# South Derbyshire District Council – Audit Progress Report

Audit Sub-Committee: 21st March 2018



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### Our Vision

Through continuous improvement, the central midlands audit partnership will strive to provide cost effective, high quality internal audit services that meet the needs and expectations of all its partners.

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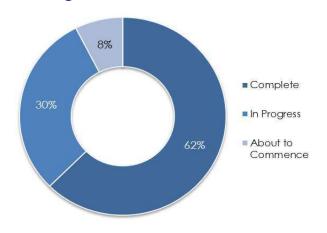
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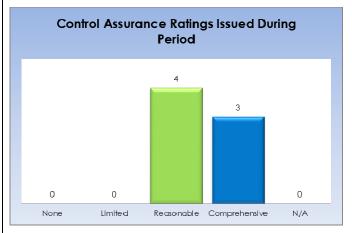
# South Derbyshire District Council – Audit Progress Report

# **AUDIT DASHBOARD**

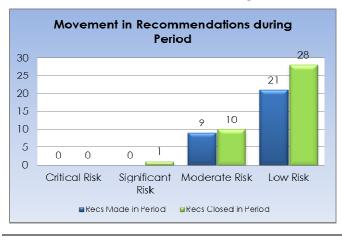
### Plan Progress



### Jobs Completed in Period



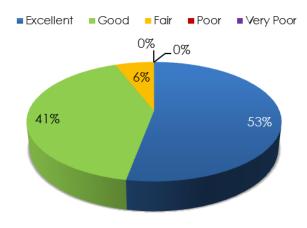
### Recommendation Tracking





#### **Customer Satisfaction**

#### Feb 17 to Jan 18



### Continuous Improvement

- 1. A member of the CMAP team has been participating as a Key Expert (along with other global accounting firms) in an Internal Audit project in the Republic of Tajikistan in Central Asia. Funded by the European Commission, the project is aimed at providing assistance to governments of several Eastern European and ex-USSR countries in development of modern comprehensive financial regulations and providing best practice methodology for undertaking internal audits.
- The Audit Together Partnership (where CMAP is one of 9 member organisations) has been shortlisted for a Public Finance Innovation Award 2018 in the Innovation in Internal Audit category for its collaborative work.

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# **AUDIT PLAN**

### Progress on Audit Assignments

The following table provide Audit Sub-Committee with information on how audit assignments were progressing as at 28th February 2018.

2017-18 Jobs	Status	% Complete	Assurance Rating
Business Continuity & Emergency Planning	Final Report	100%	Comprehensive
Cashiering (Agile Audit)	Final Report	100%	Reasonable
Dry Waste Recycling Contract	Final Report	100%	Reasonable
Officers Expenses & Allowances	Final Report	100%	Reasonable
Backup Server Healthcheck	Final Report	100%	Limited
Waste Less, Save More	Final Report	100%	Comprehensive
People Management	Final Report	100%	Reasonable
Backup Policy	Final Report	100%	Reasonable
Sharpes Pottery	In Progress	75%	
Express Electoral System Security Assessment	Draft Report	95%	
Organisational Culture & Ethics	Fieldwork Complete	90%	
Rent Accounting	Final Report	100%	Reasonable
Tenants Arrears	Final Report	100%	Reasonable
New Build / Affordable Housing	Allocated	5%	
Licensing	Fieldwork Complete	80%	
Health & Safety	In Progress	15%	
Follow-up of Whistleblowing Recommendations	Allocated	10%	
Main Accounting System 2017-18	Final Report	100%	Comprehensive
Risk Management	In Progress	10%	
Council Tax 2017-18	Allocated	0%	
NDR 2017-18	In Progress	65%	
Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support 2017-18	In Progress	10%	
Payroll 2017-8	In Progress	65%	
Capital Programme	Covered Elsewhere		
Procurement (Contracts Register)	Covered Elsewhere		
Data Protection & Freedom of Information	Deferred		
Records Management	Deferred		
PCI Compliance	Deferred		
Grant Certification	No Longer Needed		

2016-17 Jobs	Status	% Complete	Assurance Rating	
Taxation	Final Report	100%	Comprehensive	
Banking Services	Final Report	100%	Reasonable	
Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support 2016-17	Final Report	100%	Reasonable	
Creditors 2016-17	Final Report	100%	Reasonable	
Data Quality & Performance Management	Final Report	100%	Reasonable	
Fixed Assets 2015-17	Final Report	100%	Reasonable	

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Leisure Centres	Final Report 100%		Reasonable	
Parks & Open Spaces	Final Report	100%	Reasonable	
Change & Configuration Management	Final Report	100%	Reasonable	
Client Monitoring - Corporate Services Contract	Final Report	100%	Reasonable	
Whistleblowing Investigation 2	Final Report	Final Report 100%		
Housing Contracts Review	Final Report	100%	Limited	
Main Accounting System 2016-17	Final Report	100%	Comprehensive	
Debtors 2016-17	Final Report	100%	Comprehensive	
Payroll 2016-17	Draft Report	95%		
Safeguarding	Draft Report	95%		

### **Audit Plan Changes**

None since last Sub-Committee.

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### **AUDIT COVERAGE**

### Completed Audit Assignments

Between 1st December 2017 and 6th March 2018, the following audit assignments have been finalised since the last Progress Report was presented to this Sub-Committee.

Audit Assignments Completed in Period	Assurance Rating	Recommendations Made				% Recs
		Critical Risk	Significant Risk	Moderate Risk	Low Risk	Closed
People Management	Reasonable	0	0	3	3	17%
Main Accounting System 2016-17	Comprehensive	0	0	0	4	100%
Rent Accounting 2017-18	Reasonable	0	0	1	3	25%
Debtors 2016-17	Comprehensive	0	0	0	0	n/a
Main Accounting System (Reconciliations)	Comprehensive	0	0	0	1	100%
Backup Policy	Reasonable	0	0	3	6	22%
Tenants Arrears	Reasonable	0	0	2	4	17%

The following paragraphs summarise the internal audit work completed in the period.

#### People Management

#### Overall Assurance Rating: Reasonable

This audit focused on the overall management of people management policies by the Organisational Development Department. It compared actual practice against the policies in place for Equality and Diversity, Disciplinary and Harassment and Bullying.

From the 30 key controls evaluated in this audit review, 24 were considered to provide adequate control and 6 contained weaknesses. This report contained 6 recommendations, 3 of which were considered to present a low risk and 3 presenting a moderate risk. The following issues were considered to be the key control weaknesses:

- 1. In 40% of the policies sampled there were no version controls included in the document. In 50% of those policies sampled that did have a version control, the dates in the version control did not match the date appended to the footer of the actual document. (Low Risk)
- 2. There was no evidence that the Equalities Policy Statement had been reviewed since March 2012 and it was not clear if it was up-to-date. (Moderate Risk)
- 3. The Council did not have a formal process in place to ensure that written warnings were removed from personal files when they had lapsed. (Moderate Risk)
- 4. The process to follow in order to make a confidential complaint was not clear in the Harassment Policy and Procedure. (Moderate Risk)
- 5. The Council was not collecting information regarding allegations of harassment and bullying (formal and informal). (Low Risk **Risk Accepted**)
- 6. Harassment and Bullying cases were managed by the Organisational Development Team and no details were reported to Members or Senior Management. (Low Risk)



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All 6 of the issues raised within this report were accepted and action is planned in 2018 to address 5 of the weaknesses by the end of September 2018. Management has chosen to accept the risk associated with one low risk issue.

#### Main Accounting System 2016-17

#### **Overall Assurance Rating: Comprehensive**

This audit focused on ensuring that adequate controls were in place regarding key control reconciliations, that systems were in place which allowed robust revenue and capital budget monitoring and that appropriate controls were in place with regard to the processing of journals and virements.

From the 34 key controls evaluated in this audit review, 30 were considered to provide adequate control and 4 contained weaknesses. This report contained 4 recommendations, all of which were considered to present a low risk. The following issues were considered to be the key control weaknesses:

- 1. The completion summary within the reconciliation control log, for recording whether reconciliations had been completed and reviewed, was not being kept up-to-date. (Low Risk)
- 2. Four out of the 14 reconciliations we reviewed had not been signed by the reviewing officer, to authorise the reconciliation calculation. (Low Risk)
- 3. Written procedures in respect of reconciling key control accounts had been established, but these were brief and did not cover all aspects of the reconciliation process. (Low Risk)
- 4. Checks on journals in excess of £50k were not being evidenced. (Low Risk)

All 4 issues raised within this report were accepted and action had already been taken to address 2 of the issues raised by the end of the audit. The remaining two issues were agreed to be addressed by 31st January 2018.

#### Rent Accounting

#### Overall Assurance Rating: Reasonable

This audit focused on the Council's rent accounting systems, concerning the administration and collection of rental income, to ensure rental controls were operating as expected.

From the 14 key controls evaluated in this audit review, 6 were considered to provide adequate control and 8 contained weaknesses. This report contained 4 recommendations, 3 of which were considered to present a low risk and 1 was a moderate risk. Another 2 minor risk issues were highlighted for management's consideration. The following issues were considered to be the key control weaknesses:

- 1. Historical suspense account postings had not been resolved. There were a total of 454 postings to the value of -£18,916.62, dating back as far as 2004. (Low Risk)
- 2. Reports evidencing actions taken to clear Suspense account postings, housing benefits reconciliations and records supporting the Housing Register, were not being signed and dated by the processing officers or by the Senior Officer upon authorisation. (Low Risk)
- 3. Control totals from housing benefit files, imported into the Orchard Housing system on a weekly basis, were not being matched to those from the system, following import. (Low Risk)
- 4. The annual rent adjustments for 2017-18 were processed prior to receiving notification from Housing Management that formal approval had been obtained from Committee. (Moderate Risk)

All 4 of the control issues raised within this report were accepted and positive action was agreed to be taken to address all issues. Positive action in respect to the moderate risk issue was due to be taken by 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018, 1 recommendation was due to be addressed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, another issue was due to be addressed by the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018 and the remaining recommendation was due to be addressed by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018.



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#### **Debtors**

#### **Overall Assurance Rating: Comprehensive**

This audit focused on the controls in operation over the debtors function of the Council, covering customers' accounts and adjustments to them, recovery and reconciliation processes.

From the 13 key controls evaluated in this audit review, all 13 were considered to provide adequate control and none contained weaknesses. This report did not contain any recommendations.

We were able to offer comprehensive assurance as the areas reviewed were found to be adequately controlled. Internal controls were in place and operating effectively and risks against the achievement of objectives were well managed.

#### Main Accounting System 2017-18

#### **Overall Assurance Rating: Comprehensive**

This audit focused on the reconciliation process of the Council's bank accounts and key control account reconciliations..

From the 2 key controls evaluated in this audit review, 23 were considered to provide adequate control and 1 contained a weakness. This report contained 1 recommendation, which was considered to present a low risk. The following issue was considered to be the key control weakness:

1. Some reconciliations had not being completed in accordance with the predetermined frequency and within the stipulated deadline. (Low Risk)

he issue raised in this report was accepted and action had already been taken to address the issue raised by the end of the audit.

#### **Back-up Policy**

#### Overall Assurance Rating: Reasonable

This audit focused on the Council's backup policies and procedures, including a review of the physical security of the disaster recovery equipment and offsite backups located at Oakland's Village.

We were unable to provide assurances on a number of areas in the original audit scope, as evidence requested in the following areas was not provided to the auditor in an acceptable timeframe:

- Evidence that hardware maintenance agreements were in place for all equipment involved in the current backup operations (e.g. storage infrastructure and tape devices).
- Evidence that backup documentation exists, was accessible, and was maintained to reduce the impact on backup and restore operations when senior engineers were unavailable.
- Evidence that service level agreements existed, and performance monitoring was in operation for the 3rd parties responsibilities for offsite collection, transfer, storage and return of tape based backups.
- Evidence that risk assessments had been performed and documented on the ISP's (Internet service provider) redundancy in their backbone to minimise risks of construction work or natural disasters affecting the link between the Civic Offices and Oakland's' DR site, and therefore the offsite storage of backup files.

From the 24 key controls evaluated in this audit review, 11 were considered to provide adequate control and 13 contained weaknesses. This report contained 9 recommendations, 6 of which were considered to present a low risk and 3 was a moderate risk. Another minor risk issue was highlighted for management's consideration. The following issues were considered to be the key control weaknesses:

1. The Council had not documented a policy specific to backup and restore. We also found that the IT team had not been provided with recovery point and time objectives on which to design an appropriate backup strategy. (Low Risk)

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- 2. There was no daily checklist in operation to evidence that the relevant officers had successfully performed maintenance in relation to the tape backup process, meaning oversights may go undetected by management. (Low Risk)
- 3. There were not 3 recovery sources for backups of critical systems. Only hardware level replication between the primary and DR storage area networks (SAN) maintained copies of backup files for all virtual servers, leaving the Council vulnerable to a complete loss of recovery sources if there was major corruption issues replicated at the storage level between both storage area networks. (Moderate Risk)
- 4. A small number of servers in the network were not included in backup jobs. We also found that 3rd parties would need to be contacted to determine if this was an oversight, raising concerns around the documentation of backup requirements for all server assets. (Low Risk)
- 5. The Council was not periodically testing restores of backups for critical information systems and servers in line with a formal schedule. (Moderate Risk)
- 6. Default passwords were in operation on both the primary and DR storage area networks (SAN), making both devices highly vulnerable to unauthorised access with administrator level permissions. (Moderate Risk)
- 7. Management were not signing off backup selection lists as part of a scoping document, or as part of 'defining the business requirements' of the service which was resident on each of the Council's servers. (Low Risk)
- 8. A concerning number of failed backup jobs were reported in the backup servers audit logs. Discussions with the IT technical team found that software was somewhat unreliable and prone to regular failures leading to incomplete jobs or failed backup jobs. (Low Risk)
- 9. The existing backup software did not provide disaster recovery (replication) functionality. (Low Risk)

All 9 of the issues raised were accepted and positive actions had been taken to address one of the issues by the end of the audit. Another 2 of the issues were agreed to be addressed by the end of March 2018, 2 more by the end of April 2018, and the remaining 4 issues by the end of August 2018.

#### **Tenants Arrears**

#### Overall Assurance Rating: Reasonable

This audit focused on the rent recovery activities undertaken by the Council to ensure that outstanding income was being actively chased and that escalation activities were being appropriately taken.

From the 19 key controls evaluated in this audit review, 8 were considered to provide adequate control and 11 contained weaknesses. This report contained 6 recommendations, 4 of which were considered to present a low risk and 2 presenting a moderate risk. The following issues were considered to be the key control weaknesses:

- 1. The Income Management Policy had not been reviewed in line with criteria laid down in the policy itself. (Low Risk)
- 2. A number of procedure manuals were identified and there was confusion as to which procedures were current for the service. (Low Risk)
- 3. Fortnightly Case Reviews, which were in place under the Interim Housing Services Team Leader, had yet to recommence under the permanent Housing Services Team Leader. This was also the case for the displaying of rent arrears performance information in the Housing Office. (Moderate Risk)
- 4. Levels of indebtedness for tenants' arrears and information concerning recovery activities were not being reported to senior management and Members. (Moderate Risk)

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- 5. The six monthly procedure for reviewing and writing-off former tenants' arrears, where debts had proved to be irrecoverable, had not been undertaken since September 2016. (Low Risk)
- 6. There were a number of unnecessary codes in the Orchard Housing System for either the same or similar actions and some codes were not linked into the automated workflow processes. (Low Risk)

All 6 of the control issues raised within this report were accepted and positive action in respect to 1 moderate risk issue had already been taken. The other moderate risk issue was due to be addressed by 1st July 2018. For the 4 remaining low risk issues they were agreed to be addressed by 1st April 2018, 1st June 2018, 30th September 2018 and 31st December 2018 respectively.

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### RECOMMENDATION TRACKING

### Highlighted Recommendations

The following outstanding recommendations are detailed for Committee's scrutiny.

### Corporate Resources

#### Risk Management

Control Issue 4 – Although the FIU Annual Report acted as a Fraud Plan and an Internal Audit Plan was developed on an annual basis, there was not a clear link between the two, and officers working in the Fraud Investigation Unit indicated that there was opportunity for closer working with Internal Audit.

Risk Rating – Low Risk

Status Update – The DCC Fraud Service is in place but have yet to develop formal plans. Agreement between SDDC and Internal Audit that this will be picked up for the 2018-19 planning cycle to allow the Fraud Service an opportunity to develop a longer term plan and then align this with the work of Internal Audit. Fraud work stream within CMAP will also provide a closer link between Internal Audit and Counter Fraud team. The partnership is drawing up a fraud plan but it needs to dovetail with the IA plan.

Original Action Date 31 Dec 15 Revised Action Date 27 Apr 18

#### Information@Work

Control Issue 8 – The page verification on a number of databases, including the live Images database, was TORN\_PAGE\_VERIFACATION. To effectively identify and deal with database corruption before the Council faces potential data loss situations, it is recommended that this configuration is set to CHECKSUM.

Risk Rating - Low Risk

Status Update – The 3rd party DBA support have been contacted for advice on how to apply.

Original Action Date 31 Oct 16 Revised Action Date 30 Mar 18

#### NDR 2016-17

Control Issue 1 – NDR procedures were aged and mixed with Council Tax documents.

Risk Rating - Low Risk

Status Update Started to review the procedures, but task is not completed yet: annual billing and other projects are priority at the moment, so will not be done before end of the financial year.

Original Action Date 3! Dec 17 Revised Action Date 30 Apr 18

Control Issue 4 – Accounts put on hold were not being regularly reviewed and holds were not being removed where no longer required.

Risk Rating - Low Risk

Status Update High value accounts on hold have been reviewed, and appropriate action taken. However, a formal process for undertaking the review on a regular basis has not been introduced: this is due to a delay in restructuring within the team and an intention to split liability order and post liability order work.

Original Action Date 30 Sep 17 Revised Action Date 30 Apr 18

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### Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support 2016-17

Control Issue 1 – The Council was not using all available exception reports in the Academy system to highlight potential areas of error and fraud.

Risk Rating - Low Risk

Status Update Implementation was subject to a Team restructuring that has been delayed (JEQs and grades only agreed in Nov 17).

Original Action Date 30 Nov 17 Revised Action Date 30 Mar 18

Control Issue 2 – Recovery rates quoted in the Housing and Council Tax Benefits Overpayments leaflet were out-of-date.

Risk Rating - Low Risk

Status Update Implementation was subject to a Team restructuring that has been delayed (JEQs and grades only agreed in Nov 17).

Original Action Date 30 Nov 17 Revised Action Date 30 Mar 18

Control Issue 3 – The Council was failing to pursue Housing Benefit overpayments in an efficient and timely manner which could contribute to the failure to recover money that it was owed.

Risk Rating – Moderate Risk

Status Update Implementation was subject to a Team restructuring that has been delayed (JEQs and grades only agreed in Nov 17).

Original Action Date 30 Nov 17 Revised Action Date 30 Mar 18

#### Council Tax 2016-17

Control Issue 2 – Older postings to the suspense accounts were not being resolved resulting in inaccurate data being held in the system.

Risk Rating - Low Risk

Status Update Date extended to the end of the year - majority are miscoded DWP payments so need to wait until year-end to resolve which are still due and which are not.

Original Action Date 30 Sep 17 Revised Action Date 31 Mar 18

Control Issue 3 – Supervisory checks on transactions which moved monies out of the suspense account were not being carried out on a regular basis.

Risk Rating - Low Risk

Status Update Checks undertaken to show balances still remaining in suspense account and showing year by year breakdown for clarification, removing the transactions which are remaining. However these are still to be balanced by my team member, with the amounts showing in the suspense account and also cross referenced with the 'suspense action transactional record' spreadsheet.

Original Action Date 31 Dec 17 Revised Action Date 31 May 18

#### Client Monitoring – Information Governance

Control Issue 2 - The Information Governance function was still being determined within the Council.

Risk Rating - Moderate Risk

Status Update – Substantial progress has been made with Derby (acting as support service to the Council) having undertaken a detailed assessment ahead of the new Data Protection Regulations in May 2018. Consequently, an action plan is currently being worked through to prepare the Council with a draft agreement being considered for a shared service arrangement.

Original Action Date 30 Nov 17 Revised Action Date 25 May 18



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#### **Economic & Central Services**

#### **Land Charges**

Control Issue 2 – Completed applications for Land Charges searches were not stored in a secure filing environment, but in a storeroom with free access to officers from other departments and in the Land Charges office which was not locked when not in use.

Risk Rating – Low Risk

Status Update – Current Searches - There is a lockable store cupboard within LLC office for securely storing live searches overnight. Completed Searches - We are in the process of moving all archived searches into a secure store room. This is an on-going process due to the amount of files and limited staff resource for this somewhat dirty and weighty task. We aim to have moved all the files within the next three months

Original Action Date 24 Dec 17 Revised Action Date 30 Apr 18

#### Service Delivery

#### Leisure Centres

Control Issue 1 – The Contractor had not included all the areas which it was responsible for maintaining within the planned preventative maintenance schedule and this had not been highlighted by the Council.

Risk Rating - Moderate Risk

Status Update – Discussed at contract meeting. Transition to WAM system more labour intensive than originally envisaged. Now expecting completion in April.

Original Action Date 1 Oct 17 Revised Action Date 30 Apr 18

Control Issue 2 – The Council had not undertaken inspections on the exterior fabric of the building as per the contract summary of maintenance responsibilities.

Risk Rating - Moderate Risk

Status Update – The long term future of the Public Building Officer post has still not been settled and an interim arrangement with a housing office picking up related duties put in place. This officer has been contacted with a view to them undertaking the inspections pending settlement of the longer term arrangements with this post.

Original Action Date 1 Oct 17 Revised Action Date 1 Apr 18

Control Issue 4 – Repairs and maintenance issues were being recorded in different places with no central register bringing all the issues together.

Risk Rating - Low Risk

Status Update – Active Nation are still working on transition to WAM, large amount of data to enter. Matter discussed at contract meetings. Suggest revised date of end of Mar 2018.

Original Action Date 1 Oct 17 Revised Action Date 31 Mar 18

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#### Parks & Open Spaces

Control Issue 1 – Comprehensive risk assessments of play equipment were not available for inspection. A limited number of non-descript risk assessments were located with play equipment listed as a hazard, suggesting that risk assessments had not been completed for all playgrounds and equipment across the district.

Risk Rating - Moderate Risk

Status Update – Due to officer departure from the Council, we don't believe any action has been taken to date so deadline will need moving back probably to end March for now. We now have an interim 3 day replacement and will be convening to discuss how we take the audit recommendations forward.

Original Action Date 31 Dec 17 Revised Action Date 31 Mar 18

#### Whistleblowing Investigation 2

Control Issue 2 – A formal process was not being followed for extending Housing Contracts.

Risk Rating – Low Risk

Status Update - Anything that Housing had in place has now effectively been superseded. There is a now a corporate process in place with the new Procurement Service. However, since the Audit, there hasn't, until now, been a requirement to review a contract with a view to it being extended. However, at the moment, a review into extending the General Maintenance Contract is being undertaken and Procurement has been asked that they share the process when this exercise has been completed as practical evidence to show how it works and how it is all documented.

Original Action Date 1 Sep 17 Revised Action Date 30 Apr 18

#### Housing Contracts Review

Control Issue 7 – Procurement Checklists were not being completed to ensure that the required procurement processes were being undertaken.

Risk Rating - Low Risk

Status Update – A Procurement Checklist has been trialled by the new Procurement Service, but it is far too onerous for the Council's needs as it includes detail which is not thought to be relevant for the Council's purposes at this stage. It may only be necessary for works above £10k but below £25k. Procurement has been asked to streamline it and provide what would be a bespoke document for South Derbyshire. This will be trialled before approving.

Original Action Date 26 Jan 18 Revised Action Date 30 Mar 18