

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Audit Committee

18 January 2013

Report of: Service Director Finance

Title: Internal Inspections and Reviews, Oct 2011 to Sept 2012

Ward: Citywide

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RECOMMENDATION

1. Members are asked to note the report
2. The Committee's views are invited.

Summary

This report summarises the findings of external inspections/reviews of council services undertaken Oct 2011 - Sept 2012 and subsequent progress against action plans.

Inspections and reviews from Grant Thornton UK and HMRC are omitted from this summary as the Committee receive separate reports on these.

The significant issues in the report are:

- 51 inspections and reviews from external organisations were reported in the period.
- There are robust and comprehensive processes in place to manage and monitor improvement areas identified in inspections and review, and progress against action plans is at least satisfactory against all reviews and good in many cases.

Policy

1. The requirement to have policies and processes for managing improvement is included in the Council's Performance Management Strategy and People Strategy.

Consultation

2. Internal

Not applicable

3. External

Not applicable

Introduction

4. This report provides an update on the findings of external inspections and reviews of council services undertaken between October 2011 and September 2012, and the progress made against improvement plans arising from these reviews.

Background

5. With an increasing emphasis on self-regulation it is appropriate for the Audit Committee to review findings and progress against improvement plans arising from external inspections and reviews of council services to seek assurance that services are responding effectively and that progress is being made, resulting in improvements to outcomes.

6. All services were canvassed to establish which services had been inspected in the period and asked, where applicable, to provide details of:

- inspection findings
- improvement plans for any areas of poor performance
- management processes to ensure improvement
- progress against improvement plans

Findings

7. A total of 51 external inspections and reviews were undertaken between October 2011 and the end of September 2012: 47 initiated by external organisations, 4 requested from external organisations by Bristol City Council. The majority of external inspections were undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

8. Ofsted inspections

In addition to the annual assessment of Children's Services, Ofsted inspected the Council's fostering service, made an unannounced

inspection sampling the quality and effectiveness of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within duty teams in Children's Services and their impact on minimising any child abuse and neglect, and inspected 33 maintained schools, adult learning and skills and early years settings. Full details of inspections are available on the Ofsted website, however, outcomes are summarised below.

8.1 Annual Children's Services Assessment judged as adequate

Strengths include:

- The quality of day care provision
- effectiveness of nursery school and Early Years Foundation Stage provision in primary schools
- pupil referral units
- children's homes
- The proportion of five-year-old children from low-income backgrounds who achieved a good level of development by the end of their reception year

Areas for further improvement:

- The number of primary schools that remain only satisfactory.
- Attainment for 16-year-olds gaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics, and attainment of young people from low income families at both age 16 and by age 19 (below the similar area and national averages in 2010).
- Two of the nine local authority special schools are currently inadequate.
- Post-16 provision is no better than adequate overall.

Progress is reported regularly to the Children's Scrutiny Commission and, since the inspection, outcomes for children have continued to improve with fewer schools below floor targets, attainment levels continuing to rise and progress made by special schools judged satisfactory or good by Ofsted.

8.2 Unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements

Ofsted noted that

- a robust approach to recruitment and retention has resulted in a very stable and experienced social work workforce in the assessment teams,
- twelve other areas met requirements and
- three areas required further development: timely transfer of cases, informing referrers of the outcome of referrals, improve performance in relation to assessments in child protection cases

Progress since the inspection shows that improvements have been made, and continue to be made, in each of these three areas

8.3 Fostering service

Judged as good, with outstanding elements.

Minor recommendations have all been addressed.

8.4 Early learning, schools and adult learning

Despite schools inspections having a sharper focus on schools previously considered to be weaker, over two thirds of schools were judged good or outstanding in the last year and fewer judged inadequate. The table below provides a brief summary of the outcomes of the inspections.

Settings	1 Outstanding	2 Good	3 Satisfactory	4 Inadequate
Early Years	5	2		
Primary	1	10	3	3
Junior		2		
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)		1		
Secondary	1		1	
Special			2	1
Adult Learning		1		

Action plans are in place to remedy the issues identified in school judged inadequate and progress is at least satisfactory or good. Progress continues to be monitored until a school is judged at least good by Ofsted. Further details on action taken can be provided to Committee members if required. The six schools judged satisfactory also receive support from the authority to help them improve further.

9 Care Quality Commission (CQC) reviews

Of the nine centres reviewed by the CQC, five were compliant with standards in all areas reviewed, two had minor concerns relating to staffing, staffing support, infection control and assessing/monitoring the quality of service provision whilst one had moderate concerns relating to the care and welfare of service users, and safeguarding. There were no major concerns. The table below provides a brief summary of the outcomes of the reviews

	All areas compliant	Non-compliance in only 1 or 2 areas	Non-compliance in 3+ areas
Resource Centres	2	1	0
EPHs	3	3	0

- 9.1 For each site where non-compliance is found the council submit a response including detailed action plan to the CQC, within the required timescales. Where non-compliance has been identified, the relevant Team Manager monitors the improvement actions at monthly supervision, and reports to the service manager and operations manager if concerns remain. Actions to correct minor issues from all inspections have largely been completed with the remainder progressing in accordance with plans.

10 Other inspections

The table below provides a brief summary of the other inspections and reviews that have been undertaken within the period under review.

Service	External assessor	Findings	Updates
Public Protection Food Safety Services: Port Health Authority	Food Standards Agency – follow up audit	All actions completed or on target	No changes to original action plan required
STS HR Employee Lifestyle and STS Finance & Procurement: Employment Status.	HMRC Assurance process	Queries raised direct with STS	All queries addressed. Where procedures are at fault these are immediately updated and confirmed to HMRC
Internally initiated or partner initiated			
Security & Cash in Transit: BCC Security Services - BS EN ISO 9001:2008 audits	The National Security Inspectorate (NSI),	'Gold' award was received in July 2012	N/A
EMAS (Eco management and audit standard)	Bureau Veritas (regulated by UKAS)	Certificates issued with potential to include major and minor non-compliances and observations	Only minor non-compliances and observations received; usually resolved at team level and reported back at the next audit.
Bristol Futures: European Green Capital Award	RPS Group, Ireland acting as Secretariat for the	Ranked 2nd overall during 2012 (for 2014 Award)	N/A

	awarding body		
Equalities and Diversity – Equalities Framework	Peer Challenge (LGA organised)	Confirmation of satisfactory self-assessment against the criteria for the Excellent Level.	Additional recommendations informed the new Equality Plan 2012-15

11 Management processes across the council

A review of management processes for recording, monitoring and tracking progress found that effective processes are in place in all of the inspected services, and an assessment of progress against plans shows at least satisfactory and often good or excellent progress against 11 of the 12 action plans. The remaining inspection, of a primary school, has been held too recently for progress to be assessed but progress will be monitored going forward.

Other Options Considered

12 Not applicable

Risk Assessment

13 Failure to make improvement as a result of inspections may result in service users not receiving essential/good quality services, however, robust and comprehensive processes are in place, and being used effectively throughout the council, to ensure improvements identified in inspections and reviews are addressed. Any risks associated with failing to address improvement plans are therefore minimised.

Equalities Impact Assessment

14 There are no issues arising from this report

Legal and Resource Implications

None arising from this report

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None