

Quarter 4, 2012-13: Recommendations due

Code to ratings:

Shading	Rating	Explanation
	Implemented	The recommendation that had previously been raised as a priority one has been reviewed and was considered implemented.
	Partly Implemented	Aspects of the priority one recommendation had been implemented however not considered implemented in full.
	Not Implemented	There had been no progress made in implementing this priority one recommendation.

Audit Title and Recommendation	Responsible Area	Response from Management	Audit Assessment April 2013
<p>Recommendation 1: Housing Benefit</p> <p>Access to OpenRevenues by any person or organisation outside of the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service should be reviewed in line with the Council's Information Sharing Policy and the Data Protection Act 1998 and formalised through an Information Sharing Agreement as appropriate. The Standards and Information Rights team within Corporate Governance should be consulted to advise on this review.</p>	Chief Executive's Service	<p>Following the audit and feedback meeting, we have conducted a review of all the access to the OPENRevenues system. The data held for the administration of benefits and the use thereof by Barnet Group has been considered in conjunction with http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/mou-2011-2012.pdf, and http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/mou-2011-2012.pdf. Having discussed our findings with the Data Protection Governance Officer we concluded that their access was not compliant and revoked it with effect from 16/10/2012. Consideration is still being given to Barnet Group's access requirements in support of the homelessness function.</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Access to OpenRevenues has been reviewed, and revoked where necessary.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 2: Housing Benefit</p> <p>The backdating procedure should be reviewed to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose and minimises the potential for fraud and error</p> <p>The procedure should be agreed by senior management, documented and readily available to all relevant members of staff, with training where necessary. The procedure should be version-controlled and reviewed at the appropriate level at least annually.</p> <p>Clear evidence of authorisation should be attached to OpenRevenues; any changes to payment amounts which are not <i>de minimis</i> should be re-signed at the appropriate levels. Authorisation levels should be reviewed to take into account the abolition of the Senior Assessor posts in the recent restructure; evidence to support a backdating claim should be required wherever possible; and backdated claims should be processed promptly where possible.</p>	<p>Chief Executive's Service</p>	<p>The backdating procedure has been reviewed and revised as appropriate. The revised procedure has been documented and circulated to all staff.</p> <p>The monthly benefits whole team meeting held on 10 October 2012 contained a session specifically dedicated to the audit findings and actions arising from these. At the meeting the training officer went through the revised backdating process in detail.</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>The backdating process has been reviewed and communicated to staff.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 3: Contract Procedure Rules – Environment Planning Regeneration (under 25K)</p> <p>Arrangements for EPR Business Support Team systematically identifying and investigating vendor relationships below £25,000 for inclusion in the Directorate contracts register should be introduced.</p> <p>Confirmed relationships below £25,000 should be included in the directorate contracts register. Where spend is identified for vendors delivering services covered by other relationships which have been made CPR compliant, they should be removed from SAP.</p>	<p>Environment Planning Regeneration</p>	<p>The contract register was determined to exist for contracts above £25k initially. Work is now underway with Corporate Procurement to agree a common and structured method for inclusion of contracts under £25k on the register and presentations of same.</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>An under-25K contracts register has been implemented.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: Contract Procedure Rules – Environment Planning Regeneration (under 25K)</p> <p>Routine pro-active reviews of vendor spend in SAP below £25,000 should be undertaken by the EPR Business Support Team. The review should take place as noted within the procedures published by the Corporate Procurement Team.</p> <p>Identified spend below £25,000 not on the contracts register should be investigated</p>	<p>Environment Planning Regeneration</p>	<p>The agreed process with Corporate Procurement will include access to routines reports. It will also consider processes for managing categories of spending within the Services register in order to ensure consistency of approach.</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>The report identifying all EPR vendor spend approaching 25k has been developed for monthly provision to and review and action by the Service for potential breach of the Contract Procedure Rule 25k threshold.</p>

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<p>further with the Service and Corporate Procurement.</p> <p>Compliance action should be implemented and implementation monitored for future aggregated spend expected to exceed CPR thresholds.</p> <p>Where spend above £5,000 is not expected to exceed the £25,000 threshold, the relationship should be included on the Directorate contracts register as required by the Contract Procedure Rules.</p>			
<p>Recommendation 5: Value for Money – Facilities Management, Leaseholder Relationship</p> <p>Management should liaise with the leaseholder to authorise and sign the lease for Building 2 Lower Ground Floor.</p> <p>Management should review all leases to identify any unbilled amounts, and liaise with the leaseholder to calculate a final amount payable.</p> <p>In addition, management should accrue for the full amount of payments not made since January 2008.</p>	Commercial Services	<p>All necessary authorities are now in place for Officers to complete the outstanding lease.</p> <p>Day to day meetings exist through LBB Operations Manager and Landlord's representative, also forward planned meetings are now in place addressing all lease and operational issues.</p> <p>Adequate provision is being set aside for the properties.</p>	<p>Partly implemented</p> <p>The lease for Building 2 Lower Ground Floor has not been signed as formal consent to sub-let to Barnet Council has not been requested by the intermediary and provided by the ultimate landlord. As management have taken all reasonable action possible to expedite completion, we propose that this recommendation be considered complete for reporting purposes.</p>