

Appendix 1 – Audit Opinions

Recommendation Risk Ratings

At the conclusion of each audit, control weaknesses are rated based on their potential impact against the organisation and likelihood of any associated risks occurring.

The scoring matrices below are used by Auditors as a guide to assessment of each control weakness, and therefore generating the priority rating of the resultant recommendation.

Priority ratings may be adjusted subsequently; for example, in a minor system with a total budget of £100,000, financial loss of £5,000 would be considered more a more significant risk to system objectives than the matrix below would initially suggest.

Impact Ratings

Risk Type	Marginal	Significant	Fundamental	Catastrophic
	1	2	3	4
Financial	Lack of VFM or overspend resulting in a financial loss below £10,000	Lack of VFM or overspend resulting in a financial loss between £10,000 and £100,000	Lack of VFM or overspend resulting in a financial loss between £100,000 and £0.5m	Lack of VFM or overspend resulting in a financial loss in excess of £0.5m
Reputation	Adverse publicity unlikely (e.g. Just can't demonstrate that probity has been observed.)	Needs careful public relations (e.g. Minor theft of property or income.)	Adverse local publicity (e.g. Minor fraud case.)	Adverse national publicity (e.g. Major fraud or corruption case.)
Legal/Regulatory	Breaches of local procedures / standards	Breaches of regulations / standards	Breaches of law punishable by fines only	Breaches of law punishable by imprisonment
Legal/Regulatory	Not an issue that would interest the External Auditors	An issue that may require further checks to satisfy the External Auditor that control is sufficient.	Would warrant mention in the Annual Audit Letter or Annual Governance Statement (AGS).	Could lead to qualification of Council's Statement of Accounts
Legal/Regulatory	Unlikely to cause complaint / litigation	High potential for complaint, litigation possible	Litigation to be expected	Litigation almost certain and difficult to defend
Performance	Doesn't materially affect a departmental performance indicator or service objective.	Has a material adverse affect on a departmental/corporate performance indicator or service objective.	Could adversely affect a number of departmental/corporate performance indicators or could seriously damage Departmental objectives / priorities.	Could call into question the Council's overall performance framework or seriously damage a Council objective / priority.
Service Delivery	Doesn't affect any identified objectives	Adversely affects a service objective	Seriously damage Departmental objective / priority	Seriously damage any Council objectives / priorities
Service Delivery	No significant disruption to service capability	Short term disruption to service capability	Short term loss of service capability	Medium term loss of service capability
Service Delivery	No more than 3 people involved	No more than 10 people involved	Up to 50 people involved	More than 50 people involved
Health & Safety	No injuries beyond "first aid" level	Medical treatment required - long term injury	Extensive, permanent injuries; long term sick	Death

Likelihood ratings:

Risk Score	Description	Example Detail Description
5	Very Likely	Likely to occur within a year / Over 80% Probability of Likelihood
4	Likely	Likely to occur within 1 to 3 Years / 60%- 80% Probability of Likelihood
3	Possible	Likely to occur within 3 to 5 Years / 40%-60% Probability of Likelihood
2	Unlikely	Likely to occur within 5 to 10 Years / 20%-40% Probability of Likelihood
1	Remote	Likely to occur greater than 10 Years / Less than 20% Probability of Likelihood

Priority Ratings Matrix

Impact	Likelihood	4	3	2	1
		Catastrophic	4	8	12
Fundamental	3	3	6	9	12
Significant	2	2	4	6	8
Marginal	1	1	2	3	4

Risk Score		Recommendation Rating
>=	<	
1	5	Minor Priority
6	10	Low Priority
10	13	Medium Priority
15	21	High Priority

Internal Audit Assurance Ratings

Each Internal Audit report completed provides a level of assurance of either Limited, Adequate or Substantial Assurance. The following table is a guide to how assurance levels are determined. Dependent on the nature of the recommendations raised, the Internal Audit function may increase or decrease the level of assurance provided. For example a single, very significant control weakness may give rise to only one recommendation but severely compromise the effectiveness of a system and therefore result in a limited assurance report, or on occasion an audit may give rise to recommendation numbers close to the thresholds shown below for two or more categories of recommendation.

Assurance Level	Typical Findings
Limited	Either: 2+ high priority recommendations, 8+ medium priority recommendations, or 13+ low priority recommendations
Adequate	Either: 1 high priority recommendation, 3-7 medium priority recommendations, or 7-12 low priority recommendations
Substantial	0 high priority recommendations, 0-2 medium priority recommendations, and 0-6 low priority recommendations