

AUDIT REPORT 20'024

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – ACCESS CONTROLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The annual audit plan for 2019/20 provided for a review to be undertaken of access controls to the Council's Financial Management System. The audit reviewed the controls governing user access rights and the procedures for administration and monitoring of user activity. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Information Technology Control Matrices and the International Standards Organisation (ISO) Information Security Standards were used in the development of an audit programme for this review.

The Council's Financial Management System (FMS) is supplied by a company called Advanced. The system went live in 1994 and provides software applications for General Ledger, Accounts Payable etc. Users are allocated to a specific user group with the level of access determined by the duties of the post. The Payments Manager has overall management responsibility for FMS. However, a Finance Development Working Group, including the Chief Financial Officer, Payments Manager and other officers from Payments, Accountancy and ICT meet once a month to discuss any issues or future development requirements.

The audit found that officers within the Payments Section had a clear understanding of the systems architecture. Documented procedural guidance was available for officers covering a range of service requirements. This provides a point of reference for officers and promotes greater consistency in operating practices. FMS is hosted on a Council server supported by the Council's ICT Service. Enquiries noted that the system is regularly updated and established back up arrangements exist in the event of any data loss incident. The following areas were identified where further development of controls and governance arrangements should be considered:-

- System Administration or Super User access level allows a user to process all actions within FMS. It is therefore difficult to enforce segregation of duties control for a user with this level of access. Enquiries noted that 25 users within FMS have system administration level access. CIPFA recommends that system administration access should be restricted to the least number of users as possible.
- An authorised new user Request/ Application Form is required before an officer can access FMS. The audit checked a random sample of users to ensure that an authorised form had been received prior to allowing access to FMS. Examples were found where Application Forms could not be found or been authorised. All new users must submit an authorised new user Application Form before access to FMS is allowed.
- A check was made to compare users recorded within FMS as still requiring access, to their current employment position within the Payroll System. Examples were noted where officers no longer employed by the Council but still had recorded access entitlement to FMS.