

Appendix 2b: Audits Revisited

Purpose of these audits

To assess whether the actions agreed in the original audit report have been implemented and are now effectively embedded into the day-to-day operation of the service.

Report Revisited SEAT Governance Arrangements 19-08 (2019-20)

Original Objective

To assess whether there are robust accounting, monitoring and transparency arrangements in place to ensure the outcomes set out in the original bid are met

Summary / Audit Committee Summary

Reporting to Project, Programme and Sponsorship Boards

The above board meetings have taken place regularly at frequencies of monthly for the Project Board and quarterly for the Programme and Sponsorship Boards.

The Dashboard Report acts as an agenda and highlight report, providing an overview of the programmes progress, budget and spend, and risks of current concern. Extending the report to include compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant will provide board members an opportunity to seek further assurance as they feel necessary. A KPI spreadsheet provides simple to understand updates on progress against all KPI's. Both are sent to the boards ahead of each meeting.

There is a Risk Register in place that captures the description and impact of the risks, along with any mitigating actions being taken. There is also a Team Plan showing the ownership for each action but not the timeframes for their completion, which may mean that actions drift or become outstanding.

Providing copies of the Risk Register and Team Plan ahead of the meetings, as with the Dashboard Report and KPI's, will ensure the board are aware of and able to seek assurance on all:

- actions within the Team Plan and the progress of delivery
- risks in the Risk Register and how they are being managed.

Compliance with Procurement and State Aid

An annual plan to identify potential procurement activity in 2019/20 was completed and support and advice was obtained from the Corporate Procurement Team on two occasions, which helped to make sure that the action being taken was compliant with Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs). Advice should now be sought from the team to ensure any CPR considerations relating to the grant extension can be appropriately addressed.

To assist with adhering to various requirements, additional training would help staff understand their importance and assist compliance going forward for:

- Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Southend on Sea Borough Council's (the Council) adoption of this through the CPRs
- State Aid Regulations.

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Third Party Compliance and Contributions

To ensure third parties made the required contribution to the programme as set out in the original grant bid, they were asked to provide a statement of contributions. Three parties were unable to identify or evidence this adequately. As this was a requirement of the grant, it is unclear what the impact of this may be. Now that the extension for funding has been agreed, this should be addressed going forward.

Expenses

Essex County Council (ECC) and Thurrock Council (TC), partners on the South Essex Active Travel (SEAT) project, had not been providing suitable information when claiming back expenses from Southend Borough Council (SBC), who are the lead authority. This was because the expectations of SBC had not been communicated to them clearly, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was not updated and not all of the requirement details had been sent to ECC and TC.

As the extension for funding has been granted, the new Memorandum of Understanding needs to be extended to include the requirement for expense claims to be made in line with the Council's expense policy.

Results

Fully implemented	Substantially implemented	Partially implemented	Not implemented	Closed
1	7	4	1	