Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service

Internal Audit Procurement Actions

Finance & Pay

Procurement – Procurement Framework
Date: 21.07.20   Priority: Medium   Completed: 01.03.21

Audit Action

The Service should select an appropriate framework for new procurement activities which is fit for purpose for the solution and / or goods and services required.

Audit Response (Sheldon Dryer)

We have published guidance on the Procurement intranet, including a revised Single Source Justification form.

A meeting was held with budget holders to document the use of procurement frameworks. The issues were discussed and addressed.

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

Procurement – Procurement Policies
Date: 21.07.20   Priority: Medium   Due: 30.09.20

Audit Action
There is insufficient coverage of certain areas of procurement guidance within the financial and procurement regulations.

Financial and procurement policies/procedures are combined within the same document.

Audit Response (Sheldon Dryer)
Procurement regulations have been separated from the Constitution and published on the Intranet.

Additional guidance has also been published to support the Procurement Regulations where there is insufficient coverage of key areas.

An email has been circulated across the Service to advise of the new guidance.

Procurement – Contract Monitoring
Date: 21.07.20   Priority: High   Due: 31.12.20

Audit Action

Contracts approaching expiry should be identified and actioned in sufficient time ahead of expiry or extension period.

Contracts approaching expiry should be renewed or extended to ensure new contracts are in place at the required time.

Audit Response (Sheldon Dryer)

Delta is used for tenders and is used to monitor ongoing contracts.

This is reviewed monthly by the Contracts Officer and approved by the Head of Procurement.

This action has been re-opened as a result of the follow-up audit, which is yet to be finalised. We are discussing whether this action has been adequately addressed.

Procurement – Visibility and Exemptions
Date: 21.07.20   Priority: Medium   Due: 31.12.20

Audit Action

The audit found a lack in visibility around the procurement process, value for money and the use of an approved supplier list. The audit also challenged the exemptions in place for tenders (Single Source Justifications).

Audit Response (Sheldon Dryer)

The Single Source Justification form has been reviewed and a new version has been published on the Intranet.

Communication was circulated in March advising of the new form, and single tender actions have reduced as a result.

The Procurement team is working on guidance for an approved supplier list which has been drafted, but not finalised.

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

Procurement – Pre-procurement Process
Date: 21.07.20   Priority: Medium   Due: 31.12.20

Audit Action

The audit found that there were pre-procurement processes that were not being adopted by the Service. These included the business cases and pipeline planning.

Audit Response (Sheldon Dryer)

A template business case has been uploaded to the Intranet and is being encouraged for use at Asset Board and by the wider Service. This has been reinforced through the issue of standalone Procurement Regulations and guidance (extract from Constitution only).

Delta is used as a "Pipeline" but further work needs to be done to assess whether this is adequate.

We recognise that the completion date has not been realistic to what we can achieve, and future completion dates will be set in line with our overall annual plan.

Procurement – Procurement Records
Date: 21.07.20   Priority: Medium   Due: 31/10/20

Audit Action

Information and records relating to procurement planning and activity are currently not stored, managed, and accessed in a consistent manner within the Service due to multiple data systems.

Information is not retained in a centralised location and accessible by all required parties.

Audit Response (Sheldon Dryer)

The Procurement team are looking to produce an information map to assist in addressing this issue. Our primary focus has been to ensure Procurement policies and guidance is updated in the first instance.

Key procurement information is maintained on multiple systems by multiple departments. We are looking at additional software platforms to address this issue, which include SharePoint.