

High Importance (HI) Recommendations at 28 February 2025

<u>Audit Title (Director)</u>	<u>Summary of HI Finding(s) and Recommendation(s)</u>	<u>Management Response</u>	<u>Action Date (by end of) & extensions</u>	<u>Confirmed Implemented/ No longer applicable</u>
Reported March 2025				
City Council Coroner & Recharges Chief Executives Department	One HI recommendation was made to draw up and agree a service level agreement and associated content	Agreed – this is work in progress and it is hoped to be completed by the end of the financial year subject to legal services sign off.	March 2025	
Direct Payments Adults & Communities	Three HI recommendations were made: - 1. An annual review of DP cards with cash withdrawals “switched on” should be undertaken to ensure there remains a good reason to continue to allow them.	Agreed 1. An exercise is currently underway to send letters to service users with cash access who have not used the ‘cash withdrawal’ facility for six months. Service Users (SU) have been advised that if a response is not received within four weeks, the facility will be switched off. To date, letters have been issued as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 186 – SUs who look after their own DP. • 279 – SU representatives. Letters are due to be sent out to a further 325 carers with cash access to confirm if the facility is still required. The figures mentioned above have been verified by Internal Audit.	July 2025	

	<p>2. Annual reviews, including a review of direct payments should be undertaken on a timely basis, to ensure that the needs of service users are met and that the level of direct payment remains appropriate to meet those needs.</p> <p>3. Action taken on excess balances should be reviewed and balances clawed back as appropriate. Managerial oversight should be introduced to ensure prompt action is taken.</p>	<p>In addition, the 'DP Card Financial Review Form' has now been revised and a new version is live on the system (12th March 2025). This revision gives specific attention to the use of cash, including whether the cash facility is switched on/needed. Internal Audit have reviewed the amended form.</p> <p>2. This recommendation will be incorporated as part of a Strategic Review of Reviews which is part of a larger project facilitated by the Transformation Unit. A report on the review is expected March 2025 which will outline the implementation plan. There are currently 24% of annual reviews outstanding for direct payments @ 12th March.</p> <p>3. This recommendation will be implemented as part of another project, i.e. Financial Pathway Improvement Programme (FPIP), also facilitated by the Transformation Unit (TU). Scope of the work will focus on all types of missing contributions and excess balances that occur in direct payments, with the aim of identifying and addressing root causes of the occurrences. In the meantime, work is looking at surplus high value balances.</p> <p>Timescale - by March 2025, Discovery phase Part 1 of the DP Project work focussed on surplus balances and debts due to non-payment of Non-Residential Contributions (NRCs) will be completed. That will then result in the design of a project plan, so between March 2025 to</p>	<p>July 2025</p> <p>July 2025</p>	
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		June 2025 we will have a firmer idea of the planned approach to ensure excess balances are better managed.		
December 2024				
Disclosure & Barring Checks – Transport Services (Environment & Transport)	<p>Finding</p> <p>Regarding both the BB4 (large vehicles) and SV5 (small vehicles) Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) frameworks, the Service acknowledges there is significant room for improvement in that there is no definitive list of which drivers are working on which contracts. Whilst ‘crew lists’ are held for each provider, detailing the staff working for them, this information does not extend to matching drivers to routes / contracts.</p> <p>Recommended</p> <p>IAS is supportive of the Service’s proposed move to a regular data collection process from providers, subject to the process being proportionate and manageable. A timeframe should be established for its introduction. Information collected through the new process should be used proactively by the Contracts and Compliance Team for effective contract monitoring, including spot checks.</p>	<p>Where there is a need for a dedicated crew on home to school transport, there is now a facility to record this on the home to school transport database (MTC), and consequently these are now being input into the system, and this should be concluded by the end of March 2025.</p> <p>Internal Audit will test the arrangements are in place by the end of May</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p>Extend to May 2025</p>	
Reported May 2024				
Worthington, Newbold CE, Witherley CE and Hose CE Primary	For each, the multi-year budget forecast plan indicated that the school is predicted to be in a deficit situation from either 2023-24 or 2024-25 onwards.	Both Witherley CE and Newbold CE have had their visits and are waiting for reports. Hose is still waiting for a confirmed deployment.	<p>June 2024</p> <p>November 2024</p> <p>March 2025</p>	

Schools (Children & Family Services)	Recommended Contact should be made as a matter of priority with the Education Finance Team, in order that a deficit plan can be formally agreed.		Extend to May 2025	
Reported May 2022				
Surveillance and CCTV Audit (Consolidated Risk)	Three recommendations were made: - 1. Contracts for Surveillance and CCTV installations need to be located and reviewed. 2. Information Security Risk Assessments (ISRAs) and Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) should be completed for all surveillance and CCTV installations. 3. Site visits/audits should be undertaken to determine compliance with the SCC Code of Practice and LCC CCTV Policies.	All three recommendations continue to be progressed; however, these have not yet been completed: - 1. The historic contract has been obtained, and an extension to the Intruder Alarm & Security Systems Service Framework 2018 has been obtained until 31/3/26 2. ISRAs have now been completed and finalised for the libraries and waste sites. Completion of Children's Homes, Care Homes and County Hall remain outstanding but have been drafted and are due to be issued and finalised in the near future. 3. It has been agreed that Site visits will be completed by departments. CCTV questionnaires have been completed, and the process remains ongoing.	Various dates before Dec 2024 Closed Extend to May 2025 Extend to May 2025	