



SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL AUDIT SERVICES

"ADDING VALUE"

FINAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT WME CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT 2024/25

Assurance Level	Good
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Audit Data

Customer:	West Mercia Energy
Report Distribution:	Nigel Evans, Managing Director
Auditors:	Megan Alcock Adam Williams
Fieldwork Dates:	November 2024
Debrief Meeting:	N/A
Draft Report Issued:	25 November 2024
Responses Received:	25 November 2024
Final Report Issued:	27 November 2024

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 2024/25 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. 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 confirm that there are appropriate arrangements in place for the management of governance, risk and business continuity during the 2024/25 financial year.
7. The scope includes a follow up of recommendations made in the 2023/24 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:
 - ✓ The recommendations made in the previous audit have been implemented.
 - ✓ There is an appropriate process in place to ensure that Strategic and Operational Risks are recorded in a suitable format in the Risk Register and regularly reported to the Joint Committee.
 - ✓ Satisfactory Corporate Governance arrangements are in place.
 - ✓ A business continuity plan has been prepared which details the actions to be taken to allow recovery from an incident.

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. Detailed findings and a definition of the recommendation categories are included in the Exception Report at **Appendix 1**. 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 2**. Implementation of these recommendations will address the risks identified and improve the controls that are currently in place.
12. Audit work revealed control weaknesses which, whilst not deemed to be fundamental or significant, limit the level of assurance in the following areas:
- A business continuity plan has been prepared which details the actions to be taken to allow recovery from an incident.
13. 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	1
Recommendations partially implemented	-
Recommendations superseded	-
Recommendations not implemented	-

Good/Reasonable/Limited/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

14. 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.
15. As Internal Audit report by exception, only those areas where control weaknesses and/or errors have been identified are included in this report (**Appendix 1**). Recommendations to improve controls or enhance existing practice are detailed against each finding and the associated risk. Your Action Plan is included at **Appendix 2**. A more detailed report covering all the work undertaken can be provided on request.

16. 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.

Barry Hanson
Head of Audit

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APPENDIX 1

INTERNAL AUDIT EXCEPTION REPORT FOR WME CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT 2024/25

Fundamental	Significant	Requires Attention	Best Practice
Immediate action required to address a major control weakness which, if not addressed, could lead to material loss.	A recommendation to address a significant control weakness where the system may be working but errors may go undetected.	A recommendation aimed at improving the existing control environment.	Suggested action which aims to improve best value, quality or efficiency.

Audit Ref	Finding/ Observation	Implications/Risks	Rec No.	Rec Rating	Recommendation
Management Control Objective: A business continuity plan has been prepared which details the actions to be taken to allow recovery from an incident.					
4.1	There has been no planned testing of the Business Continuity Plan, however it is acknowledged that some elements have been tested such as when there has been IT loss. Whilst not all parts of the business continuity plan will be appropriate to test, the effectiveness of the plan should be periodically tested to ensure that key business activities can be resumed particularly in the event where key personnel are unavailable. Documenting and updating the plan as a result of these tests will ensure the plan effective if it is ever needed to be invoked.	Business continuity plan is not effective in ensuring business loss is minimised in the event of service disruption.	1	Requires Attention	The business continuity plan should be periodically tested to ensure it is fit for purpose and updated where lessons are learnt.

ACTION PLAN FOR WME CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT 2024/25

Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating	Proposed Management Action	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned
4.1	1	The business continuity plan should be periodically tested to ensure it is fit for purpose and updated where lessons are learnt.	Requires Attention	Agreed	Nigel Evans	June 2025