

Briefing Note

Governance and Audit Committee



Date: 27th July 2023

Subject PTU Audit Update – SECOND UPDATE

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Purpose To advise the Committee on progress as a result of the “unsatisfactory” audit opinion and G&A Committee additional requests.

Background

The follow up audit was carried out between February and May 2022 with the weaknesses and agreed management actions summarised below. Work was undertaken by the service area to implement each of these actions and the previous note to G&A Committee confirmed that all points had been actioned as below.

Further sample checks were carried out on 15th and then again on the 26th June to ensure no slippage so we can confirm all action points continue to be adhered to.

The tables below summarise the outstanding individual weaknesses identified during the follow up review.

Ref.	CRITICAL
	No critical weaknesses were identified during this follow-up audit.

Ref.	SIGNIFICANT
1.01	<p>The CTX system did not record all contracts / taxi usage across the Authority. Multiple and inconsistent records were used to monitor the various contracts.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upload CTX to Cloud – Implemented• Load and maintain all contracts on the CTX system – all current ongoing contracts are now on the system.

Ref.	SIGNIFICANT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further checks on 15th and 26th June confirm all contracts continue to be maintained on the system
1.02	<p>The CTX database was not fully up-to-date with accurate operator licences and insurances. Dates of birth were missing for some drivers which resulted in the system reporting the driver was underage.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload CTX to Cloud – Implemented • Ensure all driver checks are in place and system up to date – Complete – no outstanding checks as at 11/05/23. • No outstanding checks as at 15th and 26th June.
1.03	<p>There were expired DBS checks and training for drivers and escorts recorded on the CTX database.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload CTX to Cloud – Implemented • Ensure DBS checks and driver training up to date and within operational levels and recorded on system – All training up to date and no outstanding DBS checks as at 11/05/23 • Confirmed all training up to date and no outstanding DBS checks on 15th and 26th June.
2.10	<p>Taxi escorts were not required to submit any form of photo identification along with their DBS check.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issuing of escort identification badges has been rolled out as part of the escort training sessions with the Licencing team, with photographs being obtained as part of the session – Implemented • Photos continue to be obtained as part of the training session and we are exploring ways to speed this process up
2.11	<p>Adequate driving licence checks were not undertaken prior to the award of contracts to ensure that drivers were appropriate.</p> <p>Action(s):</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional staff will be deployed and fully trained on the Davis system – in the process of recruitment, two appointments made and recruitment to the third post in progress. Training will commence once in post. • The first two appointments are now fully trained and the third started in post 3rd July so only beginning training this week. • In the interim, all driver licence checks will be undertaken at the point of contract award and on expiration – complete and ongoing • Checks on 15th and 26th June confirm this action implemented and ongoing. • Full utilisation of the Davis system will be achieved following training of key staff – complete - all staff have full access to the Davis system • Confirmed all staff have access with the exception of the new starter which will be arranged week commencing 10th July.
2.11 (New)	<p>A taxi company with previous offenses relating to unlicensed drivers was operating on contract work. The DBS and driving licence checks for the contracted driver was not updated / renewed (as this was a historical arrangement) and there was no reference to the offences and consideration of the contract continuation on the CTX system.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider operates contracts with Caerphilly and Newport. The driver in question did not work on NCC contracts but these points were all noted on the system against the operator notes - complete
2.12	<p>Purchase orders were not always raised in advance of the first taxi journey taking place and did not record the agreed journey cost. Purchase order justification box did not reference the ITT number to highlight market testing undertaken.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POs to be raised in a timely manner with journey cost recorded – complete and ongoing • Checks on 15th and 26th June confirm this is complete and ongoing • ITT numbers to be recorded within the requisition box confirming the requisition has been tendered with eTender Wales – complete and ongoing • Checks on 15th and 26th June confirm this is complete and ongoing

Ref.	SIGNIFICANT
2.14	<p>The monitoring system in place for Social Services / Corporate taxi contract arrangements required improvement. Key information was not recorded.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Services spreadsheet to be updated to meet audit requirements – complete and ongoing • Checks on 15th and 26th June confirm this is complete and ongoing
2.16	<p>The details of the taxi driver / escorts were not always provided to the schools / social worker making the booking.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver, escort and operator information is now provided in the same detail to all schools. The social worker who books the transport will also continue to receive the information when transport is confirmed. – complete and ongoing • Checks on 15th and 26th June confirm this is complete and ongoing
3.07	<p>Employees within the PTU team have not attended Information Security training and the required Financial Regulations refresher training.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff to attend IS and FR training – complete January 2023, new staff to be inducted on appointment • As at 15th and 26th June all staff had attended the necessary training. New starter on 3rd July will be enrolled on the next available courses.
3.08	<p>Absence recording in iTrent was not always input correctly and in a timely manner. Return to work discussions were not always recorded in the iTrent system.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence recordings and RTW interviews to be completed in a timely manner – implemented and ongoing • Checks on 15th and 26th June confirm this is complete and ongoing

Ref.	MODERATE
2.08	<p>Taxi request forms were not always authorised by an appropriate officer in line with the requirements as set out on the form.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion will be held with Social Services regarding who is authorised to approve taxi contracts and we will review the approval limits and update the form as necessary – Complete – approval levels revisited and signatories agreed with Social Services
2.09	<p>Copies of DBS certificates were sometimes uploaded onto eTender Wales.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppliers have again been reminded that DBS certificates must not be uploaded onto e tender Wales. PTU staff are unable to remove/delete these files from e tender Wales if the operator does not comply. PTU continues to remind operators/ tenderers not to append DBS information when using e tender Wales – Complete and ongoing
2.13	<p>Invoices received from taxi companies did not always contain adequate information.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operators to be instructed that failure to include certain information on invoices all result in payment delays – complete and ongoing • Checks on 15th and 26th June confirm this continues to be adhered to
3.06	<p>Quality assurance checks had not been undertaken for the taxi contracts. The Taxi Licensing team required an updated school's contract list in order to assist with the undertaking of checks.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring schedule has been prepared and arrangements, in partnership with the Licencing team, in place for weekly monitoring across all school sites – implemented • Checks on 15th and 26th June confirm this is complete and ongoing
3.09	<p>The formal agreement in place between Newport City Council and Monmouthshire County Council had yet to be strengthened with the development of a job description and job specification as indicated. The stated</p>

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	<p>period of the original agreement had passed and should be considered for review.</p> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Infrastructure to confirm with Monmouthshire CBC that the current arrangement will be extended. Term to be agreed and confirmed.- complete • All Service Area Team Managers operate under a generic job description and job specification. HR Business Partners to add this position to the generic JD which is currently going before the Job Evaluation Panel for sign off - complete

Further to the action points agreed as part of the audit follow up, Governance and Audit Committee also requested the following be addressed, updates have been included in **bold**.

- That Education is contacted to ensure that the process for regular monitoring and escalating issues is clearly defined and mutually understood. **There has always been a regular channel of communication between Education and PTU colleagues although a group was established last year to proactively improve upon this and now includes all stakeholders. This group meets on a regular basis.**
- That the lead time given by the CTX system flagging up when a DBS check was due for renewal is confirmed. **Processes are in place that allow for a six week renewal period before the expiration of a DBS which is then communicated with operators.**
- That an internal working group is considered for further development to formalise the collaborative approach to monitoring and problem solving. **As above, a collaborative and regular meeting has been established to address arising issues.**
- A written update report be provided to the Committee in 3 month's time to provide an update to include; up to date facts and figures, DBS Checks for drivers and escorts and an indication of what continuation training was in place
 - **0 DBS checks outstanding**
 - **0 Licence checks outstanding**
 - **Safeguarding training for all escorts has been delivered and is currently under assessment to determine a rolling programme of refresher courses**
 - **As at 15th and 26th June, the outstanding figures above still apply**