

Audit Committee – 28th October 2010

5. Update on Homelessness Service Action Plan

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to provide members with an update on the Homelessness Service Audit Action Plan (see appendix A).

Recommendation

To note the progress made, and agree that action point 8.1 is now complete.

Background

During the final quarter of 2008/9, South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) reviewed the homeless service and the overall outcome of the audit was that reasonable assurances could be given as most of the areas reviewed were found to be adequately controlled, and generally risks were well managed. From the audit an action plan was produced (see appendix A). Over the last couple of years significant progress has been made on the action plan and one area had remained outstanding.

During 2010 SWAP has recently completed an audit of the Homeless service. The draft report states “generally risks are well managed”. Of the risks identified none were considered to be high. The audit report stated there was reasonable assurance as most of the areas reviewed were found to be adequately controlled.

Progress Made on the Action Plan

Since the last audit report significant progress has been made. The Cedar system is now able to produce more informative aged debt reports to enable the housing team to monitor debts by client, and produce automated statements for clients as required.

The reports will be fully available from the beginning of December 2010.

The rent deposit spreadsheets have been bought up-to-date and invoices sent out to landlords/clients with outstanding deposit debts. The work carried out in this area is reflected in the increased collection rates (see appendix B).

We have also introduced a summary sheet for deposits giving us better financial information in relation to landlords. We are able to see if we have more than one deposit outstanding per property and where we have to chase the landlord for SSDC's money.

We are now in the position to recruit a permanent Senior Finance Officer, which will bring stability to the team and ensure the service continues to make improvements to debt management and financial controls.

Summary

Good progress has been made on the financial reports available from Cedar, and from the excel spreadsheets maintained by Housing, enabling Managers to have a clear approach to tackling debts and maximising recovery.

Financial Implications

None.

Background Papers: *Audit Committee Agenda and Minutes July 2010.*
Audit Committee Agenda and Minutes October 2009.
District Executive Homeless Prevention Fund Review and Demonstration of Value for Money October 2009.
Internal Audit Report of Homelessness Service June 2009.
Audit Committee Agenda and Minutes December 2007.
Internal Audit Report of Homelessness Service March 2007.
