit Scope

The scope of the audit covered:

- Contract Monitoring;
- Planning Applications;
- Planning Enforcement;
- Building Control;
- Section 106 Agreements; and,
- Land Charges.

Assurance Opinion

Unsatisfactory Assurance	Limited Assurance	Adequate Assurance	Good Assurance
			

Rationale supporting the award of the opinion

The audit focused upon the controls in place to mitigate inherent risks over planning applications, building control, section 106 planning agreements and land charges. It considered the contract monitoring arrangements in place by the Council for Capita Symonds’s administration of these services and also included interviews with Capita Symonds staff and inspection of documents held by Capita Symonds such as case files and system records.

The system of internal control is, overall, deemed limited in managing the risks associated with Development Control that fall within the scope of this audit. The level of assurance has remained the same since the previous audit undertaken for this area. The assurance opinion has been derived as a result of two high, four medium and one low priority recommendations being raised.

The high priority recommendation relates to an issue whereby building control decisions are currently being signed off by Capita Symonds on behalf of the Council (in particular the Public Protection Manager). The Public Protection Manager reviews the decisions retrospectively and will not be able to amend decisions or identify problems before they have been issued. The statutory responsibility for this function rests with the Council and therefore a Council representative should be overseeing these cases. Further medium recommendations have been raised as a result of issues over timeliness of dealing with enforcement cases and land charges searches, as well as the requirement to implement Section 106 monitoring arrangements.

Issue was also identified with the timeliness of application processing. The Council is to process and return a decision to the applicant within eight weeks unless an extension is granted. From a sample of 25 planning applications tested, two applications were not processed within the 56 days target set. No extension or other supporting documentation could be located to justify the delay. A recommendation has not been raised as this is monitored as an indicator within the performance report to the two-monthly Contract Monitoring Board and issues with the timeliness of application processing have been raised within this forum.

There are also four recommendations still outstanding from the previous report issued in April 2012. These relate to updating terms of reference for the Contract Monitoring Board, validating Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Capita Symonds's self-monitoring arrangements, validating the Growth Income Threshold and monitoring of planning enforcement activity.

Positive Findings

We found that the Council has demonstrated the following areas where sound controls are in place and operating consistently:

- Contract monitoring meetings between Capita Symonds and the Council take place on a bi monthly basis. Operational meetings are conducted on a monthly basis.
- Payments for planning applications are made in line with the approved rates and prior to the application being approved.
- Evidence of time spent on Building Control cases is retained to provide justification over the charging of fees.
- Income is received for searches prior to their being processed and in line with agreed charges.

Control weaknesses to be addressed

During our work we have identified the following key area(s) where we believe that the processes / arrangements within Development Control would benefit from being strengthened, and as a result of these findings the following high priority recommendation has been made.

- Building Control applications are approved and determined by the contractor Capita Symonds at present. The Public Protection Manager is notified of decisions made although this is after the decision notice has been issued. As such, these decisions are not being made in accordance with the Council's statutory responsibilities and processes need to be out in place to address this issue and the risks associated.

During our work we have identified the following area(s) where we believe that the processes / arrangement within Development Control that would benefit from being strengthened, and as a result of these findings medium priority recommendations have been made.

- The electronic system Ocella is not being utilised to its maximum capacity by the Enforcement team with information not always recorded on the system; this need to be actioned to ensure that planning enforcement actions are correct and timely.
- Enforcement action is not taken in a timely manner; processes need to ensure that complaints or referrals are acknowledged within the five day timeframe given, resulting in statutory duties being discharged.
- Monitoring of section 106 planning agreement trigger points has not been undertaken since the departure of the previous monitoring officer in January 2013. Mechanisms should be agreed over how the production of section 106 agreements and monitoring of their trigger points should occur, including detailing of Council/contractor responsibilities.
- Land search requests are not dealt with in a timely manner. The ten day target agreed between Capita Symonds and the Council for processing such complaints needs to be met to ensure a high quality and efficient service is provided.

Summary of the adequacy and effectiveness of controls

Adequacy and Effectiveness Assessments	Area of Scope	Adequacy of Controls	Effectiveness of Controls	Recommendations Raised		
				High	Medium	Low
	Contract Monitoring*	Green	Amber	0	0	1
	Planning Applications	Green	Amber**	0	0	0
	Planning Enforcement	Green	Amber	0	2	0
	Building Control	Amber	Amber	1	0	0
	Section 106 Agreements	Amber	Amber	0	1	0
	Land Charges	Green	Amber	0	1	0
Total				1	4	1

*- Four recommendations remain outstanding from audit BRK/12/01 with revised deadlines of 30th September 2013; as detailed above.

** - Issues noted within the section above in relation to the timeliness of processing of planning applications.

High Priority Recommendations

One high priority recommendations has been raised as a result of this audit:

Building Control - Approval of building control decisions (Recommendation 4)

All Building Control decisions should be approved in line with the Council's statutory requirements.

Management Response

Agreed.

The Public Protection Manager has purchased the Ocella Building Control Manager module, which will enable correct sign off of all applications in a timely manner, with full documentation available. This is due for installation during October 2013.

Overall Management Responses

Management have accepted all recommendation raised.

Report No. BRK/14/04 – Final Report issued 13 August 2013

Audit Report on Elections and Electoral Registration

Audit Scope

The scope of the audit covered:

Electoral Registration

- Electoral Register completeness and accuracy;
- Register security;
- Canvasser payment authorisation, coding and recording; and,
- Planning for Individual Electoral Registration.

Elections

- Election expenditure is in accordance with relevant legislation, accurate, authorised and recovered from the County Council and that Statutory Returns are completed to Her Majesty’s Revenues and Customs (HMRC) and Electoral Commission; and,
- Controls over postal voting.

Assurance Opinion

Unsatisfactory Assurance	Limited Assurance	Adequate Assurance	Good Assurance
			

Rationale supporting the award of the opinion

The system of internal control is, overall, deemed adequate in managing the risks associated with Elections and Electoral Registration that fall within the scope of this audit. This includes the Council having prepared for the pending introduction of IER. The assurance opinion has been derived as a result of five medium and one low priority recommendations being raised upon conclusion of our work concerning Elections and Electoral Registration provisions.

Two of the medium priority recommendations are to ensure that the Electoral Register is complete and accurate and that only those entitled to vote can do so, through; ensuring that requests for changes are processed and retained and that duplicate entry checks are undertaken and records maintained of these.

A further two medium priority recommendations are made in relation to the system for canvassers; firstly ensuring that supporting documentation in relation to canvassing staff is retained and secondly that the requisite amount of visits are made to properties.

The final medium priority recommendation relates to ensuring that a formal reconciliation between the costs incurred in the course of the elections and those recorded on the general ledger is performed, recorded and independently reviewed before the accounts are submitted to be audited by the responsible body.

The level of assurance remains the same as the previous audit undertaken for this area, with the direction of travel remaining unchanged despite an increase in the number of recommendations raised.

Positive Findings

We found that the Council has demonstrated the following points of good practice as identified in this review and we will be sharing details of these operational provisions with

other member authorities in the Consortium:

- Comprehensive guidance has been made available to the personal canvassing staff, including advice on how to complete the canvassing of an area efficiently, safely and in a way that is fair to the residents, such as not entering houses, dealing with potential hazards, as well as common responses to questions or objections, and the required documentation to be returned at the end of the canvass.
- The necessary IT changes to the Xpress database used to hold the register have been made for IER thereby ensuring the team is up to date with the existing Cabinet office deadlines. At the time of our review, Councils were awaiting the DWP to commence the first confirmation dry-run in preparation for the introduction of IER, and for further details on the overall specifications of IER, to be determined by parliament.

It is also acknowledged there are areas where sound controls are in place and operating consistently:

- A system of reminders is in place during the annual canvass, whereby following the initial canvassing form, first and second reminders are sent out to all non-responding properties, and personal canvassers are then sent to each property which has received a second reminder form.
- The Electoral Services team complies with the timetables set by the Electoral Commission in both the monthly updates to the register and the annual canvassing period.
- Staff access to the register is appropriately restricted and reviewed on an annual basis, and the passwords are changed every 30 days, in keeping with the Council IT security requirements.
- The 2012 canvassing payments were processed through the payroll system, and all were made at the correct rate.
- All expenditure made in relation to election expenses is documented, recorded on the ledger and authorised, with controls and checks in place, and is reclaimed from the appropriate bodies.
- All HMRC and Electoral Commission statutory returns have been completed to date.
- A comprehensive process is in place for the handling of postal vote statements, including recording the date and time of when the ballot papers are received thus providing a complete audit of all postal votes received, although the recording of the ballot paper is not required by law.
- For the opening of postal votes, verified persons have been appointed and documented as required by law.

Control weaknesses to be addressed

During our work we have identified the following key area(s) where we believe that the processes and arrangements within the Elections and Electoral Registration function would benefit from being strengthened, and as a result of these findings, five medium priority recommendations have been raised, in relation to the following issues:

- In two cases it was determined that the canvassing forms received were not retained, and in one case it was found that a registration form received had not been processed and entered onto the electoral register.
- It was found that two of ten entries reported by the system as being duplicated elsewhere in the register were not removed as part of the duplicate entry checks performed.
- The supporting documents and forms completed for the 2012 canvass were lost following the end of the canvass period, including the starters documentation received. For two of the ten areas sampled, the personal canvassing worksheets completed could not be located.
- Checks need to be applied to confirm that canvassers have made the requisite visits where there has been no reply to their first visit.

- Financial reconciliation takes place between the general ledger and the election accounts before submission to the accounting authority although no formal record is kept as evidence.

Summary of the adequacy and effectiveness of controls

	Area of Scope	Adequacy of Controls	Effectiveness of Controls	Recommendations Raised		
				High	Medium	Low
Adequacy and Effectiveness Assessments	Electoral Register Completeness and Accuracy	Green	Amber	0	2	1
	Register Security	Green	Green	0	0	0
	Canvasser Payments	Green	Amber	0	2	0
	Planning for IER	Green	Green	0	0	0
	Elections Administration	Green	Amber	0	1	0
	Postal Voting	Green	Green	0	0	0
	Total				0	5

High Priority Recommendations

No high priority recommendations have been raised as a result of this audit

Management Responses

Management have accepted the recommendation raised.

Report No. BRK/14/06 – Final Report issued 7 November 2013

Audit Report on Homelessness, Housing List and Choice Based Lettings

Audit Scope

The scope of the audit covered:

- Homelessness Provision;
- Management of the Housing List; and
- Choice Based Lettings System.

Assurance Opinion

Unsatisfactory Assurance	Limited Assurance	Adequate Assurance	Good Assurance
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Rationale supporting the award of the opinion

The system of internal control is, overall, deemed limited in managing the risks associated with Homelessness, Housing List and CBL that fall within the scope of this audit. The level of assurance has deteriorated since the previous audit undertaken for this area. The assurance opinion has been derived as a result of two high, two medium and two low priority recommendations being raised.

The deterioration in assurance has resulted from two primary areas which have resulted in high priority recommendations having been raised. Firstly, a failure to implement requirements of the Localism Act and the Allocations Policy in assessing routine local connections as a matter of course. Secondly, there is a need to develop monitoring mechanisms within CIVICA. Two recommendations have arisen as a result of manual processes being required within the system which have not been undertaken; and a further recommendation has been raised partly as a result of an inability to produce effective monitoring records from the system. Although faults and issues are logged with CIVICA, regular formal monitoring of measures and system performance will help to provide assurance that these issues are dealt with.

Positive Findings

We found that the Council has demonstrated the following areas where sound controls are in place and operating consistently:

- Implications of the Localism Act had been considered and reflected in the Council's Allocations Policy which had been approved by Cabinet in October 2012 and was available on the web site;
- Invoices received from landlords for temporary accommodation had been checked prior to payment; and
- Applicants are made aware of their housing options through the Council's online CBL system, Breckland Key Connect. Once registered and all requested information has been provided, the applicant is able to directly log into the system and make bids on appropriate properties with the successful bid typically placed by the highest priority case.

Control weaknesses to be addressed

During our work we have identified the following key area(s) where we believe that the processes / arrangements within Homelessness, Housing List and CBL would benefit from being strengthened, and as a result of these findings the following high priority recommendations have been made:

- Until such time as the CBL system's software has been updated to force a review of an applicant's local connection status before allowing any housing applications to be made, staff should make arrangements to manually identify and verify an applicant's local connection status on all occasions and only to allow a housing application to be made at the appropriate time. This is a requirement of the Allocations Policy, updated with effect from April 2013 to take account of implications of the Localism Act.
- The nature of service delivery performance information should be agreed between the Council and Civica, as provider of the CBL system, and reported against on a monthly basis for review by management. This will help to provide assurance that systems issues have been raised and dealt with which would help to reduce the likelihood of issues occurring as a result of a requirement to implement manual processes.

During our work we have identified the following area(s) where we believe that the processes / arrangements within Homelessness, Housing List and CBL that would benefit from being strengthened, and as a result of these findings medium priority recommendations have been made:

- As a result of an inability to produce a report of tenant arrears cases, testing could not be undertaken to confirm that recovery of temporary accommodation charges is taking place in an effective and timely manner. An arrears report was produced subsequent to completion of the audit fieldwork which ascertained outstanding debt for these charges to be £2,358.79. Furthermore, documented procedures should be introduced to support recovery and payment of Norfolk Credit Union loans.
- Arrangements should be made to follow up awarding of property outcomes with the relevant landlords in a timely manner in order to update the CBL system and thereby prevent the applicant from making a subsequent application with the benefit of the existing priority classification.

Summary of the adequacy and effectiveness of controls

	Area of Scope	Adequacy of Controls	Effectiveness of Controls	Recommendations Raised		
				High	Medium	Low
Adequacy and Effectiveness Assessments	Homelessness Provision	Amber	Amber	0	1	1
	Management of the Housing List	Amber	Amber	0	0	1
	Choice Based Lettings System	Amber	Amber	2	1	0
Total				2	2	2

High Priority Recommendations

Two high priority recommendations have been raised as a result of this audit:

Choice Based Lettings System - Routine Local Connection Checks (Recommendation 4)

Until such time as the Council's CBL system's software has been updated to force a review of an applicant's local connection status before allowing any housing applications to be made, staff should make arrangements to manually identify and verify an applicant's local connection status on all occasions and only to allow an housing application to be made at the appropriate time.

Management Response:

Agreed.

As from a go-live date of 30th September 2013 the front end of the CBL system incorporates the local connection criteria set out in the Council's allocation policy.

If applicants cannot match the criteria they are not permitted to continue with their application. If the information they have given allows them to proceed with an application to pending status following which there is a manual assessment of their local connection status which, if confirmed, will allow them to be issued with the reference and password that enables them complete their application.

Choice Based Lettings System - CBL Service Delivery Management Information (Recommendation 6)

The nature of service delivery performance information should be agreed between the Council and Civica, as provider of the CBL system, and reported against on a monthly basis for review by management.

Management Response:

Agreed.

The issue is less about the provision of information about system performance from Civica, (this is self-evident from the users perspective) and more about the difficulty of constructing report formats within the system.

Civica will levy a charge for work they do on this system which is bespoke for Breckland.

It is intended to make better use of the Council's account manager at Civica to help better understand the system and to develop a more harmonious relationship to our mutual benefit.

Action: expected to be on-going and to commence within 3 months

Overall Management Responses

Management have accepted all recommendations raised.

Report No. BRK/14/13 – Final Report issued 31 July 2013

Audit Report on Telecoms / VoIP Management

Audit Scope

The scope of the audit covered:

- System Management and Roles & Responsibilities;
- System Security;
- Call Restrictions;
- Resilience, Disaster Recovery and Maintenance;
- System monitoring reports and Value for Money; and
- Mobile telephony.

Assurance Opinion

Unsatisfactory Assurance	Limited Assurance	Adequate Assurance	Good Assurance

Rationale supporting the award of the opinion

The system of internal control is adequate in managing the risks associated with the Telecoms/VoIP infrastructure. Seven recommendations have been raised, five of which are medium priority actions to ensure that; a review of the telecoms strategy contained within the overall ICT Strategy is conducted, that the Mitel appliance passwords are configured in line with corporate policy as far as is possible, that the DISA configuration within the Mitel appliance is investigated, that the risk presented by the single point of failure on the ISDN 30 is adequately mitigated and to ensure that the mobile device policy is reviewed/signed off by all staff in receipt of mobile devices.

Positive Findings

The following are areas where sound controls are in place and operating consistently.

- Adequate call restriction controls are in place;
- The VoIP deployment described as a strategic objective within the Council's ICT Strategy 2012 – 2014 has been completed;
- There are adequate reporting processes in place, specifically for the call centre; and
- The Vodafone VCOL web portal provides a central point for the management of mobile devices.

Control weaknesses to be addressed

During our work we have identified the following areas where we believe that the processes / arrangement within the Telecoms/VoIP infrastructure would benefit from being strengthened, and as a result of these findings medium priority recommendations have been made.

- The Telecoms Strategy contained within the Corporate ICT strategy should be reviewed to ensure that it remains relevant to the Council's current requirements;
- Password controls to access the Mitel appliance should be strengthened to comply with corporate policy as far as possible;

- The DISA configuration should be reviewed to understand what the configuration currently allows, if anything, beyond the ability to change the night service messaging for the call centre;
- The ISDN 30 telecoms line is a single point of failure that requires addressing; and
- The Mobile Device Policy should be reviewed and signed off by all relevant staff.

Summary of the adequacy and effectiveness of controls

	Area of Scope	Adequacy of Controls	Effectiveness of Controls	Recommendations Raised			
				High	Medium	Low	
Adequacy and Effectiveness Assessments	System Management and Roles & Responsibilities	Amber	Amber	0	1	0	
	System Security	Amber	Amber	0	2	2	
	Call Restrictions	Green	Green	0	0	0	
	Resilience, Disaster Recovery and Maintenance	Amber	Amber	0	1	0	
	System monitoring reports and VFM	Green	Green	0	0	0	
	Mobile Telephony	Amber	Amber	0	1	0	
	Total				0	5	2

High Priority Recommendations

No high priority recommendations have been raised as a result of this audit

Management Responses

Management have accepted the recommendations raised.

Report No. BRK/14/14 – Final Report issued 16 August 2013

Audit Report on Business Continuity

Audit Scope

The scope of the audit covered:

- Management commitment;
- Establishment of a service resumption planning team;
- Infrastructure assessment;
- Risk analysis;
- Establishment of priorities for recovery;
- Definition of requirements for recovery;
- The business recovery plan;
- Training;
- Testing of the business recovery plan;
- Maintaining and updating the plan; and
- Insurance.

Assurance Opinion

Unsatisfactory Assurance	Limited Assurance	Adequate Assurance	Good Assurance

Rationale supporting the award of the opinion

The system of internal control is adequate in managing the risks associated with business continuity. This opinion has been awarded as, although there is no overall Corporate Business Continuity Plan in place and no regular testing of Plans have occurred, individual Business Impact Analyses and Service Continuity Plans were found to be in place and provided sufficient detail to assist in the continuity/recovery of a business unit in the event of an unexpected disruption to normal processes. Overall six medium priority recommendations have been raised including the requirement to develop a Corporate Business Continuity Plan, conduct regular testing of Business Continuity Plans, provide appropriate training to officers with business continuity responsibilities, and to ensure that documentation in relation to business continuity is complete, accurate and regularly reviewed and contains version control information. It is also acknowledged that the Resilience Officer has produced a draft report for presentation to CMT recommending improvements in the business continuity process.

Positive Findings

We found that the Council has demonstrated the following points of good practice as identified in this review and we will be sharing details of these operational provisions with other member authorities in the Consortium:

- The Council have a sound Governance structure in place which will help to facilitate effective business continuity. There are clearly defined reporting lines both internally, and across partnerships. The existence of the Business Continuity Project Group also provides an opportunity for steering and escalation of issues where necessary.

It is also acknowledged there are areas where sound controls are in place and operating consistently.

- The Council has adopted a robust and consistent approach to assessing risks associated with their key activities. This has been used to develop a meaningful recovery objective which is consistently referred to throughout the Business Impact Analyses and Plans.
- Roles and responsibilities of responsible officers have been clearly defined and documented.
- The insurance cover that the Council has, covers all consequential losses and increased working costs which may arise as a result of an incident occurring.

Control weaknesses to be addressed

During our work we have identified the following key area(s) where we believe that the processes / arrangements within Business Continuity would benefit from being strengthened, and as a result of these findings four medium priority recommendations have been made.

- There is currently no corporate level business continuity plan in place at the Council.
- The Business Impact Analyses (BIA's) are in place across the Services, however, many have not been fully completed.
- The Council have not exercised their Business Continuity Plans for at least the last three years.
- There is currently no provision of training for responsible officers outside of the Resilience team.

Audit was unable to test the maintaining and updating of plans, due to there being no Corporate Business Continuity Plan in place, and therefore exercising is not achievable.

Additionally two low priority recommendations have been raised where improvements to existing controls could be made and includes:

- Not all of the Plans have been brought up to date, with the dates of the last review going back as far as 2010.
- Key policy documents, including the Business Continuity Management Framework document, have not been reviewed and/or updated since 2011.

Summary of the adequacy and effectiveness of controls

	Area of Scope	Adequacy of Controls	Effectiveness of Controls	Recommendations Raised			
				High	Medium	Low	
Adequacy & Effectiveness Assessments	Management Commitment	Green	Amber	0	0	1	
	Establishment of a Service Resumption Planning team	Green	Green	0	0	0	
	Infrastructure Assessment	Amber	Green	0	1	0	
	Risk Analysis	Amber	Amber	0	0	1	
	Establishment of Priorities for recovery	Green	Green	0	0	0	
	Definition of Requirements for recovery	Green	Green	0	0	0	
	The Business Recovery Plan (BCP)	Amber	Amber	0	1	0	
	Training	Green	Amber	0	1	0	
	Testing the BCP	Red	Red	0	1	0	
	Maintaining and Updating the BCP	Red	Red	0	*0	0	
	Insurance	Green	Green	0	0	0	
	Total				0	4	2

* As no testing had recently occurred, there was no evidence to demonstrate that Plans had been updated following testing.

High Priority Recommendations

No high priority recommendations have been raised as a result of this audit

Management Responses

Management have accepted the recommendation raised.