

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
18 September 2024

Report of the Audit Working Group 31 July 2024

Report by Executive Director of Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

Executive Summary

2. The Audit Working Group (AWG) met on 31 July 2024. The group received an update on the implementation of management actions arising from the audits of Purchasing Cards, Health Funded Payments and Payments to Providers which were all undertaken during 2023/24.

Introduction

3. Attendance:
Full Meeting: Chairman Dr Geoff Jones. Councillors: Ted Fenton, Roz Smith, Glynis Phillips.

Officers: Full meeting: Sarah Cox, Chief Internal Auditor, Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services, Shilpa Manek, Committee Officer, Sam Egerton, Principal Auditor, Nick Stokes, Intelligence and Data Officer, Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance.

Officers: Part meeting: Clair Pollock, Head of Financial Systems & Support, Victoria Baran, Deputy Director Adult Social Care, and Level Chingalembe, Service Manager.

Apologies: Cllr Jenny Hannaby

Matters to Report:

Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Proactive Review of Purchasing Cards 2023/24

4. The Internal Audit & Counter Fraud proactive review of Purchasing Cards was undertaken during 2023/24. The overall conclusion was graded Amber. The audit noted that the administration and management of purchasing cards had recently become the responsibility of the Financial Systems & Support Team

and that since the audit a Purchase to Pay Lead has also been recruited and is now in post.

5. The audit had identified that a significant amount of VAT was potentially not being coded correctly by cardholders resulting in unclaimed VAT. Improvements were also identified including the need to increase the level of transactions being reviewed by cardholders and then approved by managers and the implementation of the upload of supporting receipts to the system.
6. Officers updated the group and confirmed that good progress has been made with the implementation of the management action plan. Eight management actions have been fully implemented and the remaining actions are in progress and due for completion by the end of September 2024.
7. The Audit Working Group were satisfied with the response taken to the issues identified within the Internal Audit report and will be updated on the implementation of the remaining actions through the routine Internal Audit follow up process.

Internal Audit of Health Funded Payments 2023/24

8. The audit of Health Funded Payments was undertaken in 2023/24. The overall conclusion was graded Amber. During 2023/24 the Council processed payments on behalf of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Integrated Care Board (total in excess of £100M). The Audit Working Group noted that there had been an issue with overpayments being made to providers on behalf of the Integrated Care Board, for some clients that had died. The Oxfordshire County Council payments team had not been notified of these. Action has now been taken to recover all overpayments made and address any process issues. The Integrated Care Board has since taken back responsibility for making these payments going forward.
9. The Audit Working Group noted that progress has been made to address / implement four of the agreed management actions, with work in progress to implement the remaining four. The group agreed that implementation of the remaining actions will be continued to be monitored through the routine Internal Audit follow up process.

Internal Audit of Adult Payments to Providers 2023/24

10. The audit of Adult Payments to Providers was undertaken in 2023/24. The overall conclusion was graded Amber. The approach to the delivery of home support, reablement and extra care changed in October 2021, with the introduction of the Live Well at Home model. As part of the new arrangements recording and monitoring of home support provision moved away from using an Electronic Time Management System to providers now being paid through Guaranteed Minimum Volumes or data uploaded via a Provider Portal. The

audit noted that payment processes were found to be working well with a significant volume of transactions (Over £300m per annum) being processed in relation to both residential and non-residential care. Weaknesses were highlighted by the audit in relation to the accuracy of provider portal uploads made by providers and also oversight of the Guaranteed Minimum Volumes for reablement.

11. Officers updated the group to report seven of the management actions agreed within the internal audit report have already been implemented and two are in progress for completion by the end of September 2024. The group were satisfied with progress made, in particular to address the weaknesses in relation to the development of validation and tolerance checks of provider portal uploads and the monitoring and review of reablement guaranteed minimum volumes. The group agreed that the implementation of the remaining actions will be continued to be monitored through the routine Internal Audit follow up process.

Financial Implications

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by: Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services ian.dyson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

14. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance anita.bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Lorna Baxter
Executive Director of Resources

Annex: None
Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Sarah Cox, Chief Internal Auditor.
Email: sarah.cox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

September 2024.

Next AWG meeting: 2 October 2024.