

**Completed Audits**

Report	System Overview	Work Finalised	Audit Days	Key Messages	Audit Opinion	Key Action Plan Dates
DBS	<p>The Authority is committed to safeguarding the welfare of those accessing services through the effective use of the DBS. At the time of the audit there were 9057 occupied jobs across the Authority, of which 7399 (82%) jobs have the requirement of a DBS check.</p> <p>There is a statutory requirement to undertake rechecks every three years, for certain positions including those governed by the Care Standards Act, e.g. employees in care homes. However, BCBC has adopted as best practice a rechecking policy, for all checks to be undertaken on a 3 yearly basis.</p> <p>During the period 1 July 2013 to 31 December 2013 it was identified that BCBC requested 1604 DBS checks.</p>	Sept 2014	30 days	<p>Following the introduction of the applicant only certificate in April 2013, the Authority no longer receives the original disclosure certificate. It is the employees' responsibility to ensure that they provide their disclosure certificate to the DBS Team upon receipt. It is felt that this change has caused a number of control weakness to occur within the system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assurance cannot be provided that all employees who require a DBS check have a valid check in place. A number of CRB checks have expired and a number of individuals have future dated DBS checks, suggesting input errors.</li> <li>• Input date errors on Trent mean that individuals are being chased for DBS disclosure when they have already been provided.</li> <li>• Escalation procedures have only recently been developed for individuals who fail to return their application or disclosure certificate by the stipulated date. Previously they were not chased by the DBS team in a timely manner meaning that they continued to be paid without a valid check in place.</li> <li>• Individuals are not being penalised for failing to supply this information.</li> </ul>	Limited Assurance	January 2015

				As the audit was undertaken, the Council tendered for the introduction of Ebulk as a method for undertaking checks more effectively. The system should be introduced in November 2014 and a further audit review will take place in the new year.		
Legal Expenditure	<p>The Legal department incurs expenditure in a range of areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• payment for specialist legal services,</li> <li>• disbursements, and</li> <li>• general administrative costs.</li> </ul> <p>The audit review focused on the controls and monitoring of these types of expenditure.</p>	October 2014	13 days	<p>A range of expenditure types including solicitors, barristers, disbursements, specialist services (e.g. DNA testing) were sampled for testing. In all instances it was established that the services procured represented value for money. Suitable authorisation controls were in place, with some purchases obtaining approval from the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal &amp; Regulatory.</p> <p>In summary, all of the areas reviewed demonstrated good practice, with no negative issues identified.</p>	Substantial Assurance	N/A as no Significant recommendations
School Uniform Grant	<p>The purpose of the grant from Welsh Government (WG) is to provide assistance to families on low incomes for the purchase of school uniforms. The funding is available to pupils entering year 7 of maintained secondary schools who are eligible for free school meals and pupils in special schools, special needs resource bases and pupil referral units who are aged 11 at the start of the 2014/15 school year and who are</p>	Sept 2014	4 days	<p>During the Audit a number of strengths and areas of good practice were identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Housing Benefits Team is now responsible for confirming who is eligible for the School Uniform Grant as they have real time information;</li> <li>• Claims were made prior to the deadline date set in WG's terms and conditions;</li> <li>• The majority of the grant applicants do not receive the money but will</li> </ul>	Substantial Assurance	N/A as no Significant recommendations

	eligible for free school meals.			<p>either receive a uniform pack or a voucher from an approved supplier to purchase the uniform.</p> <p>There were no key issues identified during the Audit that need to be addressed.</p>		
Waste Management Efficiency Savings	<p>An audit review of the current situation regarding the budget savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the 2014/15 financial year as regards to Waste Management has been undertaken following concerns raised by the Corporate Director – Resources as to the viability of these savings.</p> <p>The total identified savings that could be made from the collection and disposal of waste relating to the MREC were originally calculated as £1,930,000 during the 2011/12 financial year. Following the implementation of a detailed procurement process, these saving projections were subsequently revised downwards, with alternative saving proposals being developed by the Communities Directorate to meet the shortfall.</p>	October 2014	16 days	<p>The difficulties faced by Waste Management are as a result of the consequences that can arise if potential savings are treated as achievable without revisiting the assumptions built into the original business case at regular intervals and updating the MTFS where assumptions have been overridden/circumstances change. In this instance this has caused the Service Area, Directorate and ultimately the Council problems, especially given the current economic climate. It is recognised, however, that the current system of verification and approval of identified savings should ensure that the savings in the MTFS are achievable.</p> <p>The Council is being proactive in dealing with the budgetary difficulties faced with regard to waste management. This can be demonstrated by the setting up of a high profile Project Board specifically for this purpose. Its members include, but are not limited to the Council's Chief Executive and the Director of Communities.</p>	Reasonable Assurance	September 2014

Highways Maintenance – Potholes	<p>As a Highway Authority, BCBC has a statutory obligation to maintain, at public expense, the highways found within its Council boundaries. There are occasions when the highways break down and due to traffic flow and weather conditions, and potholes appear. There is a constant pressure on Authorities to ensure that potholes are kept to a minimum, and when notified or discovered, are fixed promptly.</p> <p>The Authority operates an in-house facility in the reinstatement of carriageway defects with the use of internal labour. For larger areas of work required the Authority entered into 'patching' contracts with two external suppliers.</p>	October 2014	18 days	<p>The audit identified that many of the processes in place are manual and/or paper based which made it difficult to test or verify the data and processes currently in operation. Therefore a number of recommendations were made that relate to updating and improving the current manual systems to improve efficiency, effectiveness and control.</p> <p>Furthermore a recommendation was made in relation to the tendering process, in that this should commence with sufficient time allowable to ensure that there is no time delay between the cessation of one patching contract and the commencement of another.</p> <p>It was encouraging to note that contract monitoring is in place with daily inspections of contract work being carried out.</p>	Reasonable Assurance	April 2015
Sign Shop	BCBC has operated a Sign Shop since its inception in order to provide an in-house service for the production of road traffic and other signs. Over time the operation has developed into an income generating form with signs being designed and manufactured for Neath Port Talbot Council, South Wales Trunk Road Authority (SWTRA) and other external clients as well as a number of internal	Sept 2014	13 days	<p>During the Audit a number of strengths and areas of good practice were identified including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign Shop procedures are clearly documented and are readily available for view.</li> <li>• Appropriate segregation of duties exists within the purchasing process.</li> </ul> <p>However the following key issues were identified during the Audit which need to be addressed:</p>	Limited Assurance	October 2014

	customers, including the Highways section itself.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business continuity should be assured by the training of another person to design and manufacture signs.</li> <li>• Stock takes should be independently undertaken and any discrepancies followed up.</li> </ul>		
Supporting People	<p>The Supporting People Programme began on the 1st April 2003, bringing together seven housing-related funding streams from across central government. The programme provides housing-related support to help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible. This could be in people's own homes or in hostels, sheltered housing, or other specialist supported housing. It also provides complementary support for people who may also need personal or medical care.</p> <p>As a result of The Aylward Review, WG published guidance (June 2013) for implementing the restructure of the administration, governance and funding arrangements for the Supporting People Programme.</p>	October 2014	20 days	<p>It was identified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processes and procedures were available to staff and were consistent with WG Guidance.</li> <li>• Commissioning and procurement of new services was found to be in line with WG Guidance and Council procurement rules.</li> <li>• The strategic review of services had been carried out in line with the three stage process prescribed by WG Guidance.</li> <li>• Payments made to providers for new service users were accurately calculated, double checked and authorised by a senior officer.</li> </ul>	Substantial Assurance	N/A as no Significant recommendations
Houses to Homes Grant Scheme	The Welsh Government launched the three year Houses into Homes scheme in April 2012 to help tackle the 23,000 empty homes in Wales with the intention	Sept 2014		The audit review established that the scheme is operating within a sound control environment. Specific control testing identified:	Substantial Assurance	N/A as no Significant recommendations

	<p>of bringing 5,000 properties into use by 2016. The scheme is supported by a £20million recyclable loan fund which provides loans to bring empty houses or commercial buildings back into use as homes for sale or rent. The loans are interest free and are available to individuals, charities, companies and businesses. A maximum loan of £25K is available per property and this has to be paid back within two or three years, depending on whether the property is sold or let. The total sum of funds that has been allocated to Bridgend is £900,010.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loan recipient files were complete to enable verification of information.</li> <li>• Risk assessments had been undertaken to minimise losses.</li> <li>• Policies and Procedures were in place and up to date.</li> <li>• Staff were knowledgeable and helpful to potential recipients.</li> </ul> <p>No significant recommendations were made as a result of this review.</p>		
Section 117 Process	<p>Under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act, it is the joint responsibility of the local Health Authority and the local Social Services Authority to provide after-care services for certain categories of detained patients when they leave hospital. There is no power to charge for services provided under S117, such services must be provided free of charge.</p> <p>Section 117 after-care is intended to provide sufficient support for an individual who has been compulsorily detained so that they</p>	Sept 2014	20 days	<p>As a result of the audit review, a number of issues were identified,</p> <p>The Group Manager joined this service area in January 2013, at which time; weaknesses with regard to the application of the Section 117 process were identified. As this is a high risk area, the Manager suggested that a two part review be carried out. The first part reviewed the existing processes and procedures and identified where the weaknesses lie and the second part reviewed the current financial arrangement with Health. The Group Manager intends to use the findings of the audit report and the recommendations</p>	No Assurance	March 2015

	can leave hospital and return to their home or other accommodation in a manner that minimises the risk of deterioration to their mental health and the chances of their needing further hospital treatment. It is therefore important that after-care is effectively managed and delivered to improve outcomes for service users, carers and families.			made as a basis for improving processes and further reviewing the financial arrangement with Health.		
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