

Audit and Governance Committee

Friday, 18 September 2015, County Hall, Worcester - 10.00 am

		Minutes
Present:		Mrs S Askin, Mr S J M Clee, Mrs J L M A Griffiths, Mr L C R Mallett (Vice Chairman), Mr A P Miller and Mr P A Tuthill
Available papers		<p>The Members had before them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated); andB. The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2015 (previously circulated). <p>A copy of document A will be attached to the signed Minutes.</p> <p>Mr L C R Mallett, Vice-Chairman in the Chair</p>
354	Named Substitutes (Agenda item 1)	Mr A P Miller for Mr N Desmond and Mrs J L M A Griffiths for Mr W P Gretton.
355	Apologies/ Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 2)	Apologies were received from Mr N Desmond, Mr W P Gretton and Mr R J Sutton.
356	Public Participation (Agenda item 3)	None.
357	Confirmation of Minutes (Agenda item 4)	<p>RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>The representative of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services stated that in Minute no. 347 relating to the Annual Statutory Financial Statement, the external auditor had indicated that the outcome of the resolution of the objections made to the 2013/14 Accounts would be reported to this Committee. However, timescales had dictated that this was no longer practical and it was decided that the Chairman be consulted instead.</p>

358 Retention and Disposal of Records (Agenda item 5)

The Committee considered an update report on the retention and disposal of records following the review of the Disposal Schedule by the Corporate Information Management Board.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- What happened to the Council's paper records that were no longer needed? The Corporate Information Manager explained that all information that was no longer required to be kept was securely destroyed. The records were kept in a confidential waste bin and transferred securely to an external contractor who shredded the papers before recycling them
- Did the Council receive any payment from the external contractor for this paper? The Corporate Information Manager stated that there was no fee involved for the service
- How did the service handle electronic information that was no longer needed? The Corporate Information Manager commented that information would be deleted from the server. The server would then be wiped of electronic information before being crushed
- In response to a query, the Corporate Information Manager confirmed that information relating to historic child care cases, children in care and child protection cases involving the police were kept as part of the overall management system/database. It was not clear what information would be required for the Goddard Inquiry therefore the Inspector had requested that all related information be kept for the time-being. As the Inquiry progressed, it should become clearer what information was relevant or not
- What approach was taken in relation to the retention of documents associated with the Adoption Panel? The Corporate Information Manager explained that the Minutes of the Adoption Panel were kept as a permanent record. Adoption service case files were kept permanently and were sent to be archived at The Hive
- There did not seem to be a clear understanding within the organisation of the role of Information Asset Owners. The Corporate Information Manager stated that it was important that everyone understood the role of the Information Asset Owner. However this was a large piece of

work and the service was not in a position yet to re-launch the initiative

- There were occasions when information was lost in the system, who decided whether information was retained or destroyed? The Corporate Information Manager indicated that CIMU acted as the custodians of the information. Individual business areas remained the owners of the information. Individual business areas determined how long information was retained because it was considered that they knew the importance of the information to the business and they worked in liaison with CIMU. All retention periods were listed in the Disposal Schedule. If there was a legitimate reason to keep a document, it would be taken into account. When the business area signed off a piece of information as being no longer useful to the business, then the archivist would assess it for any historical significance. If the information was deemed to be historically significant, it would be stored at The Hive
- On occasions there were no records kept of an issue and no-one was alive who understood it. The Corporate Information Manager commented that there had been difficulties in the past where records had not been listed very well when sent to CIMU. Attempts were being made to re-list this information so there was understanding of what records the Council held because if it was not possible to find the information, there was little point in keeping it. Everything that came into the service was double-checked. Any piece of legislation that was introduced had an effect on the length of time information was kept and therefore practical input from business areas in this respect was important. The service also networked with other authorities to establish best practice
- How were the 44,000 boxes of documents indexed? The Corporate Information Manager explained that the service user was required to fill in a form electronically when sending a box of documents to CIMU. The contents of the box were checked against the index sheet and entered into the database. The list was then returned to the service user. Service users were encouraged to quote the box number when requesting information
- Were there any controls for the storage of electronic data? The Corporate Information Manager indicated that, except in a limited

number of circumstances, the ability to write information to CDs and DVDs had been stopped because there was no way of encrypting the data. All flash discs and USB sticks were encrypted as soon as they entered the system

- The Corporate Information Manager confirmed that the service did not keep information for other authorities. However she added that the Information and Records Management Policy did apply to documents/data held at other Council offices within the County
- Concern was expressed that there was no record of certain older legal documents at the Council's Wyre Forest offices. The Corporate Information Manager was aware of the issue but unfortunately the way some documents had been listed in the past had been unsatisfactory. However, this inadequacy had been recognised and rectified for future record management
- What happened if the software provider to the Council changed? The Corporate Information Manager believed that IT had a migration plan to ensure that the Council's software was fit for purpose and that data could be easily transferred between software providers. Unfortunately at the time of purchase of older software, the implications of data transfer was not understood and therefore a number of older databases had had to be retained
- What represented a straight-forward request for information and which requests represented a challenge to the service? The Corporate Information Manager explained that a request for a particular record in a named box would represent a straight-forward request. More difficult requests would be for a set of information without any knowledge of its location. The service had changed the way it kept records over time. Work was underway establishing a unified system of records management but this would take time to achieve
- In response to a query, the Corporate Information Manager stated that the oldest documents kept by the service were property deeds dating back to the 1890s. The service kept all the Council's deeds, legal signed contracts and legal agreements. These documents were kept permanently and separately and retained at the Hive
- The Land Registry also kept deeds, how did their

359 Internal Audit Progress Report - 1 April to 31 July 2015 (Agenda item 6)

records relate to the Councils? The Corporate Information Manager explained that following the Land Registry voluntary registration process, the Council's deeds had been registered by the Land Registry on their database and returned to the Council

- In response to a query, the Corporate Information Manager stated that she was not aware that a decision had been made to abolish the census although she anticipated that there would be changes to the process
- The Corporate Information Manager confirmed that the Goddard Inquiry had not prevented the service from destroying other Council documents. However the process had been delayed by other issues including the request for a further audit by the Information Commissioner, general pressure of work and changes as a result of commissioning
- A further report on progress on the retention and disposal of records was requested in 6 months-time.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the new Information and Records Management Policy be noted;**
- b) the progress of physical destruction of records and impact of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse on the destruction of records be noted; and**
- c) the forward plan for reviewing the contents of the Disposal Schedule be noted; and**
- d) a further progress report be made to the meeting on 18 March 2016.**

The Committee considered the Internal Audit Progress Report for the period 1 April to 31 July 2015.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- Were there any cost implications for the Council as a result of the additional audit work associated with answering the questions raised by members of the public on the 2013/14 Accounts in relation to the Energy from Waste Plant? The representative of the Chief Financial Officer

commented that there would be financial implications for the Council of this work. Funding had been accrued to meet these costs but the final cost settlement had not yet been agreed with the external auditor. These Accounts were now closed so there was no capacity for further questions

- In response to a query about the reference to an audit of the sale of items on E-Bay, Garry Rollason commented that this work provided advice on the process that the Council should follow
- In relation to the Superfast Broadband Project, did the audit work encompass performance measurements relating to people changing contracts? Garry Rollason stated that this advisory work related primarily to the governance issues associated with the project particularly around payment processes
- How was the audit plan performing in the first quarter in terms of the number of planned audit days against actual audit days? Garry Rollason commented that there were no issues to report at this stage and the plan was on track
- Did the deletion of the Legal – Looked after Children audit from the audit plan mean that the work had already been carried out? Garry Rollason confirmed that this was the case and that it was agreed with senior management that it was unnecessary to duplicate this work
- Garry Rollason explained that the audit of Child Academic Improvements in Care Homes related to the arrangements the Council had in place to monitor academic achievement of looked-after children. Work was in progress on this audit with the final report expected by 31 March 2016
- It was noted that the report on the Use of Consultants had been delayed until the next Committee meeting, what was the reason for the delay? Garry Rollason explained that the audit work had taken longer than expected because it was felt necessary to take a larger representative sample of consultants than was originally planned. The field work had now been completed and the findings were being discussed with managers
- In relation to a query regarding looked-after children and associated property matters, Garry Rollason stated that no audit of this area was included in the 2015/16 plan
- Had the problem with the contract for the Evesham Abbey Bridge been resolved? Garry

360 Work programme (Agenda item 7)

Rollason explained that specialists had been engaged to review the reasons for the delay on the contract therefore it had been agreed that internal audit would not wish to duplicate this work

- Was the delay in the Worcester Foregate Street project on hold or being investigated? Garry Rollason commented that this audit was in its early stages. Preliminary discussions were being held with management but the Terms of Reference had yet to be determined.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Progress Report be noted.

The Committee considered its future work programme.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 11.05am

Chairman