

AUDIT SCOTLAND NATIONAL REPORTS TO AUDIT COMMITTEE 2009 - 2010

1. SUMMARY

The Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government (the Code) issued by CIPFA in 2000 and further revised in 2006 sets out good practice in delivering internal audit services. Grant Thornton UK LLP, in May 2007 carried out a Code compliance review and in their resultant report recommended that external audit reports (including Audit Scotland reports) be reported to the Audit Committee. Attached in Appendix 1 is the most recent report from Audit Scotland.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The contents of this report are noted and are to be followed up by Internal Audit.

3. DETAILS

3.1 On the 6th of August 2009 the Accounts Commission released a report entitled, "Improving Civil Contingencies Planning".

The Civil Contingencies Act was passed in 2004 and Audit Scotland's study looked at what progress has been made to date, assessed the pace of change and identified ways in which improvements can be made. Implementation of the Act is ongoing and it is recognised that some of the provisions have not yet been fully implemented or matured. The findings reflect the position at the time of the main audit work during 2008 and further progress may have been made since then.

The key messages can be summarised as follows:

- Overall, key organisations work well together, particularly through Strategic Coordinating Groups (SCGs), but there are still barriers to joint working.
- The Scottish Government has taken an active role in implementing the Act and this increased priority has placed greater demands on local responders.
- Governance and accountability arrangements for multi-agency working in civil contingencies planning are unclear.
- All SCGs have produced and published a CRR but these have made a limited contribution to informing civil contingencies planning at a local or national level.
- Most Category 1 responders have a generic emergency plan in place and have been involved in developing multi-agency arrangements for their SCG area. However, planning for business continuity management

and recovery are not yet well developed.

- Complex training and exercising requirements place significant demands on local responders, making participation and effective coordination difficult.
- Lessons from incidents and exercises are not shared widely or systematically put into practice.
- There is no clear information on how much is spent overall on civil contingencies planning across Scotland.
- There is potential for more collaboration between organisations to increase capacity and make more effective use of resources.

3.2 Argyll and Bute Council has taken its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act very seriously.

We have almost completed a Business Continuity programme which has seen the development of Departmental Recovery Plans for all the identified critical activities, and the development of a Business Continuity Plan.

The Council has also reviewed and developed its Emergency Planning Generic Plan and Pandemic Flu Plan. The Emergency Planning Unit enjoys a close working relationship with the partners within the local Strategic Co-ordinating Group.

The Council's website provides information to businesses on Business Continuity Planning.

3.3 The full report can either be viewed at http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/work/local_national.php 2009/10 or viewed in the Members room where copies of the above reports are available for review.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This report is submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration.

5. IMPLICATIONS

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| 5.1 | Policy: | None |
| 5.2 | Financial: | None |
| 5.3 | Personnel: | None |
| 5.4 | Legal: | None |
| 5.5 | Equal Opportunities: | None |

For further information please contact Alex Colligan, Internal Audit Manager (01546 604271).