



**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH  
COUNCIL  
INTERNAL AUDIT  
FOLLOW UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS**  
July 2019

# Summary

## FOLLOW UP - BDO RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the issue of reports, all due high and medium recommendations will be followed up within this report.

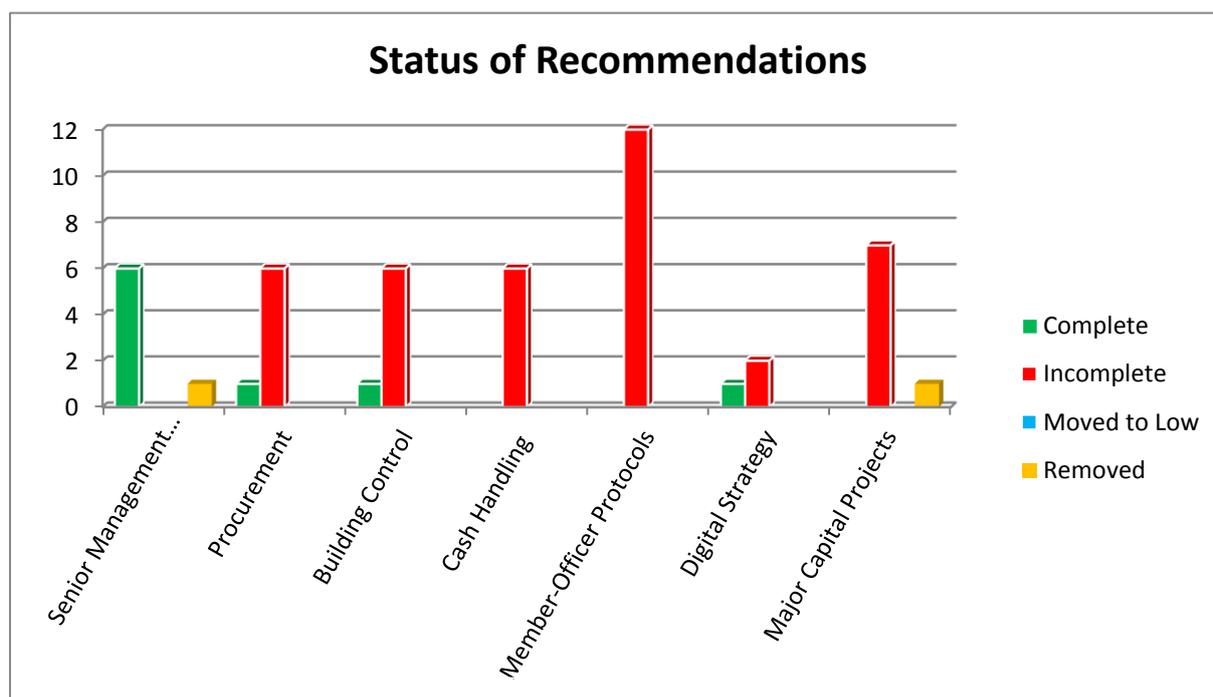
## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 50 recommendations are due for follow-up with recommendations due prior to the end of July 2019
- Previous recommendations may simply have a revised date that is post this Committee and therefore will be picked up at the next Committee
- Of the 50 recommendations:
  - 2018/19 - Nine Medium recommendations are fully implemented
  - 2018/19 - Seven High and 33 Medium recommendations are not implemented
  - 2018/19 - Two Medium recommendations have been removed from the follow-up process
  - We did not receive any management responses for the People, Housing Rents and Temporary Accommodation reports and these reports have therefore not been finalised.

Therefore overall, out of the 50 recommendations due, **80% of recommendations were incomplete**; this also includes all 6 High recommendations as outstanding.

For all incomplete recommendations we will:

1. Continue to emphasise to staff to be realistic about the implementation dates when completing their management responses at the completion stage of each internal audit review
2. Issue the recommendations tracker to all the relevant Heads of services on a monthly basis from this audit committee onwards due to very low implementation rates
3. Issue reminder emails 8 weeks prior to the follow up review to ensure timely completion of each recommendation.



# Recommendations: Complete

Recommendation made	Priority Level	Manager Responsible and Date	Current Progress
<b>2018/19. Senior Management Restructure</b>			
An action log should be created on a separate document to the CMB minutes. This should include a column to identify completed actions and how the action has been completed.	Medium	George Candler 30/04/2019	An action log has been introduced to the end of the CMB minutes with a completion date and a RAG status on the progress of the action.
A time slot should be created for a brief status update to be given on the contents of the action log by the responsible officer at the beginning of each CMB meeting.	Medium	George Candler 30/04/2019	A time slot is allocated to review the action log when CMB go through the minutes and the action log of the previous meeting.
The Chair should formally summarise all the agreed actions from the meeting at the end to clarify the responsibility of each manager and communicate a clear date the action is due to be completed by.	Medium	George Candler 30/04/2019	The Chair confirms the agreed action after each item on the agenda and these are formally documented in the meeting minutes.
A Terms of Reference should be created for CMB meetings to provide clarity on the remit, the purpose, the frequency and the composition of the group. This should be published on the intranet.	Medium	George Candler 31/07/2019	A Terms of Reference was established for CMB and approved on the 17 June 2019 including the composition, purpose and role of the group. This is due to be reviewed annually.
The Terms of Reference should include the requirement for a representative of each service area to attend if the Head of Service is unable to do so.	Medium	George Candler 31/07/2019	New Terms of Reference for CMB has a requirement for an alternative to attend if the Head of Service cannot.
There should be an open discussion at CMB about the workload concerns of each Head of Service and action plans should be agreed to ensure workload is kept to a reasonable level.	Medium	George Candler 30/06/2019	The discussion took place at CMB on 28.05.19. One immediate concern has been flagged and a new approach will be trialled to reduce workload. A wider review of the strategic resilience of CMB will be factored into an away day session at the beginning of July 2019.
<b>2018/19. Procurement</b>			
All staff should be reminded by email of the appropriate use of the exemptions process with a 'required response' email to ensure that it is received. Additionally, the Council should upload a notice onto the intranet with the exemption policies.	Medium	Stuart McGregor 30/04/2019	The intranet page was updated with the exemption policy and staff were notified of the policy.
<b>2018/19. Building Control</b>			
Building Control ensure that all supporting documents relevant to an application are appropriately filed on Civica before a case is completed	Medium	Lee Hunter 30/06/2019	The examples given where application forms and documents were not on CIVICA was because they were applications received by telephone - when an application is taken this way there are no application documents. The Registration and Support Team have a procedure and script in place for taking 'telephone' applications.'

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# Recommendations: Complete

## 2018/19. Digital Strategy

The Digital Services Team should be reminded by email that Highlight Reports should be produced on a monthly basis regardless of whether there have been significant project updates.

Medium

Kevin White  
31/05/2019

Digital services team uses Trello board for managing projects, which result in columns of work completed. These columns are then used to create the Highlight report.

# Recommendations: Incomplete

Recommendation made	Priority Level	Manager Responsible and Date	Current Progress
<b>2018/19. Procurement</b>			
The Council should remind officers by email of the importance of retaining documentation on ProContract and the locations where they should be stored	High	Stuart McGregor 30/04/2019	This is incomplete. No email has been sent out to officers to remind them to store documentation on ProContract.
The Council should create a separate drive to which all officers at the level of management and above can access where documentation should be stored relating to all procurements, current and archived, in folders unique to each procurement. This should be compulsory and incorporated into the Contract Procedure Rules.	High	Stuart McGregor 31/05/2019	This folder has not been created and the Contract Procedure Rules have not been updated to reflect it.
The Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer should formally remind any officers if the appropriate signatories, values and dates are not completed in the correct order that they should complete the form correctly or reject the exemption request.	Medium	Stuart McGregor & Francis Fernandes 30/04/2019	We were informed that officers get informed as and when they do not submit exemptions in the correct order, with S151 officer or Monitoring Officer last but this has not been done formally yet.
The Council should put in place a process to check that contractual requirements on high-value contracts are included.	Medium	Stuart McGregor 31/05/2019	This has not been completed.
The Council should give procurement and contract refresher training for staff involved with high-value contracts.	Medium	Stuart McGregor & Francis Fernandes 30/06/2019	No training has been completed.
The Council should amend the Contract Procedure Rules to ensure the correct information is conveyed within.	Medium	Stuart McGregor 30/04/2019	The Contract Procedure Rules have not been updated in lieu of the recommendation.
<b>2018/19. Member Officer Protocols</b>			
When updating the Council's Member-Officer protocol, focus on providing clarity on those areas where the survey undertaken for this review suggests that aspirations set out in the current protocol do not match reality.	Medium	Francis Fernandes 31/05/2019	Audit report considered by Standards Committee on 25 March 19 as the body responsible for Members conduct. Committee resolved that an action plan would be prepared and a further report taken to Committee once implemented. Draft revisions to protocol are being prepared for reporting to Standards Committee on 30 Sept 19 for consideration and comment, and appointment of officer/member working group to review and comment on draft revisions. Discussions held prior to updating the Member-Officer Protocols. Explanation where areas in the survey stated 'aspiration did not match reality' not included in the updated Member-Officer Protocols required.

# Recommendations: Incomplete

Convene an Officer-Member working group to focus on areas where disparity between Member perception of current roles, and Officer perception of current roles differ most - i.e. those highlighted by the survey for this review.	Medium	Francis Fernandes 31/05/2019	Working group to discuss draft and Standards Committee comments from 1 Oct 19 to 31 Oct 19 and report results to Standards Committee on 2 Dec 19.
Run an organisation-wide training programme on the Protocol once it has been refreshed - cascading training down through political groups, Heads of Service and to CMT meetings run by Heads of Service.	Medium	Francis Fernandes 31/05/2019	Organisation wide training programme will be arranged once the protocol is approved through December 2019 to March 2020.
When updating the Council's Member-Officer Protocol, the Council should incorporate a description of a Member's role in the Member-Officer Protocol, building on the description currently set out in Article 2 of the Council's Constitution.	Medium	Francis Fernandes 31/05/2019	Draft revisions include expansion on the description of members' role in Article 2. Draft revisions to protocol are being prepared for reporting to Standards Committee on 30 Sept 19 for consideration and comment
When updating the Council's Member-Officer Protocol, draw on expectations of Members and Officers highlighted for this review, and undertake a wider engagement exercise of Members and Officers to determine expectations which are bespoke to the needs and views of the Council.	Medium	Francis Fernandes 31/05/2019	Working group to draw on expectations of members and officers whilst reviewing.
The updated Member-Officer Protocol should make recommendations more understandable by couching them in everyday examples. For example "Councillors should not walk the floors of the Council and instruct Officers to undertake certain tasks".	Medium	Francis Fernandes 31/05/2019	Working group referred to above will hold member officer session later in 2019.
Hold a joint Member-Officer session focussed on understanding respective expectations of one another. This would focus on developing an improved culture to underpin the refreshed Member-Officer Protocol.	Medium	Francis Fernandes 31/05/2019	Draft revisions include complaints process for officers in relation to members but recognise that this is constrained by the statutory and case law provisions regarding members' conduct, i.e. this may only be via the standards regime. Once complete this will be shown in the revised protocols and complaints process policy later in 2019.
When updating the Member-Officer Protocol, the Council should introduce a clear process for complaints by Officers about the conduct of individual Members. Such a process exists in protocols held by other Councils which were reviewed as part of this audit. This process should set out who Officers can raise complaints with, provide an appeal route if they are not happy with how this complaint has been treated, and a method for logging complaints received. The updated Protocol should also state that Group Leaders have a responsibility for the behaviour of their Group Members towards Officers.	Medium	Francis Fernandes 31/05/2019	These priorities to be considered in light of the need to further action plan to be provided to the Standards Committee. Expected to be completed in September 2019.

# Recommendations: Incomplete

Use Executive Partnership Board (EPB) to agree a manageable set of political priorities to progress before local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire and hold these as a standing item on the agenda at each EPB.	Medium	George Candler 31/03/2019 31/07/2019	This will be discussed in the weekly 1-1 between the Leader and Chief Executive. A date will then be agreed to discuss more widely at EPB. Target completion 18.07.19
When holding training for Members on the Officer-Member Protocol, the importance of appropriate tone, and not influencing Officer reports, should be emphasised through a series of scenario-based exercises to reduce the likelihood that either element of the Protocol is unintentionally breached.	Medium	Francis Fernandes 31/05/2019	Scenario based exercises to be developed once final content of protocol confirmed.
Discuss how to improve the functioning of the Member Contact Centre at Executive Programme Board.	Medium	Marion Goodman 31/03/2019 31/07/2019	An update was provided to EPB in April when it was agreed that a workshop would be held with Members. A workshop was held in May with a representative group of members to understand their requirements and suggestions for improvement. This was followed by a questionnaire to all members. The results of both have been analysed and are being incorporated into a paper to be presented to EPB during June 2019 - date to be finalised.
Update the Member-Officer Protocol to express that Members are entitled to receive a timely response to enquiries on behalf of ward residents, and agree with Members what this timescale might be.	Medium	Francis Fernandes 31/05/2019	No response received.
<b>2018/19. Major Capital Projects</b>			
The Council should review and report on why these agreements and contracts were not signed. The report should contain a 'lessons learnt' section to ensure that contracts/agreements are promptly signed and evidence that the project outcomes are agreed.	High	Kevin Langley 30/06/2019	This has not been completed.
The Museums Project Manager should include the date risks are added to the risk register, risk owners and mitigating controls currently in place for all risks.	Medium	Kevin Langley 30/06/2019	We have been informed that this is complete but despite our request for evidence this has not been forthcoming.
All Project Managers should be reminded via email to produce monthly Highlight Reports.	Medium	Kevin Langley 30/06/2019	We have been informed that this is complete but despite our request for evidence this has not been forthcoming.
The Corporate Management Report should contain greater detail of the project spend against forecast that is similar in detail to the Highlight Reports.	Medium	Kevin Langley 30/06/2019	We have been informed that this is complete but despite our request for evidence this has not been forthcoming.

# Recommendations: Incomplete

The finance reports for the Museum and the Delapré Abbey projects should include actual vs budget spending on a line by line basis to provide greater clarity on the cause of expenditure variance.	Medium	Kevin Langley 30/06/2019	We have been informed that this is complete but despite our request for evidence this has not been forthcoming.
Spending to date should be included in the finance reports for the Museum project.	Medium	Kevin Langley 30/06/2019	We have been informed that this is complete but despite our request for evidence this has not been forthcoming.
Site meeting reports for the Museum project should include an action plan with implementation dates. RAG status column should be added to the minutes	Medium	Kevin Langley 30/06/2019	We have been informed that this is complete but despite our request for evidence this has not been forthcoming.
<b>2018/19. Building Control</b>			
Building Control ensure that agreed competency training (a) is undertaken by staff and documented on a schedule for tracking and (b) is independently spot checked or included as an agenda item for monitoring purposes on the Planning Service management meetings which can be carried out on a quarterly basis	Medium	Lee Hunter 30/06/2019 30/09/2019	Intend on discussing training opportunities during the mid-year and end-year appraisal process. These are not due to take place for all staff until June-July 2019
Building Control and the Planning Service staff ensure that evidence for training is obtained and filed	Medium	Lee Hunter 30/06/2019 30/09/2019	There is a central repository for the department to log and record training - surveyors are to provide the administrator with the details of the training and CPD certificates received. This will be communicated to the team.
Building Control Officers ensure that sufficient detail relating to site visit reports is recorded on MasterGov that facilitates a quick assessment of the status of an application and result of the visit	Medium	Lee Hunter 30/06/2019 30/09/2019	The Building Control Surveyors are to up load their site records when they return back to the office at the end of the day. The service is currently looking at ways with MasterGov on how to record site records remotely that is when the surveyors complete a visit to the site.
The Planning Registration & Support and Building Control teams ensure that all relevant fields and events in MasterGov are completed and selected when completing building regulations applications or requests	Medium	Lee Hunter 30/06/2019 30/09/2019	Procedures are in place for Registration and Support Team and the Building Control team. Team management is to monitor and review this more frequently to ensure that events and fields the service uses are filled in and completed. Any performance issues will be raised at 1:1's and in team meetings. Monthly reviews are due to commence in June 2019.
Assessment is made for the development of reports for monitoring individually determined fees, standard fees, hours and miles spent on a case to assist with the future fee charging process	Medium	Lee Hunter 30/06/2019 30/09/2019	The information listed is held in three different systems that is MasterGov, Aggresso and with individually determined fees in a Fees-Quote folder on a on a shared drive system. Building Control will assess and review how the information from these three areas can be collated and documented to help assess future fee charging is to be undertaken.
Building Control assess evidencing the Building Control Manager's periodic review of MasterGov case records.	Medium	Lee Hunter 30/06/2019 30/09/2019	The Building Control Manager will undertake a review of a random selection of case files on a quarterly basis and document and record the findings.
<b>2018/19. Cash Handling</b>			

# Recommendations: Incomplete

The Council should ensure that reconciliations are made against the Cash Box Report amount. The Parking & Bus Station Manager should send a monthly report of the amount that should have been collected from the machines to LGSS who then reconcile the bank statement against this value. Any differences should be followed up to ensure there is an adequate explanation.	High	Rick O'Farrell 30/04/2019 30/09/2019	The Council intend to complete these reconciliations and ensure that this is implemented but this has not yet been done.
There should be a reconciliation between the Cash Box Report and bank statements for the car parking account undertaken by the Council as far back as 2015	High	Rick O'Farrell 30/04/2019 30/09/2019	The Council intend to complete these reconciliations and ensure that this is implemented but this has not yet been done.
The Council should conduct an investigation into the variance and have a minuted meeting with Jade Security Services Ltd into the missing money.	High	Stuart McGregor 30/06/2019 30/09/2019	This is incomplete but arrangements are in progress.
The Council should create a central policy that is applicable to all areas of cash/cheque collection articulating protocols on segregating duties between collecting, counting and transporting cash/cheques. Furthermore, the policy should include provisions to ensure staff safety when transporting cash/cheques. This should be uploaded onto the Council's intranet and emailed to all staff.	Medium	Stuart McGregor 30/04/2019 30/09/2019	Policy has not been updated to reflect this.
The policy should include a maximum amount of cash that can be held by a service area before it should be transported to the Guildhall. This should be within the maximum amount stated on the Council's insurance policy.	Medium	Stuart McGregor 30/04/2019 30/09/2019	Policy has not been updated to reflect this.
The Council should remind all officers with a corporate credit card via email, with an acceptance requirement, that they should send their Purchase Card Reconciliation to the appropriate officer within 5 days.	Medium	Stuart McGregor 30/04/2019 30/09/2019	No email has been sent to all cardholders but a process of checking and ensuring the Heads of Service sign the card usage off at the end of each month to state that they are satisfied with it.
<b>2018/19. Digital Strategy</b>			
CMB should scrutinise the Digital Transformation project more rigorously on a bi-monthly basis including an assessment of the high risks on the risk register.	Medium	Kevin White 31/05/2019 30/09/2019	This is scheduled to come to CMB on Monday 16th June. We have not received evidence of this yet.
A road map template should be established which is required to be used for digital strategy projects.	Medium	Kevin White 31/05/2019 30/09/2019	This is in progress but not yet complete.

# Recommendations: Removed

Recommendation made	Priority Level	Manager Responsible and Date	Current Progress
<b>2018/19. Senior Management Restructure</b>			
Add the risk of inadequate leadership capacity to the Corporate Risk Register	Medium	Joanne Bonham 30/06/2019	Leadership capacity will be regularly reviewed at CMB and through 1:1's with the Chief Executive. 'Inadequate leadership capacity' recorded on the corporate risk register (CRR) may expose senior management to unnecessary challenges within certain areas when conducting business. The CRR is a public document and presented to Cabinet and Audit committee quarterly. We discussed this with the Governance & Risk Manager who informed us that the Council do not intend to implement the recommendation as stated above.
<b>2018/19</b>			
The Delapré Abbey risk register should be updated to reflect the current position of the project.	Medium	Kevin Langley 30/06/2019	This project has effectively been closed off as the final claim has been made against it. The Council do not, therefore, intend to implement this recommendation.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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