GOVERNANCE ISSUES

The issues were identified as a result of the review of arrangements and by the work of external and internal audit. Whilst there are no "significant" control deficiencies to report, the following are included as issues that may attract public interest.

ACTIVITY	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD OFFICER	PROGRESS / RESOLUTION
Management of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	The Council signed up to a PFI for the transformation of secondary school education. Regular monitoring is required to ensure that the project delivers to its objectives and those risks are appropriately identified and mitigated.	Director of Children Services	Ongoing monitoring is undertaken of the PFI contract. Specific accounting treatment is maintained within the council's accounts to ensure correct recording of charges over the life of the contract. Ongoing.
Business Continuity	Business continuity is a risk for every business. The Council needs to ensure those services which are required to produce and test business continuity as well as (emergency) resilience plans, do so.	Director of Environment and Community Services	Lead Officer has reverted to the Executive Director of Operations following a review of the senior management structure. During 2007, an actual incident took place - the flooding of a key council building - resulting in a business continuity plan being put into action. Following this, a working group was set up to establish the lessons to be learnt, and any further changes required to ensure smoother delivery / mitigate any future disasters. Various developments and changes have been proposed and these have been communicated and endorsed by CMT. Ongoing business continuity and disaster recovery exercises are undertaken, the last being in December 2008, primarily in relation to the cessation of ICT systems / buildings. Further exercises based on different scenarios are planned on an ongoing basis. Ongoing.

ACTIVITY	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD OFFICER	PROGRESS / RESOLUTION
Safeguarding electronic data	Fundamental reviews of the ICT infrastructure during the year have established a clear blue print to ensure the protection of the interests of the council, its employees and the citizens of Peterborough.	Director of Strategic Resources	Whilst the council itself has not experienced any data losses, it is mindful of incidents in other public sector bodies. An incident team was created in October 2008 with the Primary Care Trust (and coordinated by them) following a potential issue within a family centre. Exemplary practice was followed. Flowing from this, various encryption arrangements have been put in place in relation to laptops within the Council and the use of USB data sticks has been restricted. Increased awareness has been made across the Council with the establishment of separate pages on Insite detailing practical advice on data security. Within the Council, a working group has been commissioned to look further in to the safe storage and transfer of data to authorised sources. The Council has to be compliant with a number of government initiatives - Government Connect project / E-CAF scheme - by 31 March 2009. An action plan is in place to deliver, which including changes to the IT architecture and councils policies. This is a time critical project to provide a secure environment for data exchanges. If the Council fails to meet the deadline, central government departments will cease to support information exchanges (in particular DWP). The council is pursuing the adoption of a managed service approach to deliver ICT services in the future. Various submissions have been received by interested parties and are being evaluated at present. Whatever solution is selected, the impact on security arrangements will be considered. Ongoing.

ACTIVITY	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	LEAD OFFICER	PROGRESS / RESOLUTION
Development of Local Area Agreements	The authority is increasingly engaged in partnership working with both the public and private sector. There is an increased expectation in terms of establishing assurance on governance arrangements for the growing number of partnership and joint working activities.	Assistant Chief Executive	Lead Officer has reverted to the Deputy Chief Executive following a review of the senior management structure. Agreements have been established with each provider - whether public, private or voluntary sector. Continue to roll out the partnership protocols developed and the associated toolkit. Ongoing.
Data quality	Data quality arrangements were assessed as weak by the External Auditors.	Director of Strategic Resources	Data quality arrangements have improved, with the externally assessed score moving to a 3 (from 2). A Data Quality policy and strategy has been implemented and regularly reviews are undertaken of data quality and the establishment of expected standards by Performance Improvement. Regular monitoring reports are taken to CMT.

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