

Internal Audit Report 2025/2026

Appendix 1

Council Tax (Ref: 25_26.01)

1. Executive Summary

<p>Directorate: Finance, Revenues & Benefits</p> <p>Audit Owner: Caroline Saych, Revenues & Benefits Manager</p> <p>Distribution List: Alastair Clarke, Revenues Income Team Leader, Grace Osinnowo, Head of Finance, Lance Porteous, Director of Finance, Revenues & Benefits, Adrian Webb, Strategic Director of Finance & Commercialisation and Corporate Services, Peter Holt, Chief Executive</p> <p>Auditor: Meng-Chee Leong</p> <p>Audit Manager: Philip Honeybone</p> <p>Final Report Date: November 2026</p>		<p><u>Overall Opinion</u></p> <p>SUBSTANTIAL ASSURANCE ●</p>	<p><u>Number of issues relating to Control Design</u></p> <p>① Critical</p> <p>① High</p> <p>① Medium</p> <p>① Low</p>	<p><u>Number of issues relating to Controls Operating in Practice</u></p> <p>① Critical</p> <p>① High</p> <p>① Medium</p> <p>① Low</p>
<p>Scope of the Review/ Limitations:</p>	<p>The scope of this audit is to review the Council Tax financial system to ensure all income received by the Council is accounted for correctly and that discounts and exemptions granted are valid. Our audit assessment is pertinent to the controls and processes in place prior to the service restructure. Arrears managed by the Recovery Team have been omitted from this audit along with the reconciliation of the council tax revenue as it has been satisfactorily verified in the 2024 Cash and Bank Audit.</p>			
<p>Overview</p> <p>The NEC Revs & Bens system is effective and supports the Council Tax service workflow, ensuring the billing and revenue levy are correctly accounted for and that exemptions applied are correct.</p> <p>Our audit examination and testing of controls in accordance with the Terms of Reference are satisfactory and a substantial assurance is provided that the service is able to achieve its objectives and no recommendation is made.</p> <p>The collection rate has continued to achieve its target and collection rate of 98% - 99% for the past three years. This consistent performance underscores the commitment to maintaining high standards and reflects the efficiency of the processes in place.</p>		<p>Each of the objectives for this review are shown as segments of the wheel. The key to the colours on the wheel are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">No / Low priority issues identifiedMedium priority issues identifiedHigh priority issues identifiedCritical priority issues identified		

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Business Rates (NNDR) (Ref: 25_26.02)

2. Executive Summary

Directorate: Finance, Revenues & Benefits Audit Owner: Revenues & Benefits Manager Distribution List: Grace Osinnowo, Head of Finance, Lance Porteous, Director of Finance, Revenues & Benefits, Adrian Webb, Strategic Director of Finance & Commercialisation and Corporate Services, Peter Holt, Chief Executive Auditor: Meng-Chee Leong Audit Manager: Philip Honeybone Final Report Date: November 2026		Overall Opinion SUBSTANCIAL ASSURANCE ●	Number of issues relating to Control Design ① Critical ① High ① Medium ① Low	Number of issues relating to Controls Operating in Practice ① Critical ① High ① Medium ① Low
Scope of the Review/ Limitations:	The scope of this audit is to review the Business Rates billing and key financial system to ensure all income received by the Council is accounted for correctly. Our audit assessment is pertinent to the controls and processes in place prior to the service restructure.			
Overview The NEC Revs & Bens system is effective and supports the NNDR service workflow, ensuring the billing and revenue levy are correctly accounted for and that exemptions applied are correct. Our audit examination and testing of controls in accordance with the Terms of Reference are satisfactory and a substantial assurance is provided on the service being able to achieve its objectives. One recommendation has been made on record keeping and noted on the following page. The service is efficient and effectively managed with lean resources and the collection rate has continued to achieve its target and collection rate of 98% - 99% for the past three years. This consistent performance underscores the commitment to maintaining high standards while optimising resource allocation. Good working practice had been noted due to collaboration between the Print Manager and the Revenues & Benefits Manager. This had resulted in a change process with improvement to resilience and potential cost savings due to pre-printed stationery no longer being required for the annual billing.		<div>Each of the objectives for this review are shown as segments of the wheel. The key to the colours on the wheel are as follows:</div> <div><div><div></div><div>No / Low priority issues identified</div></div><div><div></div><div>Medium priority issues identified</div></div><div><div></div><div>High priority issues identified</div></div><div><div></div><div>Critical priority issues identified</div></div></div> <div><div><div><div>Risk Management Systems, Transactions & Records ① ①</div><div>Governance ① ①</div><div>Monitoring & Reporting, Performance ① ①</div><div>Financial Management Discounts, Exemptions ① ①</div></div></div></div>		

