



SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL AUDIT SERVICES

"ADDING VALUE"

FINAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT WME PROCUREMENT 2020/21

Assurance Level | **Good**



Audit Data

Customer:	West Mercia Energy
Report Distribution:	Nigel Evans, Director
Auditor(s):	Shelley Taylor
Fieldwork Dates:	2 nd February 2021
Debrief Meeting:	N/a
Draft Report Issued:	3 rd February 2021
Responses Received:	3 rd February 2021
Final Report Issued:	3 rd February 2021

Assurance		
Previous Assurance Level	Current Assurance Level	Direction of Travel
Good	Good	No change to control environment

Introduction and Background

1. As part of the approved internal audit plan for 2020/21 Audit Services have undertaken a review of Procurement.
2. This audit has been conducted in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
3. Maintenance of the control environment is the responsibility of Management. The audit process is designed to provide a reasonable chance of discovering material weaknesses in internal controls. It cannot however, guarantee absolute assurance against all weaknesses including overriding of management controls, collusion, and instances of fraud or irregularity.
4. Audit Services would like to thank officers who assisted during the audit.
5. The audit was delivered on time and within budget

Scope of the Audit

6. The following scope was agreed with key contacts at the beginning of the audit:
To review the procurement arrangements for the gas contract to ensure compliance with Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Contract Rules.
7. The scope includes a follow up of recommendations made in the 2019/20 audit. Where not implemented fully, these are revisited, and the findings included in this report.
8. Audit work was undertaken to give assurance on the extent to which the following management control objectives are being achieved. Objectives with a √ demonstrate that appropriate management controls are in place and upon which positive assurance can be given. Objectives with an X are those where the management controls are not being achieved:
 - X The recommendation made in the previous procurement audit has been implemented.
 - √ There is an appropriate evaluation process prior to the project being tendered.
 - √ There is a satisfactory system to ensure tender documents are completed in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules.
 - √ There is an adequate system of tender appraisal so that selection is based on an accurate evaluation of the tender information.
 - √ Successful and unsuccessful tenderers are notified promptly; unsuccessful tenders are retained in case of default / re-negotiation / for future information.
 - √ Contract documents are completed on a timely basis and include key conditions to protect West Mercia Energy from liability in respect of contractor's actions.

Assurance Level and Recommendations

9. An opinion is given on the effectiveness of the control environment reviewed during this audit. The level of assurance given is based upon sample testing and evaluation of the controls in place. This will be reported to the Joint Committee and will inform the Annual Governance Statement which accompanies the Annual Statement of Accounts. There are four levels of assurance; Good, Reasonable, Limited and Unsatisfactory.

Audit Services can give the following assurance level on the area audited:

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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10. Recommendations are made where control weaknesses, risks or areas for improvement have been identified and are of sufficient importance to merit being reported to you in accordance with auditing standards. There are four categories of recommendation; Best Practice, Requires Attention, Significant and Fundamental. The following table summarises the number of recommendations made in each category:

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

11. A summary of the recommendations, together with the agreed management responses are included at **Appendix 1**. Implementation of these recommendations will address the risks identified and improve the controls that are currently in place.
12. The status of the recommendations accepted by management at the previous audit has been reviewed and is summarised in the table below:

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

No progress has been made in the implementation of previous recommendations. Recommendations which remain outstanding are repeated in the Exception Report and Action Plan.

Audit Approach

13. The approach adopted for this audit included:
- Review and documentation of the system.
 - Identification of the risks to achieving the business outcomes and associated key controls.
 - Follow up of previous recommendations.
 - Testing of controls to confirm their existence and effectiveness.
 - Identification of weaknesses and potential risks arising from them.
14. As Internal Audit report by exception, only those areas where control weaknesses and/or errors have been identified are included in this report. Recommendations to improve controls or enhance existing practice are detailed against each finding and the associated risk. Your Action Plan is included at **Appendix 1**. A more detailed report covering all the work undertaken can be provided on request.
15. In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, recommendations will be followed up to evaluate the adequacy of management action taken to address identified control weaknesses.

Ceri Pilawski
Head of Audit

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ACTION PLAN FOR WME PROCUREMENT 2020/21

Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating	Proposed Management Action	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned
1.1	1	<p>Further work should be performed to produce amended Standing Orders with an aim to being able to remove the reference to Shropshire Council from the Standing Orders when there is a matter relating to the regulation of contracts which is not covered by the Standing Orders. It should be ensured that advice is obtained from the Shropshire Council Procurement Team, Legal Services and any amendments agreed by the Joint Committee.</p> <p>(As recommended and agreed in 2018/19 and 2019/20).</p>	Requires Attention	Agreed	Nigel Evans	Sept 2021