HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

IT Remediation Review – Huntingdonshire District Council Arrangements

FINAL Internal Audit Report 2025/26

12 February 2026

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CONTENTS

AUDIT OUTCOME OVERVIEW

In line with our scope, included at Appendix B, the overview of our findings is detailed below.

Background: As part of the 2025/26 Internal Audit plan, we have reviewed Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) arrangements for the Chief Digital and Information Officer (CDIO) role. Triple Value Impact (TVI), a third party, performed an ICT review which identified a need for the CDIO role and sets out the context for the CDIO programme, highlighting the need for improved digital leadership, governance, and operational ICT services. It recommended evolving the 3C ICT service into a "3C Digital" model, led by a CDIO delivering a CDIO programme, supported by a digital projects team and an operational ICT team. Our review focused on the CDIO role in delivering the intended outcomes of the CDIO programme and associated remediation activities, including governance, leadership impact, delivery against Year 1 success criteria, and measured improvements in customer satisfaction. The objective was to assess whether the role, as designed and implemented, has provided the expected uplift in stability, transparency, cultural change and strategic alignment across digital and ICT services.

The scope of this review considered:
   i.   Year 1 success criteria and the underlying three-wave delivery framework;
   ii. CDIO forum reporting and internal ICT presentations;
   iii. Year-on-year customer satisfaction survey results (2024 vs 2025); and
   iv. 360-degree feedback and stakeholder interviews.

We also met with key stakeholders to obtain feedback on the CDIO's impact, recognising that testing was undertaken on a sample basis and did not extend to a comprehensive review of all aspects of IT governance or verification of reported data.

HDC, along with its partner Councils, Cambridge City Council (CCC) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), have introduced the CDIO role with transition funding and establishment uplift to strengthen digital leadership and delivery discipline. Evidence from programme materials and the 360 satisfaction survey indicates that the role has driven improved stability, transparency, cultural interventions, and stronger alignment across digital and ICT. These improvements sit alongside a structured three-wave plan sequencing initiatives, budgets, dependencies and timelines, and a consolidated customer satisfaction instrument enabling robust comparison between 2024 and 2025 to evidence progress.

This assessment was therefore designed to evaluate the extent to which outcomes to date align to the original CDIO programme intent and Year 1 success criteria, while acknowledging scope limitations and ongoing transformation dependencies, such as operating model changes, capacity uplift, and cross-council governance alignment.

Conclusion: Our assessment indicates that the introduction of the CDIO role has enabled HDC to deliver improvements as set out by the CDIO programme and has accelerated foundations for long-term improvement. Programme evidence and 360-degree feedback as part of the employee satisfaction survey for HDC point to a step change in leadership presence and alignment across digital and ICT, alongside a governance reset, improved transparency, cultural interventions, and measurable gains in user sentiment across key service attributes. The three-wave delivery framework has strengthened sequencing and dependency management, and a consolidated survey instrument evidence's year-on-year improvement in overall satisfaction and core service dimensions. Taken together, these outcomes demonstrate clear positive impact against the intent of the CDIO programme.

Nevertheless, we identified areas where further action is needed to fully realise and sustain benefits. The operating model uplift is incomplete, with delays to recruitment (such as Enterprise Architect and Business Partnering) sustaining a single-point dependency on the CDIO.

We have agreed two medium priority actions in relation to the above. Furthermore, while year-on-year satisfaction scores have improved, the survey results confirm that several user-level service gaps remain unresolved. Until the Council completes the planned Wave 2 - 3 activities to address these gaps, there is a continued risk that improvements delivered to date will not fully translate into a sustained uplift in user experience.

Audit themes:

Management or performance information

Customer satisfaction results demonstrate clear year-on-year improvement; however, survey feedback highlights persistent service gaps that align with Wave 2–3 deliverables not yet completed. To ensure benefits are realised at user level, these gaps require targeted close-out supported by defined KPIs, ownership and ongoing performance reporting. **(Medium)**

Design of the control framework

While the three-wave delivery framework has strengthened discipline and structure, several Year One success criteria remain in progress due to dependencies on governance restructuring, operating-model uplift and organisational maturity. Without re-baselining success measures to realistic timelines and ownership, the programme risks being unable to demonstrate delivery progress despite meaningful advances. **(Medium)**

Programme design and delivery discipline

The CDIO translated Year-One success criteria into a three-wave delivery framework that sequences initiatives, clarifies dependencies, and ties spend to outcomes; this re-baselining improved transparency while delivering more within the same overall timeline and budget envelope, evidenced by wave-based progress tables and cost trackers presented to leadership throughout the year. Programme packs show Wave 1 substantially completed early, strong progression of Wave 2 enablers, and an itemised budget position that remained within allocation while absorbing limited re-prioritisations (such as Applications Rationalisation) to maximise value delivery.

Structured, consistent leadership communication

Regular "CDIO/CX" forum and All-Staff briefings provided a consistent, traceable line of sight from objectives to delivery, with progress percentages, outstanding actions, and cost trackers reported across May, September and December 2025. This cadence strengthened stakeholder confidence and alignment by showing what was complete, what was in train, and where structural dependencies remained, culminating in clear messaging on audit readiness and next steps.

Outcome-focused performance evidence

The programme used a consolidated customer-satisfaction instrument and a KPI/SLA refresh to evidence improvements, with results confirming the 10%+ uplift target and documenting progress on metrics that matter to users and governance alike. This outcome-orientation demonstrates a credible benefits narrative linking governance reset and service interventions to measurable user-level improvements.

Satisfaction Uplift with Lower Participation

The 360 degree satisfaction report, developed by TVI, in 2025 records a significantly lower response volume (552 in 2024 vs 183 in 2025), and a higher proportion of respondents who were at least somewhat satisfied (62% in 2024 vs 76% in 2025), alongside positive movements on reliability (+15% "somewhat reliable or above"), support effectiveness (+14% positive; +19% "very effective"), and remote/flexible working (+6% positive).

Summary of Actions for Management

01
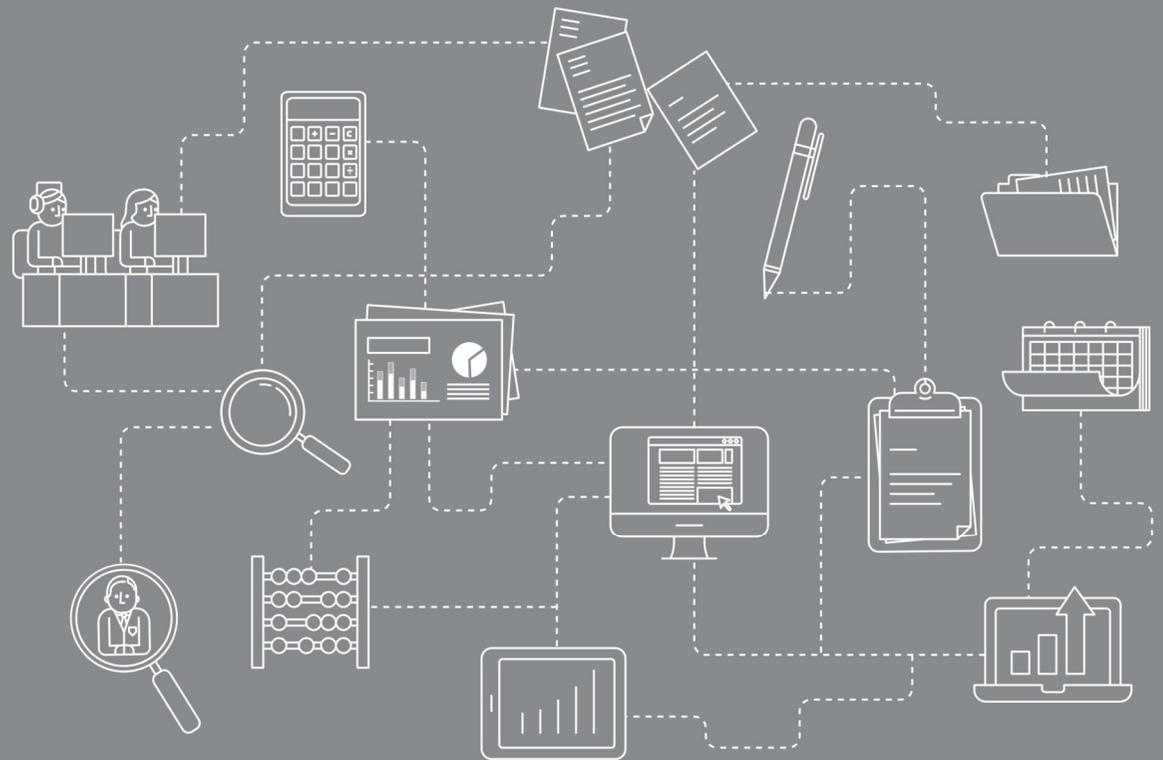
SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

The action priorities are defined as*:

High	Medium	Low
Immediate management attention is necessary.	Timely management attention is necessary.	There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency.

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsible Owner	Date
1	A revised, realistic plan for completing or re-baselining the remaining Year One success criteria will be agreed and documented. This will include clear timelines, ownership, and governance reporting to evidence progress and maintain confidence in programme delivery. Where criteria are no longer achievable due to maturity constraints, success measures will be formally updated to reflect agreed priorities and dependencies.	Medium	Simon Oliver, Chief Digital and Information Officer	30 April 2026
2	A concise close-out plan will be agreed and documented that will: 1. Ensure the recruitment of the customer experience manager; 2. Assign ownership, timelines, and reporting for survey-identified service gaps (Hornbill Phase Two, Applications Support review, device/meeting-room upgrades); and 3. Re-baseline success measures where capacity or maturity constraints require staged delivery.	Medium	Simon Oliver, Chief Digital and Information Officer	30 April 2026

Detailed Findings and Actions

02

DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all audit testing undertaken.
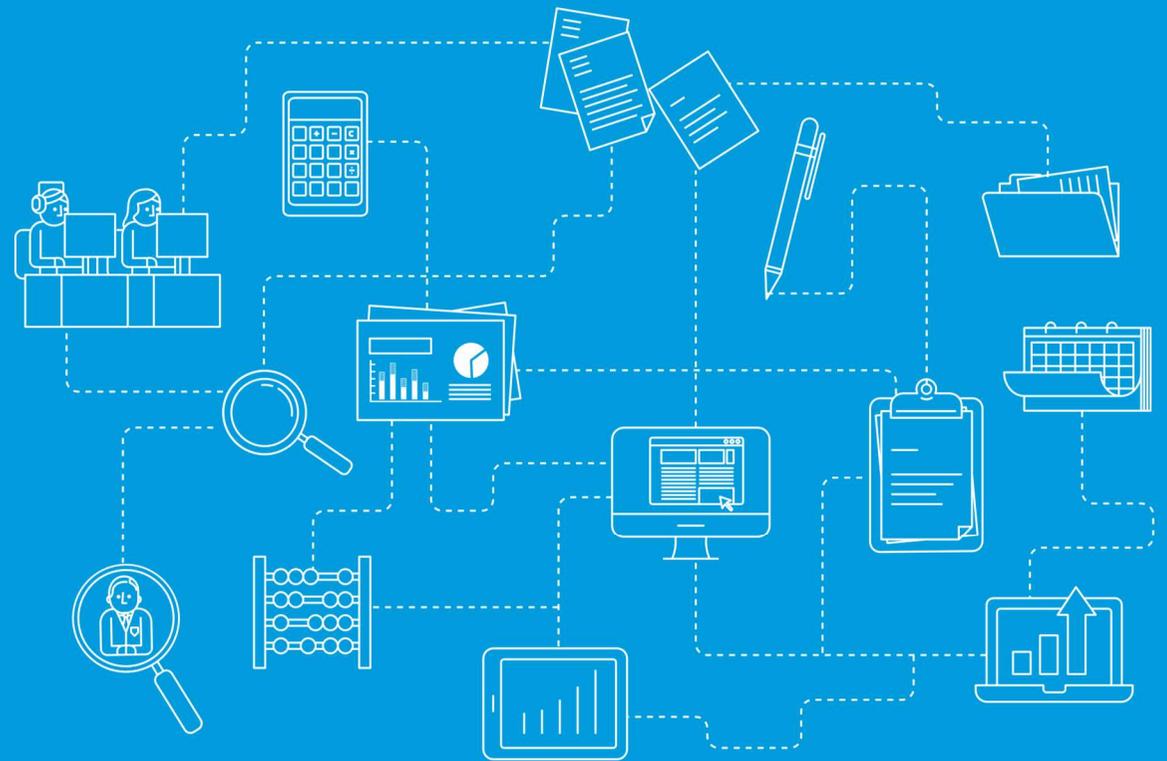
Year One Success Criteria Achievement		
Control	A CDIO-led programme is in place with Year One success criteria defined across five key outcomes, supported by transition plans and governance expectations.	**Assessment:**
	Delivery discipline has been strengthened through a three-wave framework that sequences initiatives, allocates budgets, and provides visibility of dependencies and timelines.	**Design** ✓ **Compliance** ✕
Findings / Implications	The Partner Councils have a CDIO programme established in direct response to the Triple Value Impact (TVI) review, with clearly defined Year One success criteria across five outcomes (effective joint governance, collaborative digital leadership, organisational restructure, CSIP led improvements, and a reliable operational ICT service) and supporting transition plans and governance expectations.	
	These outcomes have been supported by the £241k transition funding and the commencement of the £300k establishment uplift. The CDIO role has strengthened delivery discipline by reworking these outcomes into a three-wave framework with a revised timeline, detailed initiatives and budgeted workstreams, which has improved transparency of sequencing and dependencies. The scale and depth of work delivered through this three-wave approach have exceeded the initial expectations and budgeted effort associated with the original success criteria plan, reflecting the significant remediation and foundational change required to support long term improvement.	
	However, assessed against the original TVI success criteria at year end, the current status is:	
	- collaborative digital leadership complete; - CSIP/improvement actions complete; - effective joint governance in progress, with governance restructure and cost apportionment methodology not yet fully implemented; - organisational restructure in progress, with delays in recruiting the Enterprise Architect and Business Partner; and - reliable operational ICT service in progress, with full service redesign dependent on Target Operating Model changes, cultural change and additional delivery capacity beneath the CDIO.	
	If the remaining Year One success criteria are not completed within a realistic and formally agreed revised timeframe, there is a risk that overall programme success cannot be evidenced to governance bodies, with benefits realisation delayed and the CDIO's impact under recognised despite substantial progress to date. This may undermine confidence in the sustainability of improvements and constrain planning for subsequent phases, highlighting the need to formally re baseline expectations where original criteria are no longer achievable due to maturity constraints.	

Management Action 1	A revised, realistic plan for completing or re-baselining the remaining Year One success criteria will be agreed and documented. This will include clear timelines, ownership, and governance reporting to evidence progress and maintain confidence in programme delivery. Where criteria are no longer achievable due to maturity constraints, success measures will be formally updated to reflect agreed priorities and dependencies.	**Responsible Owner:** Simon Oliver, Chief Digital and Information Officer	**Date:** 30 April 2026	**Priority:** Medium

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Control	The Partner Councils operate a consolidated customer satisfaction survey using a consistent methodology across 2024 and 2025, enabling clear year-on-year comparison.	Assessment:	
	✓	Design	✓
		Compliance	✕

Findings / Implications	The Partner Councils have implemented a structured customer satisfaction survey, consolidating 2024 and 2025 results into a single instrument with consistent scales and side-by-side analysis. Year-on-year improvements are evidenced:
	• overall satisfaction increased from 62% to 76%; • reliability is rated "somewhat reliable or above" by 75% of respondents; and • support effectiveness reached 87%, with a notable uplift in "very effective" responses.
	Positive movement is also observed in communication, remote/flexible working, and confidence in cyber capability, aligning to Year One objectives and CDIO-led foundations (culture reset, Hornbill Phase One, Microsoft platform work).
	However, survey responses highlight persistent service gaps; clarity of application support pathways remains mixed (61% clear), and users continue to report practical issues across connectivity/network, meeting-room equipment, laptops, and helpdesk/ticketing. These themes map to planned Wave 2–3 deliverables (e.g. Hornbill Phase Two, Applications Support & Development Review, device and meeting-room upgrades) that are not yet fully implemented.
	If these survey-identified service gaps are not closed within an agreed and realistic timeframe, there is a risk that benefits realisation at the user level will stall and the programme will be unable to fully evidence sustained improvement, under-representing the impact of Year One activities.

Management Action 2	A concise close-out plan will be agreed and documented that will:	Responsible Owner:	Date:	Priority:
	1. Ensure recruitment of the customer experience manager; 2. Assign ownership, timelines, and reporting for survey-identified service gaps (Hornbill Phase Two, Applications Support review, device/meeting-room upgrades); and 3. Re-baseline success measures where capacity or maturity constraints require staged delivery.	Simon Oliver, Chief Digital and Information Officer	30 April 2026	**Medium**

Appendices

03

APPENDIX A: CATEGORISATION OF FINDINGS

Categorisation of internal audit findings

Low

There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency.

Medium

Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.

High

Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: Substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made as a result of this audit.

Area	Control design not effective*	Non-compliance with controls*	Agreed actions		
			Low	Medium	High
Year One Success Criteria	0	1	0	1	0
CDIO Programme	0	0	0	0	0
CDIO Forum Reports	0	0	0	0	0
CDIO Presentations to Council	0	0	0	0	0
Customer Satisfaction Surveys	0	1	0	1	0
Key Stakeholders Feedback	0	0	0	0	0
Total			**0**	**2**	**0**

* Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with.

APPENDIX B: SCOPE

The scope below is a copy of the original document issued.

Scope of the review

The scope was planned to provide assurance on the controls and mitigations in place relating to the following objective:

Objective of the review	Risks relevant to the scope of the review	Risk source
Undertake a review to assess the success of the Chief Digital and Information Officer (CDIO) role against expected outcomes per the CDIO programme and delivering remedial activities.	The remediation plan for 2025 has not been implemented as required.	CDIO

When planning the audit, the following were agreed:

Areas for consideration:

- Review the objectives and activities including year one success criteria
- Review the CDIO programme and other CDIO led activity
- Review the CDIO Forum reports
- Review the CDIO internal ICT presentations to the council
- Compare the results of the customer satisfaction surveys between 2024 and 2025
- Review the results of the CDIO role and post holder survey
- Meet with key stakeholders to obtain feedback on the CDIO programme

Limitations to the scope of the audit assignment:

- The scope of our work will be limited only to those areas that have been examined and reported and is not to be considered as a comprehensive review of all aspects of IT governance.
- This review was carried out in an advisory capacity.
- This review will focus on the IT remediation performed within HDC and not directly on the Partner Councils.
- We will not consider ICT budget management, overtime spend or efficiency savings in this review.
- Testing will be undertaken on a sample basis only, limited to the areas set out above.
- We will not provide assurance that the programme will allow the organisation to achieve its objectives.
- The review will not ensure compliance with data protection regulations and ethical standards for data use.
- The results of our work are reliant on the quality and completeness of the information provided to us. We will not confirm the accuracy of the data reported.
- Our work will not provide an absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

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Final report issued	12 February 2026	**Client sponsor Distribution**	Simon Oliver / Chief Digital and Information Officer Simon Oliver / Chief Digital and Information Officer Michelle Sacks / Huntingdonshire District Council Chief Executive

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