

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL AUDIT SERVICES

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE 2016/17

Assurance Level	Good
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Customer	West Mercia Energy
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Distribution	Nigel Evans - Director
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Auditor	Mark Seddon
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Fieldwork dates	21 st October 2016
Debrief meeting	25 th October 2016
Draft report issued	31 st October 2016
Responses received	18 th November 2016
Final report issued	18 th November 2016

Introduction and Background

1. As part of the approved internal audit plan for 2016/17 Audit Services have undertaken a review of Corporate Governance.
2. This audit has been conducted in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
3. Audit Services would like to express their thanks to the officers who assisted during the course of the audit.

Scope of the Audit

4. The scope, incorporating the objectives of the audit, was agreed with key contacts at the commencement of the audit.

To assess the progress made in implementing the recommendation made in the previous audit and to carry out a review of the requirements within the Joint Agreement.

5. Audit work was undertaken to give assurance on the extent to which the following management control objectives are being achieved:
 - The recommendation made in the previous audit has been implemented.
 - There is an appropriate and approved Joint Agreement between the West Mercia Energy Member Authorities.
6. The audit was delivered on time and within budget.

Audit Opinion

7. An opinion is given on the effectiveness of the control environment. This indicates the level of assurance that can be given based upon testing and evaluation of the system. This opinion will be reported to the Joint Committee and will inform the Annual Governance Statement which is included in the Annual Statement of Accounts. There are four levels of assurance; Good, Reasonable, Limited and Unsatisfactory.

As a result of the evaluation and testing of the controls that are in place in the areas examined, from work undertaken Audit Services are able to give the following assurance opinion:

Good	There is a sound system of control in place which is designed to address relevant risks, with controls being applied consistently.
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8. Responsibility for the maintenance of a sound system of internal control rests with management. The audit process is designed to provide a reasonable chance of discovery of material weaknesses in internal control by means of sample testing. It cannot however guarantee absolute assurance against all material weaknesses, the overriding of management controls, collusion, or instances of fraud or irregularity.

9. Audit recommendations are rated Fundamental, Significant, Requires Attention or Best Practice according to their level of priority. Details are included in the Exception Report provided to management and the Action Plan attached at **Appendix 1**. Implementation of these recommendations will serve to address the risks identified and enhance the procedures that are currently in place. The following table summarises the number of recommendations made in each category:

Total	Fundamental	Significant	Requires Attention	Best Practice
1	0	0	1	0

10. The review identified the following areas where appropriate management controls were in place and operating satisfactorily and, upon which, positive assurance can be given:

✓	The recommendation made in the previous audit has been implemented.
✓	There is an appropriate and approved Joint Agreement between the West Mercia Energy Member Authorities.

11. Recommendations accepted by management at the previous audit have been reviewed and are detailed below:

Number of recommendations accepted by management at the last audit	1
Recommendations implemented	1
Recommendations partially implemented	0
Recommendations superseded	0
Recommendations not actioned	0

Good progress has been made in the implementation of the previous recommendation.

Audit Approach

12. The approach adopted for this audit included:
- Review and documentation of the system.
 - Identification of key controls.
 - Follow up of previous recommendations.
 - Tests of controls to confirm their existence and effectiveness.
 - Evaluation of the controls and identification of weaknesses and potential risks arising from them.
13. Internal Audit report by exception; the exception report provided to management identifies only those areas where control evaluation and audit testing revealed control weaknesses and/or errors. Recommendations to improve controls or enhance existing practice are detailed against each exception and the associated risk, and are also included in the Action Plan at **Appendix 1**. A more detailed report covering all of the work undertaken can be provided on request. This will be, available in a working paper format.

14. In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, recommendations will be followed up to evaluate the adequacy of management action that has been taken to address identified control weaknesses.

Ceri Pilawski
Head of Audit

ACTION PLAN FOR CORPORATE GOVERNANCE 2016/17

Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating	Accepted Yes/No/ Partially	Management Response	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned
2.1	1	It should be ensured that the policies highlighted in section five of the Joint Agreement are reviewed to ensure that all are available and have been approved and adopted by the Joint Committee.	Requires Attention	Yes	Agreed	Nigel Evans	March 2017