

Appendix 2c: Other Audits and Grant Claims

Disabled Facilities Grant (2023/24)

Objective

To support those in non-council properties with required adaptations to their homes based on their assessed needs. Types of works undertaken include installations of:

- level access showers
- ramped access to properties
- stair lifts.

Themes

Work undertaken confirmed that grant spend complied with the terms and conditions of the grant.

Opinion: Unqualified

Fleet Management

Objective

To assess the current control framework for management of the internal vehicle fleet, before identifying and advising on the required steps to bring policies, procedures and controls into line with best practice and statutory requirements, so that the vehicle fleet meets service need and is appropriately maintained.

Themes

The Integrated Transport and Fleet Solutions (IT&FS) team is responsible for providing advice, guidance, and coordination for the Southend-on-Sea City Council (SCC) Fleet. This should include, but is not limited to, vehicle procurement, safety and compliance inspections, driving licence checks, and maintaining the Council's Operating Licence, which is a legal requirement.

The IT&FS team (headed by the Service Manager of Integrated Transport and Fleet Solutions, who reports to the Head of Highways and Coastal Services) informed us that the fleet management function has been transferred between several teams and is currently undergoing corporate restructuring under the Highways and Coastal Services directorate. As there is not a comprehensive suite of controls in place at the time of the audit, the Head of Internal Audit agreed for this review and accompanying report take the form of an advisory review, rather than seeking assurance over the current systems.

Appendix 2c: Other Audits and Grant Claims

We were provided with a legacy document, the Transport Policy, which was last updated in July 2015. The IT&FS team advised that this document is currently used by the Council's Service Areas for guidance on fleet management but is significantly out of date. Additionally, the IT&FS team provided the Driving At Work Policy, which is in a trial and pilot phase during the audit period (August 2024). Many aspects are still being determined, and this advisory report aims to provide insights on how the current fleet management can be improved based on sector best practices. The Service Manager of the IT&FS team advised that the Driving At Work Policy is being rolled out, with the aim of establishing a new framework for centralised fleet management. Though titled "Driving at Work", the document is intended to encompass aspects of broader fleet management within the Council. In its current iteration, fleet management is largely devolved to the management of individual departments, depending on their specific requirements, with limited oversight from the IT&FS team.

The IT&FS team is also installing and implementing telematics in all Council vehicles to ensure better tracking of their fleet operation and allow more nuanced data to be captured to maximise productive fleet usage. The team will utilise telematics to support better decision-making and strategic planning, ensuring the fleet operates efficiently and sustainably.

Number of actions agreed: 13