

Report title: Disaster Recovery Audit Progress Update	
Report to: Audit, Governance and Standards Committee	
Report author: Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance	
Date: 27 June 2022	For: Discussion
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Everyone's Essex

- 1.1 The Audit Governance and Standards Committee has a role to maintain oversight and to monitor the effectiveness of internal controls, governance and risk management arrangements as well as the work of Internal Audit.
- 1.2 This report provides the Committee with the current position regarding activity in relation to the ECC Disaster Recovery Audit. Melanie Hogger, Director, Technology Services has been invited to attend the committee to provide an update on the actions being taken to respond to the Audit Report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the progress in relation to the ECC Disaster Recovery Audit be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1 At the March 2022 meeting of the Committee it was reported that the follow-up Audit of IT Disaster Recovery received a 'Limited Assurance' rating during that reporting period. The Council has made significant progress since its previous IT Disaster Recovery audit in 2016/17 which received an overall opinion of No Assurance, with five Critical recommendations. All five Critical recommendations have now been closed. The recent follow up identified three Major and three Moderate recommendations. These relate to:
 - Incomplete business impact analysis and validation (Major)
 - Operating effectiveness of the disaster recovery arrangements (Major) – this action has been recorded as implemented.
 - IT disaster recovery testing (Major)
 - Roles and responsibilities for invoking the IT Disaster Recovery Plan (Moderate)
 - the IT Disaster Recovery Plan remains in draft (Moderate)

- the Cloud Strategy is yet to be approved (Moderate) – this action has been recorded as implemented

4. Links to our Strategic Ambitions

- 4.1 Internal Audit and Counter Fraud activity is critical in ensuring that the Council successfully mitigates its risks in all areas of work and that the public purse is protected to ensure that available resources reach those most in need.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 It is important to implement internal audit recommendations in order to ensure that our risks, including financial risks are managed.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 Internal Audit is a key way in which councillors can be assured that the Council is using its resources effectively and that the Council is discharging its fiduciary duties concerning taxpayers' money. It helps services to design systems which have appropriate controls and also helps identify and respond to breaches if they occur.
- 6.2 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the authority to have adequate systems of internal control and internal audit is a way of demonstrating this.

7. Equality and Diversity Considerations

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 7.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.