



Date: Thursday, 28 June 2018

Time: 1.30 pm

Venue: Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire,
SY2 6ND

Contact: Michelle Dulson, Committee Officer
Tel: 01743 257719
Email: michelle.dulson@shropshire.gov.uk

AUDIT COMMITTEE

TO FOLLOW REPORT (S)

6 First line assurance: Estates Update (Pages 1 - 18)

The report of the Head of Business Enterprise and Commercial Services is to follow.

Contact: Tim Smith (01743 258676).

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<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Audit Committee 28 th June 2018	

MANAGEMENT REPORT – ESTATES UPDATE

Responsible Officer Tim Smith, Head of Business Enterprise and Commercial Services

e-mail: tim.smith@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: (01743) 258676

1. Summary

- 1.1. This is an interim update following the report provided in November 2017 for Committee members which sets out the management action undertaken to address the recommendations set out in the internal audit report dated 21st April 2017.
- 1.2. There were 19 recommendations set out in the internal audit report of which 1 was fundamental, 8 were significant and 10 required attention. The managers of the estates team have been addressing the recommendations that they are responsible for and continue to report progress of implemented audit recommendations on a quarterly basis ensuring that the recommendations deemed to have most significance are prioritised.
- 1.3. The additional staffing resources that have been secured in respect of a Finance Support Officer, Finance Assistant and Property ICT officer have now been in post since January 2018 and have been effective to support the improvements required on Technology Forge system and to increase the financial resilience in managing the estate.
- 1.4. Thirteen of the nineteen improvements have now been implemented with an internal audit endorsed programme (attached at Appendix 3) in place to ensure the remaining recommendations are addressed.
- 1.5. A pilot exercise to migrate property data into TF Cloud has been undertaken on one of the Council's larger multi tenanted assets. This was completed successfully demonstrating compliance with the significant and fundamental recommendations on a test bed basis. This is now being rolled out across the corporate landlord estate.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Committee members note the progress that has been made to address the recommendations in the 21st April 2017 Audit Report to

ensure that all improvements are effectively implemented and monitored via the action plan for estate management.

- 2.2 That Committee members note the desktop review undertaken by internal audit in March, which acknowledged the comprehensive interim response and Project Plan and the extension of the implementation date to the end of September 2018, due to the size and complexity of the project.
- 2.3 That Committee members note that the improvements and implementation of the action plan associated with the audit are being progressed in line with continued implementation of the corporate landlord model and the changes required to reflect the overall change in direction of the Council in respect of its planned future new asset management strategy.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 1.1. System control weaknesses identified in the audit report are being addressed with quarterly updates being reported to senior managers and internal audit.
- 1.2. Additional staff resources have been appointed in key areas to deal with the improvements required. More effective controls and processes that have been implemented with the opportunity to make these even more efficient and effective by ensuring the data is accurate and robust for future migration to the ERP system
- 1.3. A wholesale review of the assets and estates function is being undertaken along with a whole systems review of how the Council can improve the economic growth eco system.

2. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The improvements outlined above and the management action that has taken place to date will ensure that rent associated with leased out property is identified, invoiced and collected in a timely manner. The ability to do this via one system rather than using two independent systems being SAMIS and Technology Forge will have significant benefits for the Council.

- 4.2 Three new posts have been appointed for two years costing £160,000 to address the areas of significant weakness identified in financial and IT processes and procedures.
- 4.3 The consultant review of assets and estates has been concluded and has identified the need for additional resource, resilience and expertise in certain areas of the service. The review also recognised the need to restructure the service to reflect the significant ambition and change of direction of the authority reflecting the strong emphasis on economic development, commercial improvements and income generation.

5 Background

- 5.1 Shropshire Council's Cabinet made a decision to implement a Corporate Landlord model in 2015, with financial approval having been given at Full Council.
- 5.2 The process of implementation took place in financial year 2015/16 whereby budgets totalling £12,528,080 were reallocated from directorate service areas to the Corporate Landlord. The full implementation of the model was envisaged to take between three and five years and the responsibility for budget management of income and expenditure moved across to the Assets and Estates team.
- 5.3 Among the key reasons for the implementation was consolidation and better management of estates related budgets. It was recognised that property related income was not being managed effectively in the service areas due to frailties and deficiencies existing prior to the implementation of the corporate landlord model.
- 5.4 The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support and the Director of Place & Enterprise undertook the following actions:
 - a) Instructed the Head of Business Enterprise and Commercial Services to take the necessary action to address all recommendations set out in the internal audit report.
 - b) Directed the Head of Business Enterprise and Commercial Services to secure additional staffing resources for a fixed period of time to address the key areas of weakness in property and financial management including a thorough review of data held in the Technology Forge system relating to leased out property.
 - c) Commissioned an independent review of the assets and estates function to identify where and how improvements can be made to assets and estate management.
 - d) Commissioned an independent review of all systems and processes that are undertaken within the Council to support new and expanding

businesses and sectors in accordance with the economic growth and commercial strategies.

- 5.5 In accordance with the key actions set out in 5.4, Committee members can be reassured that management action is being taken and reviewed on a quarterly basis to address all audit recommendations. Appendix 2 sets out the latest position in terms of implemented audit actions dated March 2018.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Councillor Steve Charmley - Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

Local Member

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Internal audit report: Estate management 2016/17

Appendix 2 – Review of implemented audit actions March 2018

Appendix 3 – TF Cloud Project Plan

REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTED AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS – JUNE 2018

Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating		Management Response	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned	Action
2.1	1	<p>The filing system in respect of leases information and correspondence should be reviewed to enable documentation and correspondence to be retrieved on a timely basis on request.</p> <p>It should be ensured that the correspondence filed on Officer's Microsoft Outlook archives is saved to the shared network drive on a timely basis to ensure that it is readily retrievable.</p> <p>The filing of correspondence and documentation on the</p>	Significant	Yes	<p>The current filing arrangement is not a functioning document management system and its inadequacies are acknowledged. We will therefore be seeking guidance on the implementation of a fully functioning system as part of the IT & Digital Transformation Programme.</p> <p>In the meantime, a Key Documents file/folder is to be set up on the current filing system and TF containing the CV report, CV memo, copy of legal document, Finance Credit Check Request Form & periodic income request form A file note system will also be implemented to provide a summary of actions taken.</p>	<p>Steve Law</p> <p>Mark Salt</p>	<p>Sept 18</p> <p>July 17</p>	<p>The local filing system has been reviewed and improvements made. As part of the IT Digital Transformation Programme we will be adopting Sharepoint as the Council's preferred document management system.</p> <p>Implemented May 17</p>

Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating		Management Response	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned	Action
		'Technology Forge' system should be progressed as is practical.			Officers will be reminded to save emails and other correspondence/documents to the filing system. Please note that TF is not a document management system and routine correspondence will not be filed on it, however, it will contain key documents.			
2.2	2	It should be ensured that a finance or credit check is carried out and evidence is retained of the check on all prospective tenants before a lease is agreed. A formal process should be introduced in respect of the checks carried out by the Debt Recovery Team which should include a report containing an analysis of the information in the credit report and a recommendation to the Corporate Landlord Team.	Requires Attention	Partially	A finance credit check is carried out by the Debt Recovery Team for all industrial unit lettings and a report is produced containing a summary of their findings. A copy of this report is saved on the filing system but it is accepted that this isn't always easy to find and it will be stored in the key documents folder in future. Credit checks on other lettings are usually carried out by the letting agent. Where this is done copies of credit checks will be obtained and filed in the filing system.	Mark Salt/Paul Hesp	July 2017	Implemented July 2017
2.3	3	Consideration should be given to establishing a checklist or task schedule to	Requires Attention	Yes	The Debt Recovery Team use a company called Creditsafe to undertake commercial credit	Mark Salt/Paul Hesp	August 2017	Implemented July17

Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating		Management Response	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned	Action
		ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on prospective tenants to assess their credit status. It is anticipated that the checks would at least include obtaining credit rating reports, details of business rates arrears, business plans, references from previous landlords etc.			checks. In consultation with the Debt Recovery Team consideration will be given to the implementation of a formal credit check proforma			
2.4	4	The format of the 'CV3 INC' forms should be reviewed and consideration should be given to a process where there is only one version of the form. Where a section is not applicable on the form in respect of a particular lease this should be indicated by the Officer completing the form. Although it is not strictly a requirement consideration should be given to allowing spaces on the form to permit authorisation by the Surveyor and the Estates Team Leader together with	Requires Attention	Partially	Consideration has been given to producing one version of the form but two forms do work from an operational perspective in differentiating between those properties which fall under the Corporate Landlord remit and those properties which are not managed by the Corporate Landlord Team. I confirm the existing forms have been amended to make provision for an authorising signature by the Surveyor, the Estates Team Leader and the Strategic Asset Manager	Mark Salt	Implemented	Implemented April 17

Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating		Management Response	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned	Action
		the Strategic Asset Manager.						
2.5	5	The 'Sales Ledger Periodic / Contract Income Invoice Request Form' which is provided to the Debt Recovery Team to instruct them to raise invoices to a tenant should be updated to ensure that the Debt Recovery Team are clearly informed of the deposit payable, if the deposit has already been received, who has collected the deposit and where it has been posted in the General Ledger if applicable.	Requires Attention	Yes	Officers will review the process to see why it is not working as agreed. In the meantime the Income Request Form has been updated to show who has collected the deposit and where it has been posted to in the General Ledger	Mark Salt	Sept 2017	Implemented July 17
2.6	6	The work to ensure that all leases are readily available and retrievable for all current lettings should be progressed including electronically filing copies of all leases. It should be ensured that the details in the lease including amounts chargeable and all terms	Significant	Yes	All newly completed leases are available electronically. It is acknowledged that not all legacy leases are currently available electronically but a paper copy is accessible although this does have to be retrieved manually. Leases will in future be stored	Jane Kenyon/ Ian Pugh	Feb 2019	This is ongoing

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		and conditions agree with the current invoices and practices. The information in Technology Forge should be updated and the lease should be filed in the system.			electronically in TF Work is in hand to scan all of the existing leases but due to the cost, volume and scale of this task, this work is anticipated to take some considerable time to complete.			
2.7	7	The work to ensure that the information in the database of lease details spreadsheets is complete, accurate and up to date should be progressed to enable the accurate and complete information to be transferred to the 'Technology Forge' system.	Significant	Yes	The spreadsheet has been completed and is accurate and up to date. All CV3 INC entries (which have a value) from 01/01/2017 have been entered onto TF Cloud	Mark Salt/Kerrie Golder		Implemented
2.8	8	The data in 'Technology Forge' should be reviewed and brought up to date. In particular the information on the spreadsheet 'databases' of leases and properties should be reviewed against the information in 'Technology Forge' and corrections should be made as required to produce a single complete and	Fundamental	Yes	A Finance Support Officer, Finance Assistant and Property ICT officer have been recruited. Following the appointment of these officers, a project board has been set up to identify the issues, set objectives and assign tasks. Significant progress is being made but this work is still on going.	Jane/Keaton/Ian Pugh	Sept 18	Ongoing

Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating		Management Response	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned	Action
		accurate record of all leases and properties.						
2.9	9	The project plan in respect of the implementation of 'Technology Forge' to the 'Corporate Landlord' service should be revisited to provide a realistic time scale for the complete implementation of the project.	Requires Attention	Yes	Please see attached Project Plan & status review		June 18	Implemented.
2.10	10	It should be ensured that the e-mail which is sent to the various service areas circulating the 'CV3 INC' form is retained so that it is readily available in the event of an enquiry.	Requires Attention	Yes	Implemented. All surveyors have been reminded of the process to be adopted.	N/A	Implemented	
2.11	11	Consideration should be given to raising the student accommodation invoices within the Corporate Landlord Team.	Requires Attention	Yes	A Finance Support Officer and Finance Assistant officer have been recruited.	Mark Salt/Paul/Hesp	July 18	Implemented
2.12	12	The spreadsheet of student lettings should be reviewed to ensure that all new	Requires Attention	Yes	A Finance Support Officer and Finance Assistant officer have been recruited.	Mark Salt	July 18	Implemented

Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating		Management Response	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned	Action
		students who have paid a deposit in the current year have a date recorded next to their date to indicate that a check has been made to SAMIS to confirm payment of the deposit has been received. Any discrepancies identified should be resolved in a timely manner.						
3.1	13	The spreadsheet 'database' of leases taken out by the Council should be completed and checked to the agreements which the Council has with the Landlords. The information in 'Technology Forge' should be updated and reviewed against the spreadsheet 'database' of leases taken out to ensure that it is correct.	Significant	Yes	This work is ongoing and will be completed as soon as possible.	Jane Kenyon/ Ian Pugh	Sept 18	Ongoing
4.1	14	It should be ensured that evidence is retained and is readily available that the Debt Recovery Team have been instructed to raise	Requires Attention	Yes	Historically the CV report was the formal instruction to Finance which was implemented by Finance upon receipt of a completion memo from legal.	Mark Salt	Sept 2017	Implemented July 17 The Finance Team have been

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		periodic invoices in respect of a tenant. The instruction to the Debt Recovery Team should be made by completing and e-mailing the 'Sales Ledger Periodic / Contract Income Invoice Request Form' to them.			<p>When it was discovered that Finance were no longer acting upon CV reports an Income Request Form was devised which now acts as the instruction to Finance. This form is emailed to the Periodic Income Team and filed in the filing system.</p> <p>This process will be reviewed to see whether further improvements can be made and reduce any duplication of forms and information.</p> <p>The Finance Team will be consulted to see whether they still want to receive copies of the CV report.</p>			consulted and they would like to continue to receive copies of the CV report
4.2	15	The reconciliation from the spreadsheets of leased properties and units to the leases and amounts invoiced in SAMIS should be progressed and completed. There should be clear evidence on the spreadsheets that the reconciliation has been carried out and who has carried out the review. It is	Significant	Yes	A Finance Support Officer and Finance Assistant officer have now been recruited.		July 18	Additional fields have been added to TF cloud to track this process and this is being tested.

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		suggested that a screen print is obtained from SAMIS as evidence of the amounts invoiced. Any discrepancies discovered as a result of this action should be reviewed in a timely manner.						
4.3	16	Procedures should be introduced to verify that the lease income invoices are raised each month in SAMIS are as expected, accurate and in accordance with the terms of the agreed lease. Should it not be possible to introduce an automated process and resources are not available, consideration should be given to a risk based approach which also ensures that all invoices and properties are checked on a periodic basis.	Significant	Yes	A Finance Support Officer and Finance Assistant officer have now been recruited		July 18	Implemented A fortnightly aged debt report is now being produced
4.4	17	The progress made by the Sales Ledger Team towards producing arrears monitoring reports for the	Significant		Recommendation for finance			

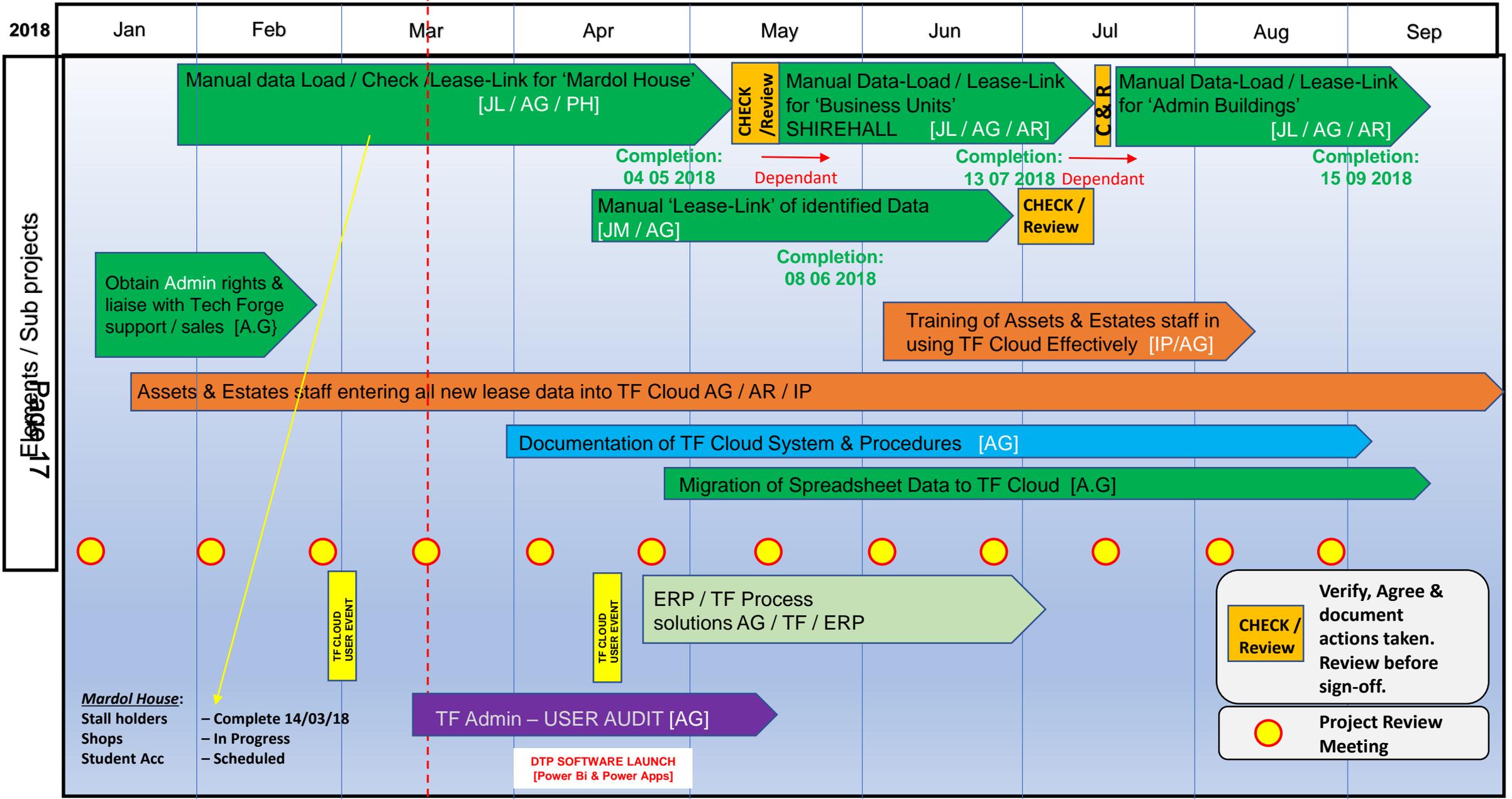
Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating		Management Response	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned	Action
		Corporate Landlord Team in respect of all property leases should be monitored and when made available should be used to control the overall levels of arrears.						
4.5	18	The spreadsheet 'database' of all properties maintained by the Corporate Landlord Team should be reviewed in conjunction with the Debt Recovery Team to ensure that the spreadsheet is complete and includes all properties as expected.	Significant	Yes	<p>TF will produce a report of all properties currently leased out & this will be checked against the information held by the Debt Recovery Team</p> <p>The spreadsheet is a record of CV's. Properties "inherited" from other authorities on unitary will not therefore be included in the spreadsheet, as no CV will have been generated in Estates.</p>	Mark Salt/Paul Hesp	Sept 17	<p>Implemented</p> <p>A fortnightly aged debt report is now being produced</p>
4.6	19	The spreadsheet of leases taken out should be completed to indicate which service area and officer is responsible for receiving, checking and authorising invoices for payment. The spreadsheet should also be updated to provide an, 'at a glance guide,' of leases	Significant	Partially	<p>TF should be the single complete and accurate record.</p> <p>The spreadsheet has been expanded to address current deficiencies in TF. Once TF is fully operational the database should no longer be necessary, but in the meantime, it will be expanded to include the recommendations.</p>	Mark Salt/Kerrie Golder	Sept 2017	The recommendations to the spreadsheet have been implemented.

Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating		Management Response	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned	Action
		expiring and when they are due for renewal.						

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TF CLOUD DATA & AUDIT COMPLIANCE - PROJECT PLAN

Adam Goodwin – June 2018



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