#### AUD206 AUDIT COMMITTEE

#### REPORT TITLE: LGA PEER REVIEW ACTION PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

#### 8 MARCH 2018

#### <u>REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: CLLR HORRILL – LEADER WITH</u> <u>PORTFOLIO FOR HOUSING SERVICES</u>

<u>Contact Officer: Joseph Holmes Tel No: 01962 848 220 Email</u> jholmes@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

## <u>PURPOSE</u>

This report provides the findings of a review undertaken by internal audit at the request of the Council of the implementation of the agreed actions in response to the nine key recommendations put forward in the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report.

The Peer Challenge took place in February 2017, and a follow-up review is scheduled to take place in June 2018.

The report also provides an update on progress in implementing the outstanding recommendations made by the Independent Review of Silver Hill.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That the Committee notes the progress against the actions as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Report.

#### **IMPLICATIONS:**

#### 1 <u>COUNCIL STRATEGY OUTCOME</u>

- 1.1 The Corporate Peer Challenge was conducted to provide support and external feedback on the Council's past achievements and performance and to highlight areas where it could improve and achieve even more in the future.
- 1.2 Implementation of the Corporate Peer Challenge team's key recommendations support the Council to deliver the outcomes that are included in the Council Strategy.
- 1.3 A number of actions that were included in the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan are also included in the Council Strategy. These actions are monitored and reported in the quarterly Finance and Performance report.

#### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 None directly arising from the content of this report, however there are additional costs and potential savings to the Council arising from the delivery and implementation of the agreed actions that respond to the both the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report and the Silver Hill Informal Policy Group (IPG) actions.

#### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are projects that are to be delivered as part of the action plan that will require signicant legal input including, for example, the review of the Council's Constitution.

#### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Significant input from senior staff is required to deliver the actions included the two action plans.

#### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

#### 6 <u>CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION</u>

- 6.1 The Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report and Action Plan are both published on the Council's website.
- 6.2 Progress against the actions in the Plan is regularly reported to Cabinet members.
- 7 <u>ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS</u>
- 7.1 None.

#### 8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 None required.

#### 9 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Property – n/a	n/a	n/a
Community Support – none	n/a	n/a
Timescales – delays to the delivery of the actions	Regular monitoring is undertaken to identify and resolve slippage	n/a
Project capacity- availability of staff to deliver projects.	Resources to deliver projects are discussed at the project planning stage and agreed by the relevant project board.	Opportunities present themselves for staff to get involved in projects outside their normal role enabling them to expand their knowledge and skills base as well as working with others.
Financial / VfM	Regular monitoring of budgets and the financial position including forecasting to year end is undertaken to avoid unplanned over/underspends.	Early notification of unplanned under/overspends through regular monitoring allows time for plans to be put in place to bring the finances back into line with budget forecast.
Legal	For projects such as the review of the Constituion, there has been extensive consultation and advice sought from Legal Services	Advice from Legal Services will ensure that the Council operates lawfully.
Innovation	n/a	n/a
Reputation – ensuring that the Council delivers the actions that respond to the recommendations as set out in the Peer Challenge Feedback report.	Regular monitoring and reporting of the progress the Council is achieving against the Action Plan, including this report.	n/a
Other	n/a	n/a

#### 10 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

10.1 A peer challenge is provided by the Local Government Association (LGA) at no cost to local authorities, as part of their sector led improvement programme. The process is designed to be forward thinking, facilitative and

problem solving. It is not a form of inspection and does not rank or score local authorities in any way.

- 10.2 In February 2017, the Council invited the LGA to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge to provide external feedback on how it was performing and to highlight the areas where it can do better and achieve even more.
- 10.3 In its feedback report, the Peer Challenge team recognised the high quality services and support that the Council is delivering and that Winchester is well placed strategically and surrounded by opportunities.
- 10.4 The peer team also highlighted in their report nine key recommendations that will help the Council to further improve services over the coming years. A copy of the Feedback report is published on the Council's website and can be viewed via this <u>link</u>.
- 10.5 The Council has requested that a review be carried out by the internal auditor of the progress achieved to date. This is to ensure that sufficient progress is being made against the actions in time for the peer review follow-up scheduled for June.
- 10.6 Appendix 1 provides an independent report of the implementation of the Council's agreed actions in response to the recommendations put forward in the LGA Peer Challenge Report.
- 10.7 The opportunity was also taken to incorporate into the same internal audit review, progress against outstanding recommendations from the work of the Informal Policy Group (IPG) in relation to the independent review of Silver Hill carried out by Claer Lloyd- Jones.
- 10.8 Appendix 2 provides a summary of the progress achieved against these recommendations.

#### 11. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 None.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

- AUD179(GOV) Update on agreed response to recommendations
- AUD201 Corporate Peer Review 2017 Action Plan

Other Background Documents:-

Corporate Peer Challenge Report Feb 2017

Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan Report

### APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 LGA Peer Review Follow Up – Position Statement

Appendix 2 Silver Hill IPG Follow Up – Position Statement

FOR OFFICER USE: TO BE COMPLETED BY OFFICER CLEARING REPORT								
Report clearance prior to CMT:	Office	er Initia	als					
Finance Clearance: DK/NA/LK*								
Legal Clearance: LH/FS/MS*								
Report clearance prior to Leaders Board:	Offic	er Initia	als	1	1	1		
CMT clearance: LT/JH/ST*								

\*please add initials to appropriate box once report has been cleared

# Southern Internal Audit Partnership

Assurance through excellence and innovation

# **Winchester City Council**

# **Internal Audit Report**

## LGA PEER REVIEW & SILVER HILL IPG FOLLOW UP – POSITION STATEMENT

23 February 2018

Prepared by: Nigel Spriggs

DRAFT REPORT Confidential

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of the Internal Audit Plan for 2017/18, we have undertaken a follow up review of the implementation of Winchester City Council's agreed actions in response to the recommendations put forward in the LGA Peer Challenge Report (February 2017). The opportunity was also taken to incorporate progress against outstanding recommendations from the work of the IPG in relation to the independent review of Silver Hill carried out by Claer Lloyd-Jones
- 1.2 The remit of this review was not to provide opinion or comment on the adequacy of actions proposed by Winchester City Council against recommendations raised within the LGA Peer Challenge report or those of the IPG; nor that plans of Lead Officers in addressing such actions, once implemented, will fully address the issue raised.
- 1.3 This review has sought solely to provide an independent view of the status of implementation plans based on evidence provided by respective Lead Officers.
- 1.4 We are grateful to all staff involved for their assistance during the course of the audit.

#### 2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 This review has sought to assess the effectiveness of controls in place focusing on those designed to mitigate risk in achieving the following key objectives:
  - Assess the effective and timely implementation of actions proposed by Winchester City Council to address recommendations raised as part of the LGA Peer Review.
  - Assess progress on outstanding recommendations from the work of the IPG in relation to the independent review of Silver Hill carried out by Clear Lloyd-Jones & Associates following the cessation of the IPG on 28 March 2017.

#### 3. CIRCULATION LIST

3.1 This document has been circulated to the following:
 Joseph Holmes, Corporate Director (Professional Services)
 Simon Howson, Corporate Business Manager

Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors	The Southern Internal Audit Partnership conforms to the IIA's professional standards and its work is performed in accordance with the International Professional Practices Framework <i>(endorsed by the IIA).</i>
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#### 4. Summary Findings

#### **Key Observations**

• The LGA Peer Challenge report contained nine recommendations. Winchester City Council proposed 20 actions to address the recommendations raised. Of theses, evidence provided by Lead Officers highlight:

14 (Green)	Complete or on track to be completed within the original timescales proposed.
5*	Evidence provided to demonstrate significant progress,
(Amber)	however, some work still required before completion, which is
(Amber)	presently scheduled to be finalised by June 2018.

	Significant work still required before the action can be classed
(Red)	as complete, which is presently scheduled to be finalised after
(Red)	the start of the LGA follow up Peer Review in June.

\*Three of the five Amber status actions are extensively complete and only remain as such as they are awaiting final Member/ Officer sign-off

Appendix 1 – summary of progress against LGA actions

• The IPG in relation to the independent review of Silver Hill carried out by Claer Lloyd-Jones incorporated six recommendations (seven outstanding actions.)

Of these, evidence provided by key contacts highlighted:

6	Complete or on track to be completed within the original					
(Green)	timescales proposed.					
1	Evidence provided to demonstrate significant progress,					
L (Ambor)	however, some work still required before completion, which is					
(Amber)	presently scheduled to be finalised by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018.					
0	Significant work still required before the action can be classed					
U (Decl)	as complete, which is presently scheduled to be finalised later					
(Red)	than 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018.					
Appendix 2 – summary of progress against IPG actions						



	Appendix 1 – Progress Against LGA Peer Review Actions							
No	Recommendation	Action	Original Completion Date	Officer Liaison	Current status as per officer action	Evidence of progress described or provided to Southern Internal Audit Partnership		
LGA 1	Clearly articulate a vision and strategic narrative for the district and for the council. This will give confidence to partners, residents and staff and can be used to prioritise activity.	A strategic narrative will be developed that sets the context for future delivery as well as visioning the future. This will align with work to identify ways of working within the council and engagement with partners	August 2017	Ellen Simpson, Head of Tourism	Extensively complete – subject to Member sign- off	<ul> <li>Best methods to communicate strategic narrative will be adopted shortly after the strategic narrative and promotional material has been finalised. Both being presented for final review and sign-off early in March.</li> <li>Five minute promo film at final editing stage, to be presented for sign-off.</li> </ul>		
		Internal communications to support the strategic narrative and ensure clear messages for staff	September 2017	Ellen Simpson, Head of Tourism	Extensively complete – subject to Member sign- off	<ul> <li>All staff updates now given by Chief Executive to convey important messages.</li> <li>Staff involved in the ongoing refresh of organisational values</li> </ul>		
LGA 2	Develop an evidence- based approach to the council's understanding of the views and needs of the whole community. This will	Commission a Residents Survey to establish a wide baseline of priorities and establish support or otherwise for future schemes.	September 2017	Peter Brown, Head of P&P	Ongoing	<ul> <li>Delayed to allow comprehensive preparation. Customer Approach Group set up to consider proposed questions. No finalised target date for sign- off of questions but go live expected to occur between June and September 2018</li> </ul>		

#### Appendix 1 – Progress Against LGA Peer Review Actions



No	Recommendation	Action	Original Completion Date	Officer Liaison	Current status as per officer action	Evidence of progress described or provided to Southern Internal Audit Partnership
LGA 3	help balance strong local opinion and reinforce the decision- making process. Review political and partnership	Review of data held and identification of key data sets required across all sections of our community to make evidence based decisions. Review the Constitution with the remit focussed on	July 2017 September 2017	Peter Brown, Head of P&P Joseph Holmes,	Complete Extensively complete –	<ul> <li>Internal data capture audit completed. Over 300 data- sets identified and collated within a single document and available to use moving forwards when making evidence based decisions or commissioning new research to fill identified data gaps as and when necessary.</li> <li>The original scope of review expanded to include a full review of the Constitution by a cross-party working</li> </ul>
	structures and forums including the operation and role of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to ensure that they can perform their roles effectively.	<ol> <li>Effective and efficient decision making</li> <li>Effective contribution to policy development and pre-scrutiny</li> <li>Greater clarity on delegations between members and officers</li> <li>Build on existing review of PHDs to make these more effective</li> <li>Clarity of financial rules of procedure</li> <li>Build on effective member briefing/policy briefings</li> </ol>		Strategic Director Resources	subject to Member sign- off	<ul> <li>group and external consultant</li> <li>A 3 page summary document was supplied to Leaders of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats for circulation and consideration (12/17). Addresses points 1, 2, 3 and 5. Target to progress through working group / all member briefing / Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee ahead of presenting for approval at June 2018 Council</li> <li>For point 4, a separate review of the Policy Holder Decision Process has recommended the removal of the requirement to follow if a Framework is in place. Scheduled for review / approval at 06/18 Council</li> <li>For point 6, new committees and more briefings are being introduced, including an all members' post elections briefing planned for April 2018</li> </ul>
		Undertake training for officers on political skills	September 2017	Jamie Cann, Interim Head of HR	Complete	Three one-day training courses provided by Local Government Association in late 2017 and attended by ninety members of staff who regularly interact with elected Members



No	Recommendation	Action	Original Completion Date	Officer Liaison	Current status as per officer action	Evidence of progress described or provided to Southern Internal Audit Partnership
		Review and refresh external stakeholder relationship particularly business, partners, town and parish councils	October 2017	Simon Howson, Corporate Business Manager / Peter Brown, Head of Policy & Projects	Ongoing	<ul> <li>Tiered ranking approach being adopted with a list of present partnerships circulated to SMT in December 2017 with request to rank them accordingly. Completion target of 31/03/18</li> <li>Commitment to integrate the reporting of partnership performance into the Council's service and Council's Strategy performance management regime by 31/03/18</li> </ul>
LGA 4	Develop a shared understanding of the financial challenges ahead. The council is currently in a healthy financial position but	Use Outcomes Based Budgeting (OBB) to achieve a long term financial plan with clear options for savings / income generation	October 2017	Joseph Holmes, Strategic Director Resource	Complete	Outcome Based Budgeting introduced to financial reporting formats from September 2017 onwards
	action is required to ensure the financial challenges and risks are well understood across the organisation and that the council has a diverse approach to	Maximise opportunity for alternative income generation and asset development within a sustainable and resourced capital programme	October 2017	Joseph Holmes, Strategic Director Resources	Complete & ongoing	<ul> <li>Capital Strategy updated August 2017 and includes Asset Management Plan</li> <li>25% of Medium Term Financial Strategy balancing initiatives related to asset management across six distinct points, including: increasing Strategic Asset Purchase Scheme from £15m to £30m to maximise potential revenue streams through asset procurement</li> </ul>
	balancing its budget in the medium-term and is not solely reliant on a small number of major projects.	Clearly articulate the financial position and the various options to close the gap through different means	October 2017	Joseph Holmes, Strategic Director Resources	Complete	Outcome Based Budgeting report ( <u>CAB2985</u> refers) articulates the cost based reduction required for a balanced financial position from 2018/19 to 2021/22 in Outcomes Based Budgeting format through Transformation, Asset Management, Efficiency and Income Generation initiatives
LGA 5	Review the way in which the business is managed – to	Establish quarterly performance reporting to CMT, Leader's Board and	September 2017	Joseph Holmes, Strategic	Complete	<ul> <li>Quarterly performance reporting instigated from September 2017 onwards and</li> <li>Financial and Performance Monitoring Reports now</li> </ul>



No	Recommendation	Action	Original Completion Date	Officer Liaison	Current status as per officer action	Evidence of progress described or provided to Southern Internal Audit Partnership
	ensure that core policies and processes are understood and consistently applied.	Cabinet including: Financial Council Strategy measures Projects Corporate Health Indicators		Director Resources		include sections for all four points under 'Actions' column
		Revise the Council's risk appetite and risk management strategy to reflect the council strategy and new Cabinet's aspirations	May 2017	Joseph Holmes, Strategic Director Resources	Complete	<ul> <li>Risk Management Policy 2017 was presented to Cabinet in April 2017 and re-aligns the Council's risk appetite with the Council Strategy 2017/2020</li> </ul>
LGA 6	Be clear about how WCC is approaching transformation, entrepreneurialism and digital – ensure ambitions are understood by members and staff and	Need clear document and communications around the Council approach to transformation (what it means for WCC and what it is trying to transform)	June 2017	Joseph Holmes, Strategic Director Resources	Complete	• A five page Transformation Change Document was approved by the Leader Board in 02/18. Point 4 (partner organisation / in-house team) of this document has been chosen as WCC's preferred approach to transformation, with the procurement process to appoint a partner organisation due to start in February 2018. Therefore rated Complete as documented approach is in place
	supported with appropriate skills and technology.	Need effective delivery mechanisms to achieve this (through 8 below)	October 2017	Joseph Holmes, Strategic Director Resources	Ongoing	<ul> <li>Will be achieved through adoption of the transformation strategy (signed off 02/18) and digital strategy (set to be finalised 31/03/18) and implementation of proposed Programme Management Office, which is not expected to be in place pre April 2018.</li> </ul>
		Development of a Digital Strategy to set a direction of travel for digital ambitions and technological support	August 2017	Joseph Holmes, Strategic Director Resources	Extensively complete – subject to sign-off	<ul> <li>Digital Strategy which identifies WCC's four main aims produced and scheduled to be finalised by 31 March 2018</li> </ul>



No	Recommendation	Action	Original Completion Date	Officer Liaison	Current status as per officer action	Evidence of progress described or provided to Southern Internal Audit Partnership
LGA 7	Clarify roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. Staff structures seem confusing and, whilst	Review roles, responsibilities and structures to deliver council strategy	September 2017	Joseph Holmes, Strategic Director Resources	Complete	<ul> <li>Reviewed structure announced and published October 2017</li> </ul>
	they support effective service delivery, they inhibit collaborative and 'horizontal' working.	Establish clear relationship management with key stakeholders e.g. LEP, HCC to maximise opportunities	September 2017	Joseph Holmes, Strategic Director Resources	Complete	<ul> <li>Identified as part of Corporate Head of Engagement role, which has recently been appointed</li> </ul>
LGA 8	Strengthen programme and project management. The council's Programme and Project Management Office needs to be suitably placed within the organisation and empowered to deliver and hold others to account.	Establish a full Programme Management Office to oversee and support all programmes and move to a clear distinction between programme and projects that support an overall Transformation programme	October 2017	Joseph Holmes, Strategic Director Resources	Ongoing	<ul> <li>Establishment of a Programme Management Office paper signed off with the recommendation adopted that the Corporate Head of Strategic Support, when appointed, oversees the creation of a full Programme Management Office. Implementation not expected to be achieved before April 2018</li> </ul>
LGA 9	Use the new People Strategy/Workforce Plan to address concerns that the council has the capacity but lacks the skills to deliver, alongside new approaches to pay and reward, to ensure the	<ul> <li>Delivery of the Empoyee</li> <li>Strategy, and includes:</li> <li>1. Pay and benefits</li> <li>2. On boarding and engagement</li> <li>3. Appraisal process</li> <li>4. Supporting HR policies</li> <li>5. Talent management</li> <li>6. Refresh</li> </ul>	September 2017	Jamie Cann, Interim Head of HR	1,4 Ongoing 2,3,5,6 Extensively complete – subject to roll-out	<ol> <li>For pay, upon publication of latest Government guidelines, WCC is committed to reviewing salaries to make them as competitive as possible, although alignment with national pay spines will potentially delay any progress until 2019/2020 at the earliest For benefits, consideration is being given to introducing an Employee Healthcare Cash Plan (EHCP), potentially early in the 2018/2019 Financial Year with the tender process presently underway. Consideration is also being given to a small increase</li> </ol>



No	Recommendation	Action	Original Completion Date	Officer Liaison	Current status as per officer action	Evidence of progress described or provided to Southern Internal Audit Partnership
	council can attract the right people and to blend internal and external expertise.	organisational values				<ul> <li>to the annual leave quota and other benefits detailed in the Employee Strategy, with phased roll-outs dependent upon reaction to the EHCP.</li> <li>2. New induction guidelines for managers and new induction pack for employees submitted to Executive Leader Board. Presently being amended and due to be presented to Senior Managers Group in March 2018.</li> <li>3. Plans being made to introduce a 360 degree appraisal process for senior management and roll out during 2018/19 Financial Year. New framework in place for 2018/19 staff appraisals.</li> <li>4. Invitation to tender sent out to HR Consultancy Companies with a completion target of 31/03/18</li> <li>5. Scoping event for Senior Management Team hosted by consultancy firm 01/18 to workshop the best way forward with a view to having a strategy in place by 31/03/18</li> <li>6. Staff briefings in November 2017 gave all staff an opportunity to be involved in selecting five organisational values from an initial list of 15. Cross- section of staff subsequently involved in 3 workshops. A presentation has been made to the Executive Leader Board. Further work ongoing with a target roll- out of 31 March 2018</li> </ul>
		Complete a review of staff accommodation to consider long term options to improve conditions and collaborative working	October 2017	Kevin Warren, Corporate Head of Asset Mngmt	Extensively complete – subject to sign-off	<ul> <li>A £658k City Office refurbishment of staff accommodation is on schedule to be completed February 2018</li> </ul>



#### Appendix 2 – Progress Against IPG Actions

No	Recommendation	Action	Original Completion Date	Officer Liaison	Current status as per officer action discussed with	Evidence of progress described or provided to SIAP
IPG 1	New communication strategy produced	Communications Strategy produced and adopted	March 2017	Ellen Simpson, Head of Tourism	Complete	<ul> <li>Prioritising Communications document produced and adopted</li> </ul>
IPG 2	Response to the LGA Peer Review	Action Plan agreed and regular monitoring report produced	June 2017	Simon Howson, Corporate Business Manager	Complete but ongoing	Corporate Peer Review Monitoring Report produced and reported to Executive Leader Board on a regular basis
IPG 3	Project Management Guidance up to date	Review of project management documentation and guidance and published on staff intranet	December 2017	Peter Brown, Head of Policy & Projects	Complete but ongoing	<ul> <li>Project management documentation which reflects current guidance and contacts is available on the staff intranet and subject to continuous review, with further updates required once a final position on IPG 4 (clear definition of a major project) has been reached</li> </ul>
IPG 4	Clear definition of a major project and associated risk register	Definition of a major project agreed.	December 2017	Peter Brown, Head of Policy & Projects	Ongoing	<ul> <li>Existing definition of a project is in place but no longer felt to be fit for purpose due to recent restructure and recruitment of three new programme leads. A revised definition with related governance structures is expected to be in place by 31/03/18</li> </ul>
		Risk register for each major project	December 2017	Peter Brown, Head of Policy & Projects	Complete	<ul> <li>Individual risk registers already in place for all projects which fit current definition of a major project and reported to relevant cabinet meetings. Point rated Amber overall due to status of 'Definition of a major project agreed' action above</li> </ul>
IPG 5	New workforce strategy produced	Workforce Strategy drafted and agreed	Summer 2017	Jamie Cann, Interim Head of HR	Complete	<ul> <li>Now referred to as the Employee Strategy. Signed off by Personnel Committee (report <u>PER304</u>, 23 November 2017 refers)</li> </ul>
IPG 6	Procurement Audit completed	Completion of audit and action plan agreed if required	March 2018	Joseph Holmes, Strategic Director Resources	Scheduled	12 day internal procurement audit scheduled for Q4 2018 to focus on Contract Procurement Rules and legislative requirements (including P Cards).

#### Assignment – Progress Control Sheet

Assignment stage		Assignment P	Comments		
Audit Outline	Issued	27/04/2017	Agreed		
Fieldwork commenced	Target	04/12/2017	Actual	04/12/2017	
Fieldwork completed	Target	29/12/2017	Actual	25/01/2018	
Close of audit meeting	Target	12/01/2018	Actual	06/02/2018	
Draft Report Issued	Target <sup>1</sup>	19/01/2018	Actual		
Factual accuracy agreed and management response provided	Requested <sup>2</sup>	Provided			
Draft final report issued	Target <sup>3</sup>	Actual			
Senior management sign-off	Requested <sup>4</sup>	Provided			
Final report issued	Target⁵	Actual			

<sup>1</sup> Within 10 working days of close of audit meeting
<sup>2</sup> Within 10 working days of draft report issued
<sup>3</sup> Within 5 working days of receipt of management response
<sup>4</sup> Within 5 working days of draft final report issued
<sup>5</sup> Within 2 working days of senior management sign-off