

Report to: **Audit and Governance Committee**

Date: **28 September 2023**

Title: **Building Maintenance Progress Update**

Portfolio Area: **Community Services – Cllr Abbott**

Wards Affected: **All Wards**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: N/A

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **N/A**

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Audit and Governance Committee

- 1. Note the work being undertaken to address the Audit report.**
- 2. Agree to defer the follow up audit from 2023-24 to Quarter 1 of 2024/25 to allow this work to complete.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Audits undertaken by the Internal Audit team in December 2020 and subsequently in February 2023 reported Limited assurance for the Building Maintenance service. As a result of this, the Audit and Governance Committee requested a written report to update them on the actions taken by officers to rectify the areas of concern highlighted.
- 1.2. This update paper provides an overview of the key actions being undertaken to address the areas of concern highlighted in the previous internal audit reports. The main concerns (and actions underway) related to:
 - Absence of a Building Maintenance Strategy (see 3.2).
 - Out of date Asset Condition Surveys (see 3.2, 3.3).
 - Resourcing and management of the Asset and Building Maintenance Teams (see 3.7).
 - Prioritisation of the work of the Building Maintenance Team (see 3.8).

- Ensuring asset data on Concerto, the Asset Maintenance Software is accurate and complete (see 3.5).

2. **Background**

- 2.1. The Building Maintenance team has suffered from numerous changes in management over the last 3 years and significant management resource and operational capacity within the team was diverted to support the deterioration of the waste service during 2021 and 2022, where performance was below the expected standard. This was carried out with the full support of the Executive.
- 2.2. Following the creation of a management structure to support the waste and recycling services, a vacancy for the Head of Service role was recruited and appointed to in April 2023 with direct responsibility for the Community and Operations service.
- 2.3. Work to review the service was paused due to the Covid pandemic and the waste service issues (para 2.1).
- 2.4. It is recognised that this work is a priority if the council is to secure good value for money from its assets portfolio.

3. **Progress to date**

- 3.1. A monthly meeting to agree and manage the improvement activity is now in place chaired by the Director of Customer Service and Delivery. Attendees include Head of Assets, Head of Community Service and Operations, and the Internal Audit team.
- 3.2. An updated Strategic Asset Management plan is being drafted and will be reviewed by the team ahead of being presented to the Executive for approval at its next meeting in November 2023. This will provide good detail on all the assets held by the council and how they will be maintained.
- 3.3. Assets are also being categorised into 5 areas to align with the Council's new corporate strategy. This will help identify the assets and the cost of associated management & maintenance resources by category. The categories are:
 - Housing
 - Operational
 - Community Services
 - Environment and Biodiversity
 - Economy and Jobs
- 3.4. The assets team are data cleansing the Estate Management IT system (Concerto) of historic tasks and working with the Community Service & Operations team to ensure maintenance tasks are up to date.
- 3.5. The Customer Service Improvement Manager has been tasked by the Head of Assets to assess the use of the Concerto system against the functionality and review current business processes across the service.

- 3.6. A new management structure (within the existing service budgets) is currently being finalised and recruitment will commence once approved by the Senior Leadership Team. Further details of the broader improvements are set out in the report to the 21 September Executive titled 'Delivering strategic priorities through Community Services and Operations'.
- 3.7. A new apprenticeship recruitment strategy will see the team offering opportunities to young people to enable them to develop key trade skills.
- 3.8. A fortnightly meeting between the operations team and the assets team is in place to ensure that resources are focussed on completing appropriate tasks and maintenance.

4 **Proposed Way Forward**

- 4.1 Continue the joint monthly meetings with service areas and the Internal Audit team to ensure focus on addressing the weakness and introducing best practice.
- 4.2 Agree to defer the Internal Audit follow up audit from 2023-24 to Q1 of 2024-25 to allow this work to complete.

5 **Implications**

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	N	
Financial	N	There are no direct financial implications of the report.
Risk	N	
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	Community Services Good Quality Council Services
Consultation and Engagement Strategy	N	External consultation and engagement has not been undertaken with regard to this report.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		N/A
Safeguarding		N/A
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		N/A

Health, Safety and Wellbeing		N/A
Other implications		

Supporting Information

Appendices: None

Background Papers: None