

Audit Panel

Tuesday, 18th September, 2012

MEETING OF AUDIT PANEL

Members present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairman);
and Councillors Jones, Lavery and Mullan and Mr. D. Bell.

In attendance: Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. M. McBride, Head of Finance and Performance;
Mr. A. Wilson, Head of Audit, Governance and
Risk Services;
Mr. A. Harrison, Audit, Governance and Risk
Services Manager;
Ms. C. O'Prey, Audit, Governance and Risk
Services Manager;
Mr. R. Allen, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office;
Mr. A. Knox, Audit Manager, Northern Ireland Audit
Office; and
Miss L. Hillick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the High Sheriff (Alderman M. Campbell) and Alderman Smyth.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 12th June were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Quarter 1 2012/2013 – Absence Rates

(Mrs J. Minne, Head of Human Resources, attended in connection with this item.)

The Head of Human Resources provided for the information of Members a presentation which indicated that the Council's Attendance Policy had been implemented from January, 2010 and had been agreed by management and Trades Unions. The Policy monitored the minimum standards of attendance through a staged approach and aimed to avoid formal action. She outlined the key elements of the attendance policy and referred to the standard of attendance triggers. She pointed out that the actions to manage absence were being implemented throughout the Council and referred to the following:

- fortnightly compliance meetings were held between departments and the Human Resources Section;
- individual Departmental Action Plans had been implemented;

- stress and muscular skeleton (highest causes of absence) had been targeted for action; and
- stress awareness training was planned for staff and managers.

The Head of Human Resources outlined further the actions which would be implemented to manage absence, including timely intervention in relation to work-related stress cases, stress audits, specialist health and safety training and the provision of scans and physiotherapy.

The Panel was reminded that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 22nd June, had agreed a new Council target to reduce the current sickness absence level of 10.47 days per annum to 10.3 days by March, 2013. Accordingly, the Head of Human Resources submitted for the Panel's consideration, a report outlining the Council's performance in relation to attendance management for Quarter 1 of the 2012/2013 financial year. The full report had indicated that the average number of days' absence recorded for each full-time equivalent employee had been 2.68 days, which represented an increase of 0.09 days compared to the average days absence for the same period last year. There had been an increase in the number of staff with recorded absences this quarter, 24.30%, compared to the same period last year. However, absence classified as long-term had reduced from 64.85% last year to 59.26% this year. She indicated that the Human Resources Section would continue to work with departments to ensure consistent compliance.

After discussion, the Committee thanked the Head of Human Resources for the information which she had provided and congratulated staff within the Unit for their assistance in the reduction in absence figures since the policy had been first implemented and agreed to note the contents of the report.

Review of Facilities Management Arrangements Update

(Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure, and Ms. J. Wilson, Business Support Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Panel considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

1.1 Currently there are 10 audit recommendations outstanding in relation to the review of facility management agreements (FMAs) within Parks and Leisure.

1.2 Substantial work has already taken place as a result of the audit and the following issues have been addressed and controls are in place through:

- Clear accountability and quarterly monitoring of FMA arrangements;
- Performance information and reporting through the effective use of TLMS system;
- Child Protection policies and training;
- incident and accident reporting
- financial reporting and monitoring

2. Key Issues

2.1 The review of Facility Management Agreements began in June 2011, the findings of which were presented at a Members workshop on 19 December 2011

- 2.2** In February and March 2012 Party Briefings took place during which an FMA review paper including a scoring matrix was discussed and the feedback from Members confirmed the need for a consistent approach and that the scoring matrix could be a useful tool to assess requests from clubs to the Council on a consistent basis. It was also acknowledged that the FMA review demonstrated that a fundamental revision was needed going forward but that this is a complex arrangement, the details of which needed further more in-depth consideration. Parks and Leisure DMT has reviewed all the information in relation to these consultation processes and is currently consulting with internal departments such as legal services and the estates unit prior to presenting to committee.
- 2.3** A review of the outdoor leisure unit has been ongoing for some time and has required consultation with both staff and trade unions which has taken longer than previously expected. The review of this unit includes the monitoring and reporting arrangements for FMAs and identifying the reporting lines and officers responsible for implementing these systems. This review also had to take into account how it can deliver on the Active Belfast agenda and look at wider issues such as allotments and events.
- 2.4** A report on the operational review of the outdoor leisure was presented to Parks and Leisure committee on 9th August 2012 however members asked for the report to be deferred to allow further information to be provided to the UUP and any member who required it. It is intended that this report will be presented again to the Committee at its meeting on 13 September 2012.
- 2.5** The current information systems which are used for the pitch bookings and which will include the FMA pitches going forward has been under review as part of a wider integration of the departments customer management system. This project has experienced delays in relation to the configuration of the system as there has been a significant review of charging within the department. There has also been ongoing consultation with the users in Leisure, the Zoo and outdoor leisure to ensure that all requirements are met within the system.
- 2.6** Actions to be implemented between September and March 2013
The critical next steps which officers will be progressing in the next 6 months are:-
- 2.7** Changes in operational arrangements to support the revised approach – a report will be presented at Parks & Leisure Committee in September 2012 and the structures fully implemented by December 2012.
- 2.8** Planning and implementation – a report will be presented to Parks and Leisure committee in October 2012 to get the final agreement on the process going forward

Managing existing FMA and other arrangements to a close and phasing to revised approach – all existing FMA holders will be informed of the process going forward and a final timescale will be agreed for phasing out the current arrangements

Meaningful and ongoing communication and engagement with all stakeholders will be undertaken.

- 2.9 The TLMS system upgrade which manages pitch bookings will be completed and the new processes implemented by October 2012.**

3. Equality and Good Relations Considerations

- 3.1 The policy will be subject to EQIA testing once agreed by committee.**

4. Resource Implications

Financial

- 4.1 Fees are currently provided within existing revenue budgets to support the FMAs**

Human Resources

- 4.2 The OSAL (Open Spaces and Active Living) Unit is currently responsible for the management of FMAs.**

Asset and Other Implications

- 4.3 None**

6. Recommendations

That the Audit Panel notes the work completed on FMAs to date and the actions to be implemented between September and March 2013”

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that the Director of Parks and Leisure provide an update in relation to the outstanding recommendations at its meeting scheduled to be held during February, 2013.

Audit Recommendations Monitor

(Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects, and Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts, attended in connection with this item.)

The Panel considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At the Audit Panel meeting in June 2012 Members received a report on the number of high priority recommendations which had not been fully implemented and had been outstanding for more than 6 months. These were recommendations which related to issues where AGRS believed that significant risk exposure had been identified.**

- 1.2 The report had highlighted that 10 of the 44 high priority recommendations outstanding at the end of May 2012 were the responsibility of the Property and Projects Department.
- 1.3 Of the 10 recommendations listed as outstanding for the Property and Projects Department there were; 6 Procurement; 3 Purchasing/ Accounts Payable and 1 Utilities / VFM.
- 1.4 It is important to note that whilst the Procurement Unit for the Council is located within the Property and Projects Department, that the majority of the procurement processes and associated responsibilities continue to reside in the individual departments.
- 1.5 Similarly responsibility for all the Utilities does not reside with the Property and Projects Department but with the Department that manages the relevant buildings.

2. Key Issues

Procurement

- 2.1 An independent VFM review of procurement within the Council was completed in 2011 by the Consultants, Farrington Ltd. This Review identified the need for the appointment of a Head of Contracts and this post was approved by SP&R 23 September 2011. In addition the report provided a list of actions to take the Procurement function forward with a greater Corporate and Strategic emphasis and direction. It identified a number of key areas for the Council to address which would bring about significant benefits in the area of Procurement. These key areas are all included in the Procurement Improvement Programme.
- 2.2 The Head of Contracts was appointed in February 2012 and with the Procurement Section staff is currently working alongside the Efficiency Unit to facilitate the implementation of the Improvement Plan and recommendations emanating from the independent VFM review of procurement. It is envisaged that all the recommendations and actions will be fully implemented and in operation by June 2014.
- 2.3 The recommendations from this review are significant and when implemented will ensure that the council moves from an operationally driven procurement function to one that ensures a more strategic approach to procurement which will be integrated into the Council's purchasing processes. It is envisaged that this will result in significant cash savings over the coming years, with a targeted savings of £700k by March 2015.
- 2.4 The Improvement Programme also takes account of areas that must be covered in order to support recommendations by Members included in both the Investment Programme and RPA.

- 2.5 All six Procurement Audit Recommendations are addressed. This is done either directly or with specific reference to the relevant location and action within the Improvement Programme.

Purchasing / Accounts Payable

- 2.6 All three Purchasing/Accounts Payable Recommendations are addressed in the attached list. This is done either directly or with specific reference to the relevant action within the Improvement Programme.

Utilities VFM

- 2.7 The Sustainable Development Steering Group commissioned a review of Energy Provision in the Council in April 2012. This covered energy consumption and Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) and what Strategy and processes Council will need to put in place to mitigate increasing energy and utility costs and also minimise our Carbon Emissions and associated penalties.
- 2.8 The Directors of Health and Environmental Services and Property and Projects will bring a report outlining options and recommendations from the Review of Energy and Utilities to CMT in September and then present the various options to Committee for approval and implementation.
- 2.9 The review has identified a number of options for improving the corporate processes of both Energy and Utility Management. The Report also outlines the potential for accessing a number of European Funding streams that will support, improve and enhance energy management within the Council and provide externally generated funds to do so.
- 2.10 We are therefore keen to ensure that the initiatives that are underway within the Council and being proposed are properly evaluated to ensure that they are best placed to take advantage of any European Funding that may be available. Proper Resource will be required to ensure that the Council maximises any potential investment and that the process overall delivers the optimum outcomes.

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1 There are no significant resource implications arising from this report.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 We would ask that the Audit Panel to note the progress made in addressing the Audit Recommendations.”

Arising from discussion, a Member expressed concern that the Standing Committees had delegated authority to Directors to approve tenders and voiced concern that mechanisms should be put in place in order to keep Members informed in relation to the award of Contracts.

After discussion, the Panel agreed that the Director of Property and Projects and the Director of Finance and Resources would give further consideration as to how the Audit Panel would get assurances around large contracts in the future.

Audit of Accounts Payable – Departmental Compliance Update

The Panel was reminded that, at its meeting on 12th June, it had requested that the Director of Finance and Resources provide an overview of the plan to implement the recommendations emanating from the Accounts Payable Audit.

The Director of Finance and Resources pointed out that the Audit, Governance and Risk Services had included fourteen recommendations specifically aimed at improving Departmental compliance with the accounts payable processes. Those recommendations had been incorporated into the Wider Improvement Plan, aimed at increasing as part of the commitment within the Investment Programme the percentage of creditors paid within twenty-eight days. He pointed out that the Improvement Plan clarified the roles and responsibilities of departments, central finance and central procurement services within the “Procure to Pay” process. The improvement actions included improving automated processes and introducing procurement cards for small-value contracts. The actions were structured in ten main areas and he outlined those to the Panel.

The Director stated that a cross-departmental Steering Group had been established to oversee the implementation of the Programme and that the majority of the recommendations were targeted to be implemented by 31st March, 2013. In addition, in order to monitor improvement in the “Procure to Pay” compliance by Departments as part of the programme of improvements, two new performance indicators and targets had been included in the quarterly report considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. The Director referred to those indicators and 2012/2013 targets as follows:

- compliant purchases – target 85%
- timeliness of goods on system – target 75%
- creditors paid within twenty-eight days – target 75%

The Panel noted the contents of the report.

Uncertainty of the Rate Base

The Director of Finance and Resources reminded the Panel that the total income from the District Rate represented 74% of the total income for the Council. Therefore, the level of rates income and the growth/decline of the rates base within the City was critical financial importance to the Council in the management of its financial affairs and its strategic financial planning. He proceeded to provide an overview of the economic outlook for Northern Ireland and an analysis of the District Rate position, based on the year ended 31st March, 2012, and the implications for the 2013/2014 financial year.

The Director then referred to the Northern Ireland Economic Outlook which had indicated that the best case scenario for the United Kingdom economy would suggest that 2013 could see a modest rate of growth, but that a triple-dip recession could result if the Eurozone suffered a Greek exit or a Spanish sovereign debt crisis. He pointed out that a report had been submitted for the consideration of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 24th August, which had provided an analysis of the District Rate position at 31st March, 2012, with a view to informing the initial strategic planning work for the 2013/2014 Revenue Estimates and medium-term Financial Plan. That report had concluded that it was likely that, at best, the rate base would remain static during 2012/2013 and that there was a high risk that the rate base would reduce during

the year. The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed that officers examine a number of scenarios regarding the potential impact that zero growth in the rate base, or a fall in the rate base, would have on the District Rate requirement for 2013/2014. Those scenarios would be included in the Revenue Estimates – High Level Guidance Report which would examine such scenarios and, in order to mitigate the risk of a decline in the base rate, that Committee had recommended that the high level guidance to departments should require that the overall increase in departmental estimates submissions should be 0% for 2013/2014.

After discussion, the Panel noted the contents of the report.

Audit, Governance and Risk Services – Progress Report

The Panel considered the above-mentioned report which provided an overview of the work activities of the Audit, Governance and Risk Services Unit.

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services provided an overview of the work ongoing regarding internal audits and the implementation of recommendations which had arisen from previous audits and answered a number of Members' queries in relation thereto.

After discussion, regarding the business cases which were being submitted by departments in relation to attendance and travel to events, the Panel agreed that letters be forwarded to the Directors of each Department indicating that the Audit Panel had expressed concern that business cases were not forthcoming in this regard and noted the contents of the report.

Corporate Risk Management

The Panel considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

The need to have effective risk management arrangements is a regulatory requirement placed on the Council and represents accepted good practice.

The purpose of this paper is to:

- **report to the Audit Panel on the operation of the assurance processes over the Council's arrangements for the management of risk for the quarter ending June 2012**
- **present the updated corporate risk register for quarter ending June 2012**
- **update the Audit Panel on the procurement of the new integrated corporate action tracking, risk management and audit management system**
- **update the Audit Panel on business continuity management and pandemic planning.**

2 Key Issues

1. Assurance on the Management of Risk

Management Assurance

Each of the 16 risks in the corporate risk register has a nominated Risk Owner who is responsible for ensuring that the risk is managed effectively and evidenced as such in the relevant departmental risk action plans.

Management are responsible for ensuring that risks are properly identified, evaluated, managed and reviewed. Departmental Risk Champions co-ordinate and monitor the update of the risk registers and risk action plans within the Department.

In order to obtain assurance on the management of risk, on a quarterly basis each Chief Officer and the Head of Human Resources, prepares and signs a quarterly assurance statement to:

- confirm compliance with risk management processes
- list the key risks that they have responsibility for managing (corporate risks and 'red' departmental risks)
- confirm that there are appropriate action plans in place to manage these risks
- identify any proposed actions and, where applicable, explain any slippage
- provide a formal assurance that the risks are being managed.

- AGRS can confirm that, for the quarter ending June 2012, all Chief Officers and the Head of Human Resources, have signed assurance statements confirming that the corporate, departmental and operational risk registers and action plans have been reviewed and updated and that they are content that overall the Council's agreed risk management processes, as set out in the Council's risk management strategy, are being complied with.

AGRS Assurance

In addition, following a request from the Audit Panel in June and in line with best practice, AGRS are currently undertaking a review of the management of 6 red corporate risks that were declared within the Annual Governance Statement for y/e March 2012. The results of this review will be reported to the relevant Directors and brought CMT and the Assurance Board prior to a special meeting of the Audit Panel in October 2012.

2. Corporate Risk Register

For the quarter ending June 2012, our review meetings with individual Directors to discuss the management of corporate risks identified the following updates to the corporate risk register:

- corporate risk 2 re waste management – risk causes updated to include reference to ‘failure to achieve recycling targets’ and ‘meet collection standards’ and the risk rating, while still red, has reduced from severe to high.
- corporate risk 7 re RPA - risk causes updated to include ‘ineffective engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh and failure to identify and effectively plan for potential convergence issues’; ‘insufficient consideration given to, and planning for, the potential organisational impact of emerging RPA legislation, which may impact upon the Council’s governance and / or operational processes’ and; ‘insufficient consideration given to, and planning for, the potential organisational implications (financial and operational) of emerging legislation which either enhances or confers new powers to the Council’
- corporate risk 12 has been re-worded as follows “failure to maximise the collectable rate”
- corporate risk 14 re draw down of EU funding – risk causes updated to include ‘fail to address EC State Aid rules in a proper and timely manner’; ‘critical staff not in place at Waterfront’ and; ‘lack of management ability to secure funding’. The risk rating has increased from significant to major given the criticality of this risk to the delivery of the Investment Programme.
- the scope of corporate risk 16 is being considered by the Risk Owner

Chief Officers did not identify any new corporate risks during the quarter ending June 2012.

The corporate risk register has been updated to reflect the above changes and has been agreed by CMT and the Assurance Board.

3. Integrated Corporate Action Tracking, Risk Management and Audit Management System

The tender for the integrated corporate action tracking, risk management and audit management system was advertised on 10 August with a return date of 31 August 2012. All Departmental Risk Champions will be invited to attend and provide feedback on the demonstrations of the new system during September / October in an observer capacity. Subject to successful procurement, we plan to pilot the new system within the Finance and Resources Department by the end of March 2013, with further phased roll out to other Departments from April 2013 onwards. Prior to roll out of the new system it will be necessary for all risk registers and risk action plans to be comprehensively reviewed and updated.

4. Business Continuity Management - Update

Business continuity is a risk within the corporate risk register. One of the key ways that Members and Chief Officers can gain assurance over the arrangements we have in place to manage a disruption to our services, is that the Business Continuity (BC) plans are up to date and have been exercised (at least annually) to ensure their effectiveness.

At this stage in the year, none of the critical services have undertaken or scheduled dates for the test of their BC Plans during 2012-13. AGRS will remind critical services of the need to undertake an annual test of their BC plans at the mid-year meeting of the BCM Champions on 18 September.

5. Pandemic Planning - Update

The current pandemic alert level 3 (of 6), while not causing alarm, does according to the WHO 'correlate with preparedness, including capacity development and response planning activities.' This means that the Council has a responsibility to ensure that there are good plans in place to manage the effects of a pandemic, should there be one.

Following a request for update from AGRS, 4 of the 15 critical services have reviewed and updated their pandemic plans, which set out how they will deliver their service in the event of a pandemic. AGRS has written to the remaining 11 services reminding them of the need to review and update their pandemic plans.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

None.

Human Resources

None.

Asset and Other Implications

None.

4 Equality Implications

None.

5 Recommendations

1. The Audit Panel to note the updated corporate risk register for quarter ending June 2012."

The Panel noted the information which had been provided and that a copy of the Corporate Risk Register was available on Modern.gov.

Audit Panel – Indicative Programme of Work 2012/2013

The Panel considered the undernoted indicative programme of work:

“1. Relevant Background Information

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the programme of work of the Audit Panel for the remainder of 2012/13 for approval.

1.2 This will assist the forward planning process and will also serve to ensure that the Audit Panel can discharge their responsibilities, by ensuring that they have a programme of work that addresses the requirements of their respective terms of reference.

2. Key Issues

2.1 An indicative plan of work for the Audit Panel for 2012/13 has been drafted (see Appendix 1). The programme draws from the Panel’s terms of reference and sets out the months of the year when meetings could most appropriately take place and the business that each meeting could address. It is, of course, likely that events will arise during the course of the year which require special meetings to take place or meeting dates to be moved forward / backwards. However, the indicative programme of work will provide a basis upon which the Panel can work to ensure it addresses its role and responsibilities.

3. Equality and Good Relations Considerations

3.1 There are no equality or good relations considerations relating to this paper.

4. Resource Implications

Financial

None

Human Resources

None

Asset and Other Implications

None

5. Decision Tracking

Andrew Wilson, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services

6. Recommendations

That the Audit Panel approves the indicative programme of work for 2012/13 for the Audit Panel as set out at Appendix 1.

7. Key to Abbreviations

AGRS – Audit, Governance and Risk Services

8 Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Belfast City Council Audit Panel – Indicative Programme of Work 2012/13

Appendix 1

**BELFAST CITY COUNCIL AUDIT PANEL –
INDICATIVE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2012/13**

<u>18 SEPTEMBER 2012</u>	<u>23 OCTOBER 2012 (SPECIAL)</u>	<u>DECEMBER 2012</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from Directors on the implementation of audit recommendations • Agree Audit Panel programme of work. • Update on use of Regulation of Investigative Powers Act (RIPA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive the NIAO's report to those charged with governance including an update on the audit of the 2011/12 financial statements • Mid year assurance update on the management of key corporate risks • Report on External review of Audit, Governance and Risk Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive the NIAO's annual audit letter and copies of the audited accounts • Update on implementation of audit recommendations • Report on Council anti-fraud and corruption strategy, whistleblowing and related issues
<u>FEBRUARY 2013</u>	<u>JUNE 2013</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve Audit, Governance and Risk Services (internal audit) Strategy and Annual Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation/approval of Draft annual statement of accounts. • Review / approval of the Council's Annual Governance Statement (which reports on the Council's governance framework and also provides the Panel with an overview of the Council's constitution in respect of contract procedure rules, financial regulations and codes of conduct and behaviour). • Review of NIAO's Audit Strategy • Consider the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services' annual report and opinion and summary of internal audit activity. • Annual review of effectiveness of Audit Panel • Annual review of the effectiveness of internal audit. • Update on implementation of audit recommendations 	

Standing Items

The following reports will be a standing item on every Audit Panel agenda:

- **Audit, Governance and Risk Services progress reports – to include updates on completed audits and investigations, progress v plan, issues arising**
- **Corporate risk management**
- **Corporate health and safety**
- **Staff attendance**
- **Staff overtime and agency costs**

Other Items

The following items which are included in the Audit Panel's terms of reference can be included in the agenda for Audit Panel meetings if required:

- **Relevant regulatory reports, such as reports on the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls**
- **Any issues referred to the Panel by the Council, any Committee or the Chief Executive**
- **Any other specific reports as agreed with the Local Government Auditor (NIAO)**

Special Meetings

- **The indicative programme of work does not preclude the Panel from holding special / extra meetings to discuss urgent business.**

Audit Panel Training

- **Audit Panel training will be arranged for January 2013."**

The Panel approved its indicative Programme of Work for 2012/2013.

Corporate Health and Safety

The Panel considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

Health and safety is an important issue in any workplace. In addition to the legal duties under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, there are moral and financial considerations. Legally, all employers must provide a safe and healthy working environment for their employees and those

affected by their undertaking (which include contractors and members of the public).

This report seeks to update the Audit Panel on progress with health and safety priorities set for 2012/13.

Key Issues

External Review of health and safety management arrangements

Further to the report in June 2012, Quadra Consulting have been appointed to undertake an external review of the Council's Health and Safety Management arrangements. The purpose of the audit is to provide independent assurance to Members and senior management regarding the risk management, control and governance arrangements pertaining to health and safety. The audit fieldwork is almost complete and it is anticipated a report will be available for the November / December meeting.

Stress Management

A new mental health and emotional resilience training programme for both employees and managers has been drafted and will be ready for piloting in September. This training has been incorporated into the Lord Mayors initiative to raise awareness of issues associated with suicide and to promote positive mental health in the city. This training will form an important part of how the Council discharges its duty of care to employees with regards to managing stress within the workplace.

Event safety management

Further to the report in June 2012, the Corporate Occupational Health and Safety Unit will be leading a cross departmental project team in the autumn to develop and implement corporate event safety arrangements within the Council. These procedures will formalise the established working practices which exist across the Council in relation to the management of event safety.

Policy on Protection of Staff from Workplace Violence and Abuse from the Public

Further to the Council's approval of the Policy on Protection of Staff from Workplace Violence and Abuse from the Public in June 2012, the Corporate Occupational Health and Safety Unit will be supporting the implementation of this policy through briefings for staff and management this autumn.

Resource Implications

No significant resource requirements

Equality Implications

None.

Recommendations

The Audit Panel is requested to note the progress report.”

Noted.

Staff Costs – Quarter 1 2012/2013

The Panel considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides information on staffing, overtime and agency costs for the quarter ended 30 June 2012.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Audit Panel on the 7 March 2011 approved a revised reporting framework effective from quarter one 2011/12 that provides information on:

- Actual staff costs to agreed staff budgets at corporate and departmental level;
- Details how much of the actual staff budget was spent on agency and overtime at corporate and departmental level.

3.0 Key Issues

3.1 Staff costs compared to staff budget

- Staff costs for the council for quarter 1, 2012/13 were £20,178,891 against a target of £20,836,660.
- This represents an overall under spend of £657,769 or 3.16% of the quarter budget. Members will be aware that these under spends are being considered as part of the investment programme commitment to create employment opportunities at no additional cost to the ratepayer.

3.2 How much of the total was spent on overtime and agency

- Overtime accounted for 5.56% or £1,121,562 of direct employee costs for quarter 1.
- Agency accounted for 4.54% or £916,051 of direct employee cost.

4.0 Resource Implications

None.

5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

None.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The Audit Panel is asked to note the contents of this report.”

After discussion, the Panel noted the contents of the report and welcomed the reduction in overtime costs.

Chairman