

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT



DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE CHECKS 2016/17

Issue Date:	22 nd March 2017	Issued to:	Lynn Aisbett – Chief Executive (<i>final report</i>)
Author:	Rachel Ashley-Caunt – Head of Internal Audit		Keith Aubrey – Strategic Director (<i>final report</i>)
			Dawn Garton – Head of Central Services (<i>final draft</i>)
			Angela Roberts – Head of Communications
			Sarah-Jane O’Connor – Communications Manager
			Jim Worley – Head of Regulatory Services
			Patrick Reid – Regulatory Services Manager

DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE CHECKS 2016/17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION & OVERALL OPINION


In order to safeguard vulnerable service users, the Council has a duty to exercise appropriate checks over the suitability of those working on the Council's behalf. As the authority granting licences for taxis and private hire vehicles, the Council is also responsible for conducting suitable checks over these applicants.

In August 2016, the Council's list of 'DBS required' posts was updated in light of the revised legislation on regulated roles. It was highlighted during audit testing, however, that this list was incomplete as other new starters since August 2016 had been subject to DBS checks, and their job role would appear to satisfy the requirements of a regulated post, but they were not on the central list. Furthermore, two recent new starters in roles included on the DBS list had not been subject to a DBS check. As such, it would appear that the central list is not being consistently applied and rather that posts continue to be considered individually at each recruitment exercise. It was also noted that the central list had not been subject to formal senior management approval.

In sample testing, all taxi and private hire licence holders reviewed had been subject to a DBS check in the last three years. The Council's Taxi Licensing Policy currently lacks detail, however, on the implications of convictions identified. It was also highlighted during sample testing that 47% of the licence renewals reviewed from the last 12 months had been granted based on DBS certificates which were more than six months old, including some which were issued based on certificates issued more than two years before. This is due to a change in the frequency of renewals but this is not consistent with Council policy and good practice. It is noted that Council officers had been monitoring DBS dates to identify when three years had lapsed outside of the renewal cycle to ensure drivers were subject to checks on a three yearly basis. The Council is keen to improve these processes and the most effective approach would be to enforce that all taxi and private hire license holders are required to subscribe to the DBS update service.

In 2015, a Code of Practice for DBS registered bodies was published specifying requirements for policies, storage and handling of information and applications. Based on the testing conducted, the Council is complying with the Code of Practice. Some minor issues have been highlighted where consistent practices across the Council should be enforced but overall information is handled sensitively and officers are proficient in the DBS application process.

The audit was carried out in accordance with the agreed Audit Planning Record (APR). It is the Auditor's Opinion that the current overall design and operation of controls provides **Sufficient Assurance**, as summarised below:

Internal Audit Assurance Opinion	Direction of Travel				
Sufficient Assurance					
Risk	Design	Comply	Recommendations		
			H	M	L
01 – Council employees working with vulnerable groups or sensitive information have not been subject to appropriate safeguarding checks.	Limited Assurance	Sufficient Assurance	2	1	2
02 – Taxi and private hire licences are awarded to individuals who have not been subject to appropriate safeguarding checks.	Limited Assurance	Sufficient Assurance	1	3	0
03 – DBS Code of Practice and Data Protection Compliance.	Sufficient Assurance	Sufficient Assurance	0	2	2
04 – Failure to require organisations providing services on the Council's behalf to have been subject to DBS checks.	Sufficient Assurance	Sufficient Assurance	0	0	0
Total Number of Recommendations			3	6	4

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Risk 1: Council employees working with vulnerable groups or sensitive information have not been subject to appropriate safeguarding checks.

The Council has established processes and procedures in place for conducting DBS checks on new employees and for reviewing the outcomes. Following the introduction of the new DBS Code of Practice, the HR and Health and Safety Officer had reviewed the Council's establishment and highlighted posts which should be eligible for a DBS check, by referring to guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Record keeping in relation to the processing and review of DBS checks for staff is sound and officers are experienced in reviewing identification evidence, submitting applications and reviewing and logging outcomes. Following an audit recommendation in 2014/15, the HR checklist for new recruitments includes a tick box for review of completed DBS certificate and a prompt to ensure that the outcome has been reviewed and the individual is approved as suitable for the role, considering any convictions identified. Any convictions should be considered in accordance with the Council's policy on ex-offenders and management should approve any decision to appoint.

Some posts for which based on a review of roles and responsibilities and discussions with management a DBS check may be expected had not, however, been included on this central list (including Pest Control Officer, Detached Youth Worker, Intensive Housing Management Officer and Private Lifeline Warden). It was also highlighted that externally funded posts, whilst on the establishment record, had not been assessed for DBS eligibility. Furthermore, the review identified that the Council's establishment still contained some posts which no longer exist (Scheme Caretakers, Customer Service Adviser (Children's Centres), Supporting People Officers (now Intensive Housing Management Officers)).

The establishment record highlights posts for which a DBS check should be conducted but on none of these posts is it specified the level of check which should be applied. The enhanced checks can, for example, include barring lists for working with adults or barring lists for working with children, but for some posts DBS guidance states that only an enhanced check without any barring list checks may be applied. As such, the central list must be updated to state the level of check to be requested for each post.

During testing, it was noted that the central establishment list is not the only basis for deciding whether a DBS check is conducted for new starters. The request to advertise form, which must be submitted by managers to commence the recruitment process, includes an option for whether a DBS check is required or not. During testing it was identified that there were cases where a DBS check had been conducted but the post had not been stated as eligible on the establishment list. It is understood that discussions with the HR and Health and Safety Officer were held to confirm whether to proceed with the requested DBS but no amendment to the establishment list was made.

In order to ensure consistency, compliance with the DBS Code of Practice and assurance that all posts considered eligible are subject to checks, the central list should be enforced as the basis for all decision making – rather than individual decisions by managers. The list must be complete, formally agreed by management and consistently enforced. **Recommendations 1, 2 and 3** address the above findings.

Sample testing on new starters was conducted and it was identified that two new starters in the last six months had been appointed to posts included on the establishment list as eligible for DBS checks but no checks had been undertaken. Indeed the job advertisements had stated that the post would be subject to DBS checks but none had

been conducted. This has been highlighted to management for investigation but based on the information available regarding the positions, it is Internal Audit's opinion that these posts may not indeed be regulated and be eligible for a DBS check. The posts are within the Environmental Health service and comparable posts at other local authorities are not subject to DBS checks. As such, this is not considered to pose a significant risk but does demonstrate that the central list of DBS posts is not being consistently complied with.

Processes are in place to ensure that all DBS eligible posts are subject to further DBS checks every three years. Records are well maintained and updated to ensure any renewals required are promptly identified and advanced notification is given to the officers to complete the application forms. Testing confirmed that renewals were being undertaken in accordance with Council procedure. It was noted, however, that there were some delays in officers completing the DBS application which resulted in additional time spent by HR officers on chasing for responses and ultimately some minor lapses in the three yearly certificates. **Recommendation 4** addresses this finding.

It was confirmed that there are no procedural notes for officers responsible for exercising the DBS checks. Whilst the lead officer is experienced and has implemented excellent recording systems and controls, there is a risk that in the case of staff absence or change in staffing it may not be possible to cover the role and ensure these key controls are consistently enforced. **Recommendation 5** addresses this finding.

Based on these findings, an opinion of **Limited Assurance** has been given over the design of controls and **Sufficient Assurance** over compliance.

Risk 2: Taxi and private hire licences are awarded to individuals who have not been subject to appropriate safeguarding checks.

The Council has a Taxi Licensing Policy which was last reviewed and approved in 2016. The policy explains that all drivers must be subject to a three yearly DBS check and that in considering any conviction: 'each case will be decided on its own merits. A particularly cautious view will be taken of offences relating to violence, indecency, dishonesty, motoring and drugs'. Good practice at other local authorities includes introducing a clear policy on implications of criminal convictions identified and periods following the most serious crimes (murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, sexual assault) during which an application will be refused. To clearly explain the implications of convictions, in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice, and to support Council officers in making and justifying decisions, it would be recommended to implement a more specific policy on this area. There is a template which has been applied by a number of Councils, a copy of which has been provided by Internal Audit, which could be adapted as appropriate and specifies implications of various convictions, time since last offence and how this will affect a licensing decision. **Recommendation 6** addresses this finding.

Sample testing for new licences awarded during the last twelve months confirmed that DBS checks were consistently completed and certificates were reviewed before licences were granted. Whilst some convictions were identified, none were identified as recent crimes of concern and none of these had been referred to the Licensing Committee for approval. Given the lack of detail in the current policy, it is not clear which offences should be referred to the Committee but in the auditor's opinion the decisions appeared reasonable.

A sample of licence renewals was reviewed and it was confirmed that all had been subject to a DBS check within the last three years. It was noted, however, that 47% of the sample had been granted licences based on previous DBS certificates, some of which were issued over two years before the licence renewal date. It is understood that this

arose due to a change in the frequency of renewals from annual to three yearly and the policy that drivers will not be subject to a check more than once in a three year period. There is an increased risk, however, that with the DBS checks not being aligned with the renewals, these may not be completed until the next renewal and there could be a lapse in checks. Furthermore, as the DBS certificate is technically only valid on the date issued, licence renewals could be issued to drivers with a recent conviction which has been committed since the last certificate.

To mitigate the risk, following a change in staffing, the Council officers have introduced a monitoring spreadsheet which monitors dates of latest DBS checks, alongside other regular checks, and highlights when these become due on a three yearly basis – outside of the renewal process. It is evident that current officers are alert to the risks and are keen to improve processes and tighten controls in this area.

The DBS update service has been introduced to enable individuals to sign up and enable bodies to check their criminal conviction/barring status at any time. This would enable the Council to undertake checks at regular intervals, reduce administration for both the Council and the applicant and enable the individual to apply for one check which can be relied upon by various bodies, rather than completing a form for each Council they work with. In order to improve controls in this area, officers are supportive of enforcing this as a requirement for all taxi and private hire drivers. See **Recommendation 7**.

Record keeping is being developed by officers and a sufficient audit trail was in place for many of the new and renewed licences reviewed. It was highlighted however that:

- For 2 out of 15 (13%) cases the DBS certificate numbers had not been recorded;
- For 47% of the cases reviewed there were no dates recorded on the checklist of when the DBS certificate was received; and
- It was not always clear and consistent whether the date recorded related to the receiving of the DBS certificate or the date of issue.

A checklist is in use for all new/renewed licences and some amendments to this have been recommended to ensure that the audit trail is complete and consistent in all cases. **Recommendation 8** addresses this finding.

Following a changeover in staffing and responsibilities, Council officers are currently refreshing processes and procedures in this area. It was noted that there are currently no procedure notes in place for officers in relation to the taxi and private hire licensing processes, including completion of DBS checks and consideration of outcomes. In order to support consistency, including in the case of staff absences, procedural notes should be prepared for use by officers. **Recommendation 9** addresses this finding.

Based on these findings, an opinion of **Limited Assurance** is given over the design of controls in place to manage this risk and an opinion of **Sufficient Assurance** is given over the compliance with these controls in practice.

Risk 3: DBS Code of Practice and Data Protection Compliance

As a DBS registered body, the Council must comply with the DBS Code of Practice which was introduced in 2015. The Code specifies a number of requirements that must be satisfied, including the handling of the certificate information, policies on convictions and the application process.

From discussions with officers with both HR responsibilities and those in licensing roles, it is evident that there is a good understanding of the requirement to handle data from DBS checks in a sensitive manner and proficiency in the processes that must be adhered to in reviewing identification, submitting and counter signing applications, reviewing outcomes and communicating with applicants. Advertisements for posts requiring DBS checks include a statement advising applicants of this from the outset.

One of the requirements for retaining registered body status is that at least 100 DBS checks must be processed each year. Based on testing, the Council had only processed 50 checks in the last twelve months and, as such, this status may be at risk. In order to prepare for loss of this status, consideration should be given to possible partnership working/delegation to another organisation, to enable checks to continue to be processed. **Recommendation 9** addresses this finding.

The DBS Code of Practice requires that the Council have an ex-offenders policy in place which is available to any applicants. Such a policy has been adopted by the Council and is readily available on its webpages. The policy is largely consistent with the template policy provided by the Disclosure and Barring Service and provides details of the potential impact of a criminal history and the process followed. The following statements are currently missing from the Council's version of the policy and it would be beneficial to clarify how the Council addresses these areas:

- [Organisation Name] ensures that all those in [Organisation Name] who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.
- [Organisation Name] also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders. ***It is understood that no training is currently provided on these two areas. It may be beneficial to ensure that all staff involved in the processing of checks and reviewing results are suitably aware of the requirements and the assessment of offences. The development of procedural notes (as per Recommendation 5) will also assist with this.***
- An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. ***The Council's policy does not currently explain how a decision is reached on the need for a DBS check for applicable posts. It would provide assurance over compliance with the Code if this was clarified in the policy.***
- [Organisation Name] can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected. ***This statement should be included in the policy to ensure applicants are aware of their rights in this area and the Council's awareness of this requirement.***

Recommendation 10 addresses these findings.

The DBS Code of Practice requires the Council to adopt a Data Handling policy in relation to the handling of information received on DBS certificates and to make this available to all applicants. Whilst the Council has data management policies in place, there is no specific policy on the handling of DBS information. A template policy has been provided by Internal Audit to assist officers in adopting this going forward. **Recommendation 11** addresses this finding.

During testing it was confirmed that data handled in relation to the employee DBS checks is secure and no copies of certificates are retained. The only occasion when a copy of a certificate is taken will be when an officer works off site and their line manager brings a certified photocopy to the HR officers for review. On these occasions the certificate will then be promptly disposed of via secure waste. It was noted during testing on taxi licence checks that scans of

certificates had been retained in some cases and saved in network folders. This tended to be where convictions had been identified and a decision on approval was required. Details of convictions were also noted on the checklists completed by officers. The network folders where this information is stored are currently accessible to all members of the Licensing team. In order to ensure full compliance with the Code of Practice and secure handling of this information, access to these folders should be limited to the key officers with responsibilities for taxi licensing decisions and all data must only be retained for as long as is required. **Recommendation 12** addresses this finding.

Processes are followed to ensure that any counter-signatories for the Council are promptly removed from the approved list held by the Disclosure and Barring Service. In order to verify the current signatories during the audit, the Service was contacted and it was confirmed that all counter-signatories were current members of Council staff, with the exception of one officer who left the organisation over two years ago. This officer has now been removed from the list and it is evident that this was an historic oversight and processes are now operating to ensure the list is promptly updated.

Based on these findings, an opinion of **Sufficient Assurance** has been given over the design of controls and **Sufficient Assurance** over the compliance and effectiveness of the controls.

Risk 4: Failure to require organisations providing services on the Council's behalf to have been subject to DBS checks.

In order to select a sample of contracts, a copy of the Contracts Register was obtained. The details within the Contracts Register were incomplete and it was, therefore, difficult to identify current contracts which may require DBS checks on staff. On this basis, sample testing was limited. As the Contracts Register is due to be reviewed by Internal Audit in 2016/17, no formal recommendation has been made within this report.

One key contract identified was with SLM Ltd for the provision of leisure services. A copy of this contract was obtained and it was confirmed that a comprehensive section on checks on criminal convictions for SLM staff was included. This requires the provider to notify the Council of any appointments made on delivery of the contract where the individual has a history of criminal convictions. The Council has, therefore, exercised its duty in stipulating the requirements for vetting staff who will be delivering services on its behalf in the leisure centre.

The Council's contract with Harborough District Council for provision of Lifeline services has also been reviewed. This contract does not require officers to be subject to checks on criminal convictions or barring. This has been discussed with management and this is not considered necessary as the only staff accessing service users' homes should be Melton Borough Council staff and the Lifeline service is only providing a contact centre function.

Based on these findings, an opinion of **Sufficient Assurance** has been given over the design of controls and **Sufficient Assurance** over the compliance and effectiveness of the controls.

3. ACTION PLAN

The following Action Plan provides 13 recommendations to address the findings identified by the audit. If accepted and implemented, these should improve the control environment and aid the Council in effectively managing its risks.

4. LIMITATIONS TO THE SCOPE OF THE AUDIT

This is an assurance piece of work and an opinion is provided on the effectiveness of arrangements for managing only the risks specified in the Audit Planning Record.

The Auditor's work does not provide any guarantee against material errors, loss or fraud. It does not provide absolute assurance that material error; loss or fraud does not exist.

ACTION PLAN

Risk 1	Failure to deliver a high standard intensive housing management service.					
Rec No.	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	Management Comments	Priority	Officer Responsible	Due date
1	<p>The Council's establishment was reviewed in 2016 to highlight those posts which should be eligible for a DBS check, under the revised guidance on regulated posts.</p> <p>This review was conducted by the HR and Health and Safety Officer but was not subject to any further review or approval. The review did not cover all posts (i.e. externally funded positions) and does not state the level of check applicable.</p> <p>Testing highlighted that this list is not being consistently enforced and cases were identified where posts which were not on the list had received DBS checks and also posts on the list which had not been subject to DBS checks. This is due to the decision not being based entirely on the list but also on requests from line managers. Furthermore, some posts where a DBS would appear applicable have not been highlighted as eligible.</p> <p>There is a risk that the application of DBS checks may be inconsistent, non-compliant with the DBS Code of Practice and not aligned with expectations of management in safeguarding service users if this list is not complete and consistently enforced.</p>	<p>The list should be reviewed to include all applicable posts and the level of check applicable (i.e. with or without barring list).</p> <p>The list should be subject to formal approval by senior management if this is to be the basis for conducting checks. This should then be enforced as the consistent basis for applying DBS checks.</p> <p>The establishment record should be updated to reflect actual posts to support budget setting and service planning.</p>	<p>List to be reviewed and agreed by T3 managers, with sign off by SMT.</p>	High	Head of Communications	30 6 17

2	<p>Sample testing identified two new starters in posts included in the DBS eligible list who had not been subject to a DBS check before their start date, or in the months since they had joined the Council. The job advertisements had stated that a DBS check would be applied.</p> <p>If the Council considers that these posts should be subject to a DBS check this should be conducted as soon as possible. Based on the information available to Internal Audit it is uncertain whether the posts meet the requirements of a regulated post and comparable posts at other authorities are not subject to DBS checks.</p> <p>There is a risk that posts which the Council has assessed as subject to a DBS check have not been suitably vetted.</p>	<p>The two posts highlighted (Environmental Health Officer and Senior Environmental Health Officer) should be reviewed to confirm whether a DBS check should be conducted. If so, this should be conducted as soon as possible and a risk assessment be undertaken in the meantime.</p> <p>If it is considered that these positions should not be subject to DBS checks, the establishment list should be updated accordingly.</p>	agreed	High	Head of Communications	30 6 17
3	<p>During testing, it was also noted that the establishment report still contained a number of posts which no longer exist.</p> <p>There is a risk that approved changes in posts and structures may not be fully documented and additional appointments could be made which are not under the current approved structure and budget.</p>	<p>The establishment report should be updated to reflect the current approved posts in the Council's establishment.</p>	agreed	Low	Head of Communications	31 8 17
4	<p>Renewals of DBS checks are conducted on a three yearly basis. Processes and record keeping are well established and robust.</p> <p>Testing highlighted, however, some delays in officers completing application forms for renewals despite notifications from the Administration Assistant. This results</p>	<p>Line managers should be informed of any impending DBS renewals required for members of their team and completion of the applications should be monitored in supervision meetings.</p>	agreed	Low	Head of Communications	31 7 17

	<p>in inefficiencies for the team in chasing for forms and lapses in the three yearly checks.</p> <p>There is a risk of time and resource spent on pursuing outstanding forms and failure by officers to complete their applications in a timely manner.</p>					
5	<p>There are currently no procedural notes for officers on the processing of DBS applications for new starters and existing staff.</p> <p>There is a risk that in the case of absence of key officers or changes in staffing, the controls in place may not be consistently applied to ensure the DBS checks are conducted in accordance with regulations and good practice.</p>	<p>Brief procedure notes should be produced to document the key processes involved in conducting DBS checks for staff.</p>	agreed	Medium	Head of Communications	31 7 17
Risk 2	Taxi and private hire licences are awarded to individuals who have not been subject to appropriate safeguarding checks.					
Rec No.	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	Management Comments	Priority	Officer Responsible	Due date
6	<p>The Council's current Taxi Licensing policy does not contain a detailed explanation of the implications of offences, including serious crimes, on the award of a licence. It does not specify, for example, the minimum number of years since a specific offence before a licence will be considered.</p> <p>A good practice example template has been provided by Internal Audit.</p> <p>Without a detailed policy on offences and implications for licences, there is a risk that decision making may not be consistent, supported or in accordance with best practice and applicants may not be fully informed on the implications of any offences, in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice.</p>	<p>Further detail on implications of different offences, in particular those of a violent or sexual nature, should be provided. This could either be expanded upon within the current policy or an additional policy on Criminal Convictions could be produced to address this area specifically and be referred to in the Taxi Licensing policy.</p>	agreed	Medium	Head of Regulatory Services	30 9 17

7	<p>Testing of taxi/private hire licence renewals identified that for 47% of the sample the licence had been awarded based on a DBS certificate issued over six months before – in some cases more than two years before.</p> <p>As the DBS certificate is only truly applicable on the date of issue, there is a risk that licences may be granted where convictions have been incurred since the certificate date. The reasons for this lapse have been identified but when the DBS renewal is not aligned with the licence renewal date, there is an increased risk that licence holders may not be subject to a three yearly check and retain their licence. Monitoring arrangements are in place but more difficult to enforce outside the licence renewal process.</p>	<p>Best practice would be for the Council to require all licence holders to subscribe to the DBS update service.</p> <p>This would enable a check to be undertaken at any time and would make processes more efficient for both applicants and Council officers.</p> <p>In the meantime, officers should only issue a licence (including renewals) on review of a DBS certificate which has been issued within the last four weeks, in accordance with Council policy.</p>	agreed	High	Head Regulatory Services	of 30 6 17
8	<p>The Council officers have introduced a useful checklist to maintain a clear audit trail of all DBS checks submitted, received and reviewed.</p> <p>Sample testing has, however, highlighted some gaps in audit trails including 13% of cases where no DBS certificate number had been recorded, to evidence the review. It was also unclear whether dates recorded related to dates of issue or date of review.</p> <p>Without a full audit trail there is a risk of lack of evidence of review of DBS certificates and potential for failure to confirm date of issue.</p>	<p>These areas have been discussed with officers and a revised checklist is to be produced and used in all future DBS applications.</p>	<p>Amended checklist produced and shared with Internal Audit for review.</p>	Medium	Head Regulatory Services	of Complete

9	<p>There are currently no procedural notes for officers on the processing of DBS applications for taxi and private hire drivers.</p> <p>There is a risk that in the case of absence of key officers or changes in staffing, the controls in place may not be consistently applied to ensure the DBS checks are conducted in accordance with regulations and good practice.</p>	Brief procedure notes should be produced to document the key processes involved in conducting DBS checks for staff.	agreed	Medium	Head of Regulatory Services	30 9 17
Risk 3	DBS Code of Practice and Data Protection Compliance.					
Rec No.	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	Management Comments	Priority	Officer Responsible	Due date
10	<p>The Council is not currently processing the minimum number of DBS checks required to retain registered body status.</p> <p>There is a risk that this status may be revoked from the Council and, if so, alternative arrangements for processing the checks will need to be made.</p>	Consideration and investigation should be made in to partnering with another umbrella, registered body in readiness for a potential loss of this status.	agreed	Low	Head of Communications	30 9 17
11	<p>The Council's ex-offenders policy is largely consistent with the DBS guidance and template.</p> <p>There are some areas, including staff training and the basis for identifying eligible posts, which should be investigated further and clarified within the policy, where appropriate.</p>	The policy should be reviewed in light of the areas highlighted by the Internal Audit reviewed against the DBS template and guidance.	agreed	Low	Head of Communications	30 9 17
12	<p>The DBS Code of Practice requires the Council to adopt a Data Handling policy in relation to the handling of information received on DBS certificates and to make this available to all applicants.</p> <p>Whilst the Council has data management policies in place, there is no specific policy on the handling of DBS information. There is a risk, therefore, of non-compliance with the Code of Practice in this area.</p>	A template has been provided by Internal Audit to assist officers in developing their own DBS data handling policy. This should be produced and adopted, then made available to all individuals for whom a DBS check is undertaken by the Council.	agreed	Medium	Head of Communications	30 9 17

13	<p>An audit trail documenting the DBS application, certificate receipt and review is maintained by the taxi licensing team in the form of a checklist. This is a useful record but it was noted that some certificate information was noted on these checklists, including notes on convictions reported.</p> <p>It was also noted that a scan of a DBS certificate was held on file for one applicant in the sample.</p> <p>The network folder where this information was saved was accessible to all members of the Licensing team.</p> <p>The Council must ensure that this data is held securely and is securely disposed of once no longer required. Otherwise, there is a risk of failure to comply with the DBS Code of Practice and Data Protection Act.</p>	<p>Access to the network folder containing details of DBS certificates, including convictions, must be limited to those officers requiring access for their role and this data must only be retained for the period for which it is required.</p>	agreed	Medium	Head of Regulatory Services	30 9 17
----	--	---	--------	--------	-----------------------------	---------

GLOSSARY

The Auditor's Opinion

The Auditor's Opinion for the assignment is based on the fieldwork carried out to evaluate the design of the controls upon which management rely and to establish the extent to which controls are being complied with. The table below explains what the opinions mean.

Level	Design of Control Framework	Compliance with Controls
SUBSTANTIAL	There is a robust framework of controls making it likely that service objectives will be delivered.	Controls are applied continuously and consistently with only infrequent minor lapses.
SUFFICIENT	The control framework includes key controls that promote the delivery of service objectives.	Controls are applied but there are lapses and/or inconsistencies.
LIMITED	There is a risk that objectives will not be achieved due to the absence of key internal controls.	There have been significant and extensive breakdowns in the application of key controls.
NO	There is an absence of basic controls which results in inability to deliver service objectives.	The fundamental controls are not being operated or complied with.

Category of Recommendations

The Auditor prioritises recommendations to give management an indication of their importance and how urgent it is that they be implemented. By implementing recommendations made managers can mitigate risks to the achievement of service objectives for the area(s) covered by the assignment.

Priority	Impact & Timescale
HIGH	Management action is imperative to ensure that the objectives for the area under review are met.
MEDIUM	Management action is required to avoid significant risks to the achievement of objectives.
LOW	Management action will enhance controls or improve operational efficiency.