Summary of Internal Audit Recommendations made and implemented 2021/22 – 2023/24 (March 2024)

Recommendations Made	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Number of High Priority	8	2	13
Number of Medium Priority	31	29	39
Number of Low priority	49	41	61
Total Number of Recommendations Made	**88**	**72**	**113**
Recommendations Implemented	**85**	**63**	**69**
Recommendations still to be implemented	**3**	**9**	**44**
Implementation date not reached yet	0	1	29
Recommendations outstanding (overdue) in total	**3**	**8**	**15**
High Recommendations Outstanding	2	2	3
Medium Recommendations Outstanding	1	4	7
Low Recommendations Outstanding	0	2	5
Percentage implemented or carried fwd to next audit (excluding those where the implementation date is not reached yet)	**96%**	**89%**	**82%**

2021/22

Report Ref	Audit	Assurance	Recommendations accepted			Total	Not Overdue	Overdue	Implemented
			High	Medium	Low				
018	Non Housing Property Repairs	Limited	2	2		4		3 (2H 1M)	1
			2	**2**	**0**	**4**		**3**	**1**

2022/23

Report Ref	Audit	Assurance	Recommendations accepted			Total	Not Overdue	Overdue	Implemented
			High	Medium	Low				
004	Housing Rents	Limited	2	1	2	5		3 (2H 1L)	2
010	Procurement	Limited		6	5	11		1L	10
012	Cyber Risk and Network Security	Limited		4	1	5		2M	3
014	Accounts Payable	Reasonable		3	2	5		1M	4
016	Risk Management	Reasonable		2	4	6	1M	1M	4
Total			**2**	**16**	**14**	**32**	**1**	**8**	**23**

2023/24

Report Ref	Audit	Assurance	Recommendations accepted			Total	Not Overdue	Overdue	Implemented
			High	Medium	Low				
001	Payroll	Limited	8	9	7	24		5 (1H 2M 2L)	19
002	Crematorium Income	Reasonable		1	5	6	2	1M	3
003	Sickness Absence Management	Reasonable		3	5	8	4	2 (1M 1L)	2
004	NNDR	Reasonable		3	3	6		1M	5
005	Corporate Health & Safety	Limited		8	4	12	3	2M	7
006	CIL & Section 106	Reasonable		1	5	6		2L	4
007	Corporate Credit Cards	Inadequate	4	2	2	8		2H	6
008	Accounts Receivable	Reasonable		1		1	1		
009	Treasury Management	Substantial			1	1	1		
010	Markets	Reasonable		1	5	6			6
011	Procurement	N/A Follow up				0			0
012	QPSC Income	Limited		5	14	19	2		17
013	VAT	Substantial			1	1	1		
014	Property Rents	Limited	1	4	7	12	12		
015	Healthy Living Centre Income	Reasonable		1	2	3	3		
016	Northern Gateway Enterprise Centre	Substantial				0			0
Total			**13**	**39**	**61**	**113**	**29**	**15**	**69**

Outstanding Recommendations at March 2024

Audit and date audit completed	Recommendation Outstanding	Priority and Original Target Date	Managers Comment – March 2024
Non- Housing Property Repairs – April 2022	It is essential that the review of the Councils maintenance plans for non-operational buildings be completed as soon as practical.	High September 2022	February 2024 - Condition surveys and zero carbon reduction surveys have been completed for HLC, VIC and former Customer Service Centre. A restructure of Property and Technical Services will be carried out mid-2024 with resources to move this area of work forward. Revised Target Date December 2025
Non- Housing Property Repairs – April 2022	Consideration must be given to the financial implications of the results of the condition surveys.	High December 2022	This will flow directly from R1. The plan is to pay for works from capital receipts.
Non- Housing Property Repairs – April 2022	Contribution levels should be reviewed to ensure they are set at a realistic level based on the outcomes of R1.	Medium February 2023	As above
Housing Rents – August 2022	It is essential that arrears cases are reviewed on a regular minimum 3 monthly basis in order to ensure: • Contact with tenant to ensure all recovery routes, financial	High 31st January 2023	February 2024 - Partly implemented. The service is applying for managed payments at an early stage to prevent increasing arrears. The service is not yet in a position to review

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	guidance/assistance is provided prior to escalation of arrears and potential eviction Where tenant is on UC direct and managed payments applied for as soon as practical to prevent increasing arrears		arrears cases every three months. The team has undergone a programme of cross skilling and has developed a new escalation policy and system enhancements. However, several vacancies are still outstanding. It is expected that some of these posts will be filled by staff who have recently been added to the council's redeployment list and a training school will be implemented from April/May 2024
Housing Rents – August 2022	Arrangements should be reviewed on a regular minimum monthly basis to ensure that the arrangement is being adhered to or where failed recovery escalation is progressed as soon as possible, to prevent increasing levels of arrears	Low November 2022	February 2024 - Partly implemented. Additional staff members have been trained on making payment arrangements and reviewing payment arrangements. This training has also been rolled out to contact centre teams. ICT have been unable to provide resources to implement the arrangement management software which will automate the process, due to delays in the Northgate system upgrade and resources being diverted to support other priority areas across the Council.

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Housing Rents – August 2022	It is essential that the continued upward trend in arrears is addressed, particularly pro-active recovery at an early stage of arrears for each case, which will necessitate a review of resources	High January 2023	February 2024 - Partly implemented. A new escalation policy has been developed but is yet to be built in Northgate. Closer working relationships have been built with tenancy support officers, providing additional capacity to develop effective payment plans. Five additional employees are being recruited and a training school will be implemented for these staff in April / May 2024.
Procurement – December 2022	Formal KPI's should be adopted to monitor the performance of the service and associated non-compliance of Services	Low 30th April 2023	The Procurement Strategy will be updated to ensure that the KPIs are relevant to the new Act.
Cyber Risk and Network Security – February 2023	It is essential that the VMware, ICT Disaster Recovery plan is reviewed and formalised and kept under review.	Medium 31st March 2023	The implementation of the new disaster recovery environment including Malware protection technology continues to make good progress. The formalisation of the ICT Disaster Recovery Plan is required as part of the ISO 27001 implementation. The plan will be formally documented in line with the ISO 27001 standards which is on track for the end of summer 2024.

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Cyber Risk and Network Security – February 2023	Continue working towards the Council being ISO 27001 certified at the earliest opportunity.	Medium 31st December 2023	The ISO 27001 Project Team has been formed following a change in contracted Chief Information Security Officer resource and are meeting regularly to progress delivery of the ISO 27001 accreditation. The assessment will take place at the end of summer 2024.
Accounts Payable **February 2023**	It is essential that the variances between authorisation levels are discussed at Tier 4 level and/or higher with objective of, if appropriate adapting the Constitution to incorporate the different authorisation limits for systems to reflect the purpose of each system e.g., Unit 4, COINS and 1st housing.	Medium August 2023	A review of systems is underway with a plan to push all non-job related expenditure through Unit 4 to ensure that the correct approvals are provided for this expenditure.
Risk Management **March 2023**	It should be ensured that all operational risk registers are reviewed and updated in addition to being transferred to the new format as soon as possible. Each operational risk register should be reviewed at	Medium September 2023	Partial completion. Operational risk registers are reviewed at the Risk Management Group which is held quarterly. All risk registers are reviewed at least annually.

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	least annually by the Risk Management Group.		Good progress has been made in transferring risk registers to a new template and this work is expected to be completed by June 2024.
Payroll **June 2023**	Consideration should be given to HR reminding Managers of overtime rules and working time directives (i.e., not to exceed 6 hours without a break)	Low 1st October 2023	Partially completed. The stand by and call out policy has been refreshed to include sections on the working time directive and compensatory rest. New procedures have been implemented in the Careline Service to ensure the working time directive is adhered to. A programme of manager training sessions has been developed in relation to payroll, absence and health and safety administrative matters and will be delivered on a monthly basis.
Payroll **June 2023**	It is essential that Managers are reminded to check accuracy of employees, hours and grade preferably maintaining a record of when check completed to ensure no fake employees. In order to facilitate this My View	High 1st October 2023	The establishment has been reviewed and refreshed. Resourcelink is now being updated to reflect the latest position. It is unlikely that Myview will be updated within the next six months, but a quarterly manual review of the establishment will be

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	must show relevant employee details		undertaken by heads of service.
Payroll **June 2023**	It would be prudent to consider re-introduction of performance measures, in particular accuracy of payments to employees (former HR1) and statutory deductions, payments and returns made on time (former HR5)	Medium 30th September 2023	A new Head of HR, Payroll and Learning and Development has been recruited and is reviewing key performance indicators for the service. These will be implemented from April 2024.
Payroll **June 2023**	It would be prudent to undertake a review of access levels within Resource Link to ensure individuals levels of access are appropriate for their job role.	Medium Ongoing	A resourcelink improvement programme has been scoped. This recommendation forms part of the change programme, but timescales for delivery have not yet been agreed with ICT and Resourcelink. It is unlikely that this work will be completed until the 2nd half of 2024, due to the need to undertake recruitment to a new payroll manager and the recent recruitment to a new Head of HR and Payroll.
Payroll **June 2023**	It would be prudent to retain adequate evidence of second check on all parameter changes.	Low Ongoing	This forms part of the resourcelink improvement programme of work.

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Crematorium Income – July 2023	It is recommended that consideration be given for a further sample to be tested by bereavement services, to ensure that all invoices for cremations from across the year have been raised.	Medium End September 2023	This will be completed before the end of the financial year
Corporate Health & Safety **August 2023**	A review should be considered to establish health and safety legislative requirements in terms of recording accident, incident and work related absence data. This should include what data is required, how long it will be retained, who should be able to access it and what level of consent is required. It can then be considered if the current accident and investigation policy and the SHE system is fit for purpose or if updates and alternatives are required.	Medium December 2023	February 2024 A revised accident and incident investigation policy has been drafted for informal consultation with TU colleagues. The consultation is due to start shortly. A H&S forum group will be established to consider software options and working through all the challenges in this policy area. Recommendation: Partly completed.
Corporate Health & Safety	A schedule of health and safety audits/ inspections should be	Medium	February 2024 There is currently no resource available to

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August 2023	reintroduced with the frequency of reviews being determined on a risk basis. Any identified improvements required should be monitored for timely implementation.	February 2024	restart this monitoring activity. A service reshape has been developed and consultation is underway. If approved by elected members in April/May 2024, this will increase capacity by an additional 3 people and will enable audits and inspections to be implemented from the 2nd quarter of 2024: incomplete / paused until the reshape of service has been completed
Sickness Absence Management **August 2023**	It would be prudent for HR to identify Managers that have not completed the mandatory My View Absence training with the aim that all managers complete the training.	Low 30th September 2023	A programme of manager training sessions has been developed in relation to payroll, absence and health and safety administrative matters and will be delivered on a monthly basis during 2024 which will address this recommendation. The 1st session will be delivered in May 2024.
Sickness Absence Management **August 2023**	The anomalies within RL in respect of occupational sick pay should be investigated and resolved as soon as practical.	Medium 1st October 2023	A resourcelink improvement programme has been scoped. This recommendation forms part of the change programme, but timescales for delivery have not yet been agreed with ICT and Resourcelink. It is unlikely that this work will be completed until

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			the 2nd half of 2024, due to the need to undertake recruitment to a new payroll manager and the recent recruitment to a new Head of HR and Payroll.
NNDR **August 2023**	To pursue the Service Director (14 cases arrears value >£230,000) to determine next course of recovery action required.	Medium 30th September 2023	Partially Completed. Decisions have been made to write off a number of cases where arrears will not be recovered. There are now some outstanding cases where we have exhausted the usual recovery options and now require a decision from the portfolio holder to agree that higher level action such as committal to prison proceedings or bankruptcy/liquidation is progressed. This action has a cost to it.
CIL / Section 106 **August 2023**	It would be beneficial for specific reports to be created within the Uniform system to allow officers to monitor outstanding Section 106 obligations, aid in tracking the progress of CIL obligations and to create reports of payments recorded in Uniform	Low 31st December 2023	This has yet to be developed. Currently Uniform cannot do this but could do with development. This would incur time from ICT and a cost from Idox / Caps. I will attempt to establish what this may be and then consider a growth request / report on the matter. To a large extent the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement process and the

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	and reconcile to Unit4 and CIL and S106 spreadsheets to ensure that all receipts are fully captured within the Council systems.		reconciliation of financial data which this involves achieves this stated purpose.
CIL / Section 106 **August 2023**	It would be prudent for the Development Management and Conservation Manager to liaise with Legal to ensure that the Planning Agreement Report is issued to Planning Committee as soon as practical.	Low End December 2023	This has been requested from Legal and remains outstanding however this appears to be a workflow / priority issue for legal services
Corporate Credit Cards **September 2023**	A system should be put in place to ensure that all expenditure via credit cards is in line with the issued guidance, appropriately monitored and approved by a line-manager. The system should include the regular submission of credit card statements and receipts to Accountancy for review, processing, and reclamation of VAT.	High 30th November 2023	Partially complete A new system has been designed and detailed in the guidance notes. Training has been arranged to take place in April 2024. Extended to 30th April 2024

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Corporate Credit Cards **September 2023**	Accountancy should undertake an exercise to ensure as much VAT as possible is reclaimed for the current and proceeding periods. Moving forward there should be a process in place to regularly identify and claim VAT.	High 31st October 2023	Partially Complete A process to identify and claim VAT has been established and is included in the guidance notes. A designated officer for monitoring Credit Card compliance has been identified within finance. Extended to 30th April 2024