



**Internal Audit Summary Report
2007/08
London Borough of Brent
Customer Satisfaction Feedback
June 2008**

This report has been prepared on the basis of the limitations set out on page 15.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

As part of our agreed quality monitoring processes, customer satisfaction questionnaires are sent out for each audit at the time of issuing the Draft Report. This report sets out a summary of the feedback that has been received in relation to audits undertaken against the 2007/08 Internal Audit Plan.

The ratings which auditees are asked to apply to our performance are as follows:

- 1 - Unacceptable;
- 2 - Not quite good enough;
- 3 - Perfectly Satisfactory;
- 4 - Highly Effective; and
- 5 - Excellent.

The auditee is asked to apply these ratings across six specific areas, together with an overall rating for the work completed. The six areas covered are as follows:

- Planning and Co-ordination;
- Understanding your service;
- Client relationships;
- Feedback;
- Reporting; and
- Timeliness.

Additionally they have the opportunity to make any further comments regarding any aspect of the audit.

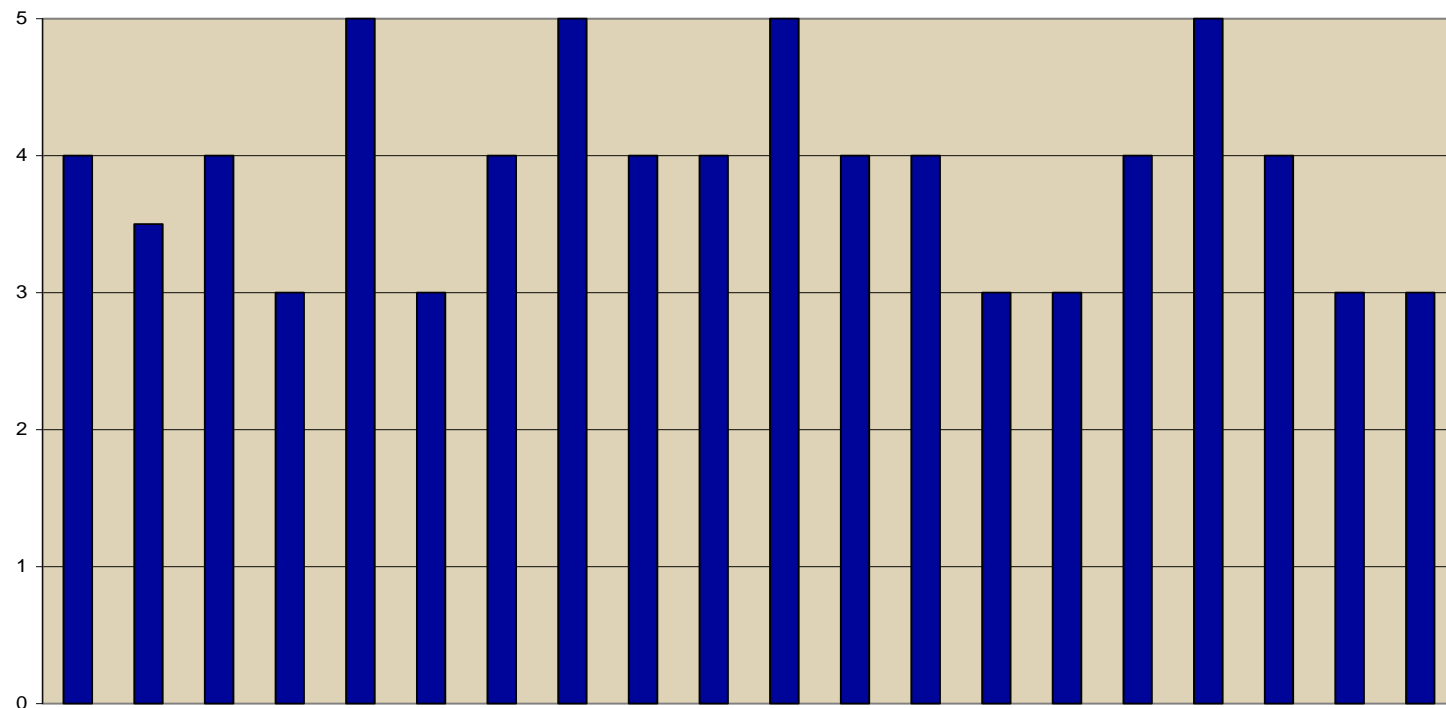
Overall Summary of Feedback

A total of 46 satisfaction surveys were issued in relation to work carried out as part of the 2007/08 Internal Audit Plan. Of these, 20 responses have been received from auditees, representing a response rate of approximately 43%.

An average score for overall performance has been calculated at 3.88, which means that our overall performance has been judged as being significantly better than 'perfectly satisfactory'. Within this average score, we have been judged as 'highly effective' on nine occasions, and 'excellent' on four. In no cases has our overall rating fallen below 'perfectly satisfactory'.

We have set out in the following section our performance across the six specific areas assessed as part of the Satisfaction Questionnaire. In all six areas our average score has exceeded 3.73, and our highest average is 4.40 in the area of 'Client Relationships'.

Overall Ratings

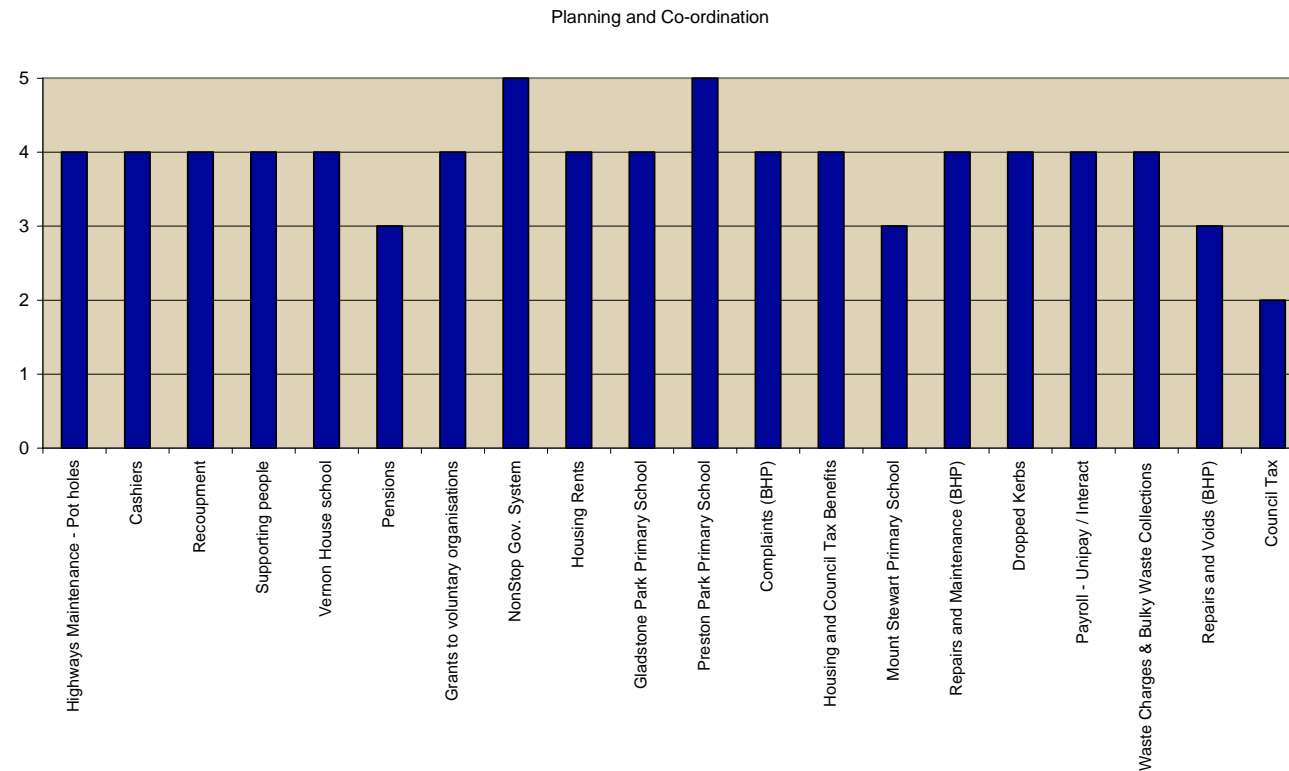


Detailed Summary of Feedback

Planning and Co-ordination

Our average rating for Planning and Co-ordination was 3.85. However, of the 20 responses received, we were actually rated as 'highly effective' in 14 cases, and 'excellent' in two. Our average has been lowered by three 'perfectly satisfactory ratings and one 'not quite good enough' rating.

The 'not quite good enough rating' was received for the Council Tax audit, and was given due to the audit taking place in February when staff were building up to the annual billing run. As such we don't feel that this is an entirely fair rating given that the date was agreed well in advance in October 2007. However, we have already resolved this issue for 2008/09, agreeing that the audit should take place in November 2008.

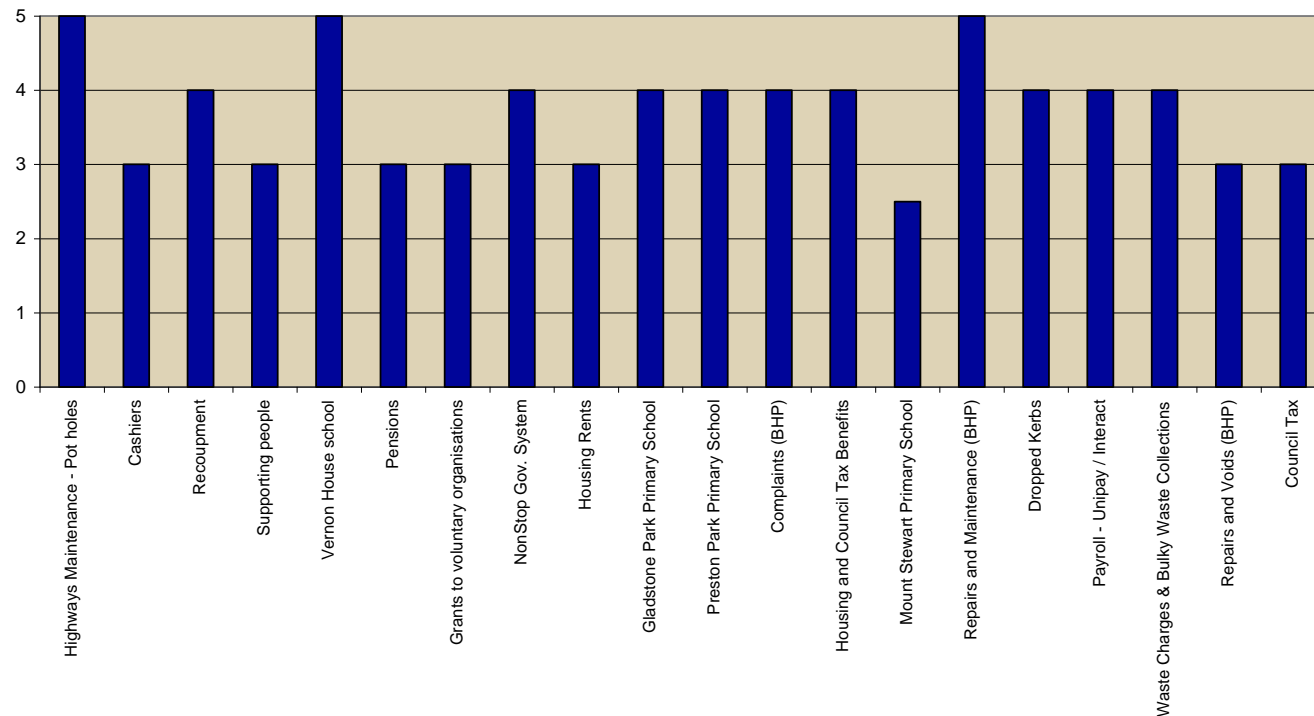


Understanding Your Service

Our average rating for Understanding Your Service was 3.77. However, as with Planning and Co-ordination, the majority of the ratings have been a four or above, with nine of the 20 responses received being 'highly effective' and three 'excellent' ratings. We only received one rating below 'perfectly satisfactory', which was for one of the schools.

Overall, we consider this to be a positive outcome given that this is a key area of the audit process and given that this was our first full year of working within Brent.

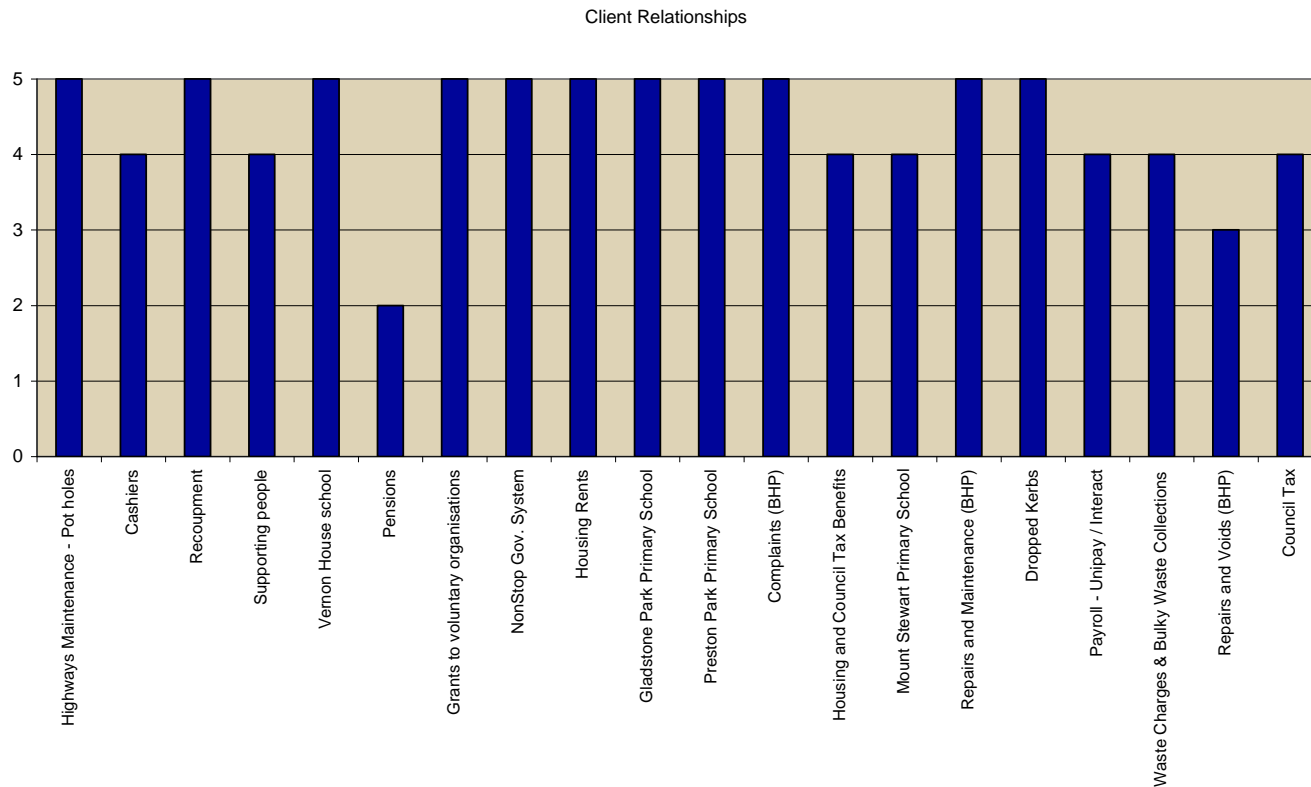
Understanding Your Service



Client Relationships

This has been our strongest area of performance with an average rating of 4.40. Of the 20 responses, received, we were rated as 'highly effective' in seven cases, and 'excellent' in 11 cases.

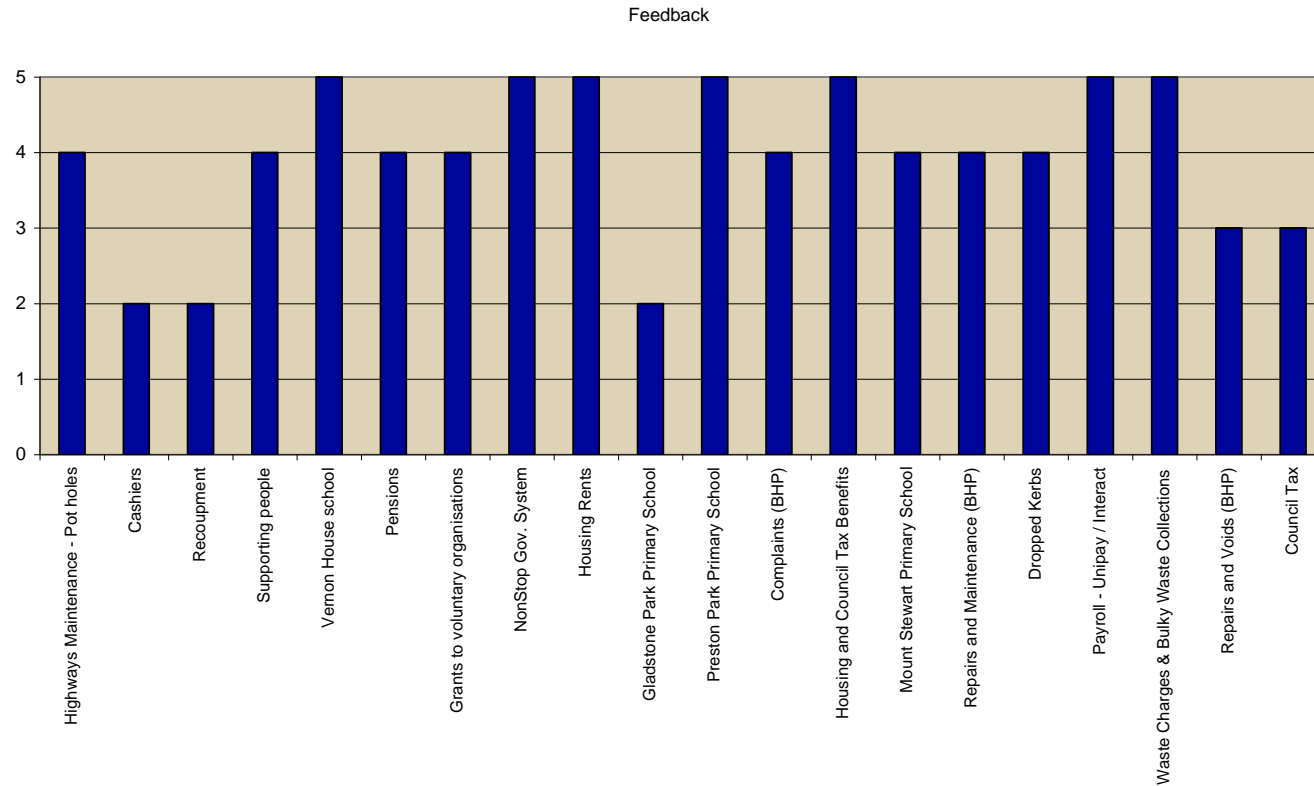
The one rating of 'not quite good enough' for the pensions audit is disappointing. However, from the comments raised by the auditee, there did not seem to be any significant issues given that these stated that they were 'happy with the courteous approach of the auditor'. The only negative aspect to the comments was with regards to having more notice about specific pieces of information that were needed, but overall we do not feel that there are major issues to be addressed from this.



Feedback

Our average rating for Feedback was 3.95, with eight 'highly effective' ratings and seven 'excellent' ratings. However, we do acknowledge that three of the 20 responses rated us as 'not quite good enough' in this area.

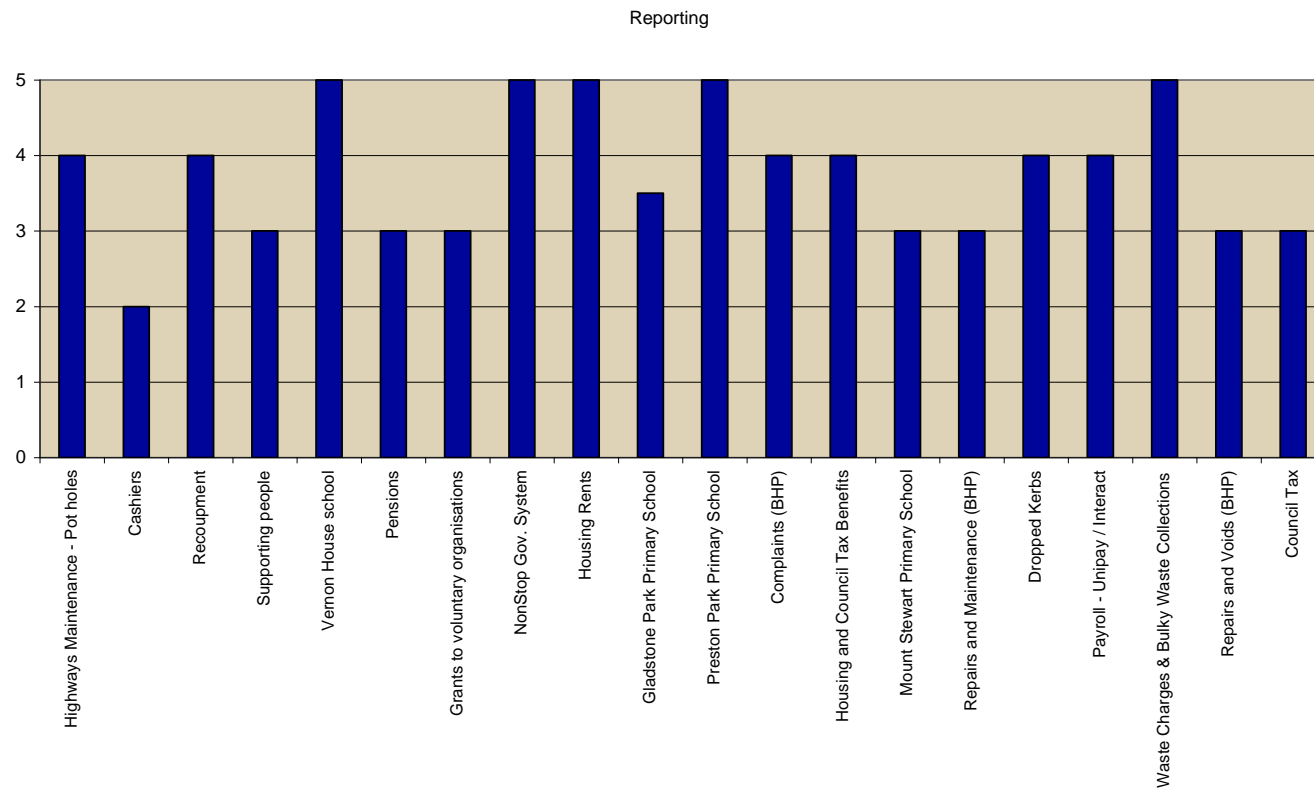
From comments received, we do recognise that there are occasions when our feedback in the exit meeting does not adequately prepare the auditees for the detail they then receive in the Draft Report. To a certain extent this may be due to the auditor not making it clear enough that the findings in the exit meeting are only draft findings which are then subject to various stages of review, during which additional points may be picked up on. Another issue may be that the auditor fails to stress the significance of weaknesses to the same degree as is then reflected in the report. We're currently looking at ways in which we can maximise the effectiveness of our exit meetings so as to ensure we achieve the top ratings in all cases.



Reporting

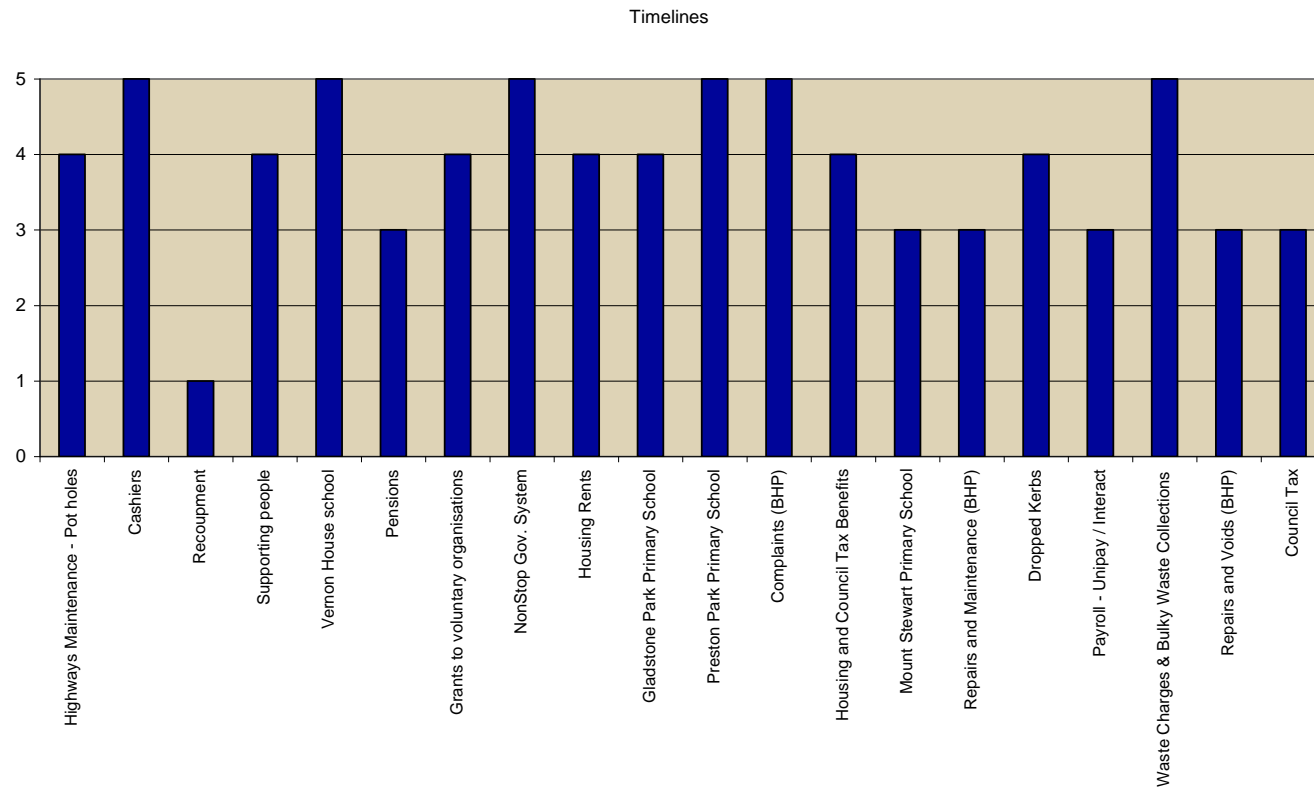
Our average rating for Reporting was 3.78. Of the 20 responses received, six were at the 'highly effective' level, and five were rated as 'excellent'. All others rated us as 'perfectly satisfactory' with the exception of one 'not quite good enough' rating for the Cashiers audit.

We discussed the 'not quite good enough' rating and do not feel that there were significant issues that need to be addressed moving forwards. As such, we believe that this rating was given due to there being relatively few weaknesses needing to be raised, and hence this audit being seen as not adding value, when in fact the outcome was positive since we gave substantial assurance for what are newly developed cashiers arrangements.



Timeliness

Our average rating for timeliness was 3.85, with seven 'highly effective' ratings and six 'excellent' ratings. In all other cases we were rated as 'perfectly satisfactory' with the one exception being an 'unacceptable' rating for the Recoupment audit. It is accepted that there was some delay between finishing the main fieldwork and the issuing of the draft report. However, we had explained that this was going to be the case due to us needing to go back and see one of the auditees to complete a final piece of testing. Due to a period of leave there was a gap to this final visit. We accept that this isn't ideal, but would suggest that this was a one-off as opposed to being reflective of our general performance.



Appendix A – Questionnaire Areas

The six areas making up the questionnaire are as follows:

Planning and co-ordination

Did we plan our audit effectively? Was our work co-ordinated with your own workloads and deadlines? Were all relevant staff fully informed of what we were doing, and why, throughout the process?

Understanding your service

Did we understand your service and any difficulties you face? Were our questions and requests for information informed and sensible?

Client relationships

Did we treat you and all your staff with the courtesy you expected? Did we keep our appointments and were you given enough time to respond to any requests for information?

Feedback

Did we talk your officers through our findings, were you given an opportunity to correct any inaccuracies and comment on areas of disagreement? Were your comments fairly represented in our final report?

Reporting

Was our report produced to the standard you wanted? Did it address all the issues agreed in the audit brief? Were our recommendations practical? Did we produce a report which you found useful?

Timeliness

Did we complete our work within a reasonable period? Did we agree with you how long the work would take and did we meet those deadlines? Were the explanations for any delays reasonable?

Appendix 2 – Breakdown of Questionnaire Responses

The table below sets out a breakdown of the feedback across each of the 20 questionnaires received. This includes both the scores in each of the feedback areas and any comments raised by auditees via the questionnaires. As such we haven't responded directly to any negative comments shown below, but each of these have been discussed with the auditees and satisfactorily resolved. We have also highlighted general points within the main body of this report in terms of areas in which we will be looking to improve and areas where we do not feel that the lower ratings received represent significant areas of concern.

Audit	Planning and Co-ordination	Understanding your service	Client Relationships	Feedback	Reporting	Timelines	Overall	Comments	Respondee
Highways Maintenance - Pot holes	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	The auditor was very proactive in suggesting improvements.	Sandor Fazekas, Head of Highways
Cashiers	4	3	4	2	2	5	3.5	Whilst an audit is not necessarily a place for praise or encouragement the style of writing is very cold with very little acknowledgement of what the service has achieved. The service was audited some years ago, and whilst not by Deloitte had you seen the previous report some appreciation of the travel would have been evident. Instead this feels very knit picky, whereas some positive comments would leave a better impression than just feeling criticised.	Sarah Cardno, Exchequer Manager
Recoupment	4	4	5	2	4	1	4	Significant delay in receiving draft report but quality of work good & provided useful information	Hannah Le Vay, Head of Finance
Supporting People	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	I think we felt that the audit took a long time, 10 days work on site to produce 9 low priority recommendations did not seem very time effective. I was disappointed with the auditor understanding of the need to work	Helen Duckworth, Supporting Housing Policy Manager

								jointly with other boroughs to follow government guidance on reducing bureaucracy and how this was reflected in the report. Inevitably joint working across boroughs means that each borough does not keep all the paperwork involved in joint projects- this would defeat the object of the joint working. The auditor did not seem to take this into account. In her recommendation; she did not indicate that the paperwork being held by the lead borough would be seen as a failing – of course, we would have obtained the paperwork from LBHF if she had indicated this. A similar issue arose with regard to the contract which was being sealed at the Town Hall at the time of the audit- the auditor did not indicate that this would be seen as a failing, if she had done, we would have obtained it.	
Vernon House school	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	The Auditors were very patient about the challenging circumstances of working within the school. The Audit and their comments were very helpful and indicated the professional way forward.	School Administrator
Pensions	3	3	2	4	3	3	3	I was happy with the courteous approach of the auditor and their feedback to me. I was also happy about the outcome of the audit. Areas for Improvement: I would like plenty of advanced warning for data required and questions asked – there were occasions when this was not the case which had an impact on resources. If audit will require	Andrew Gray, Pensions Manager

								access to resources e.g. desk. Laptop/ PC access etc I should like these to be notified to us in good time.	
Grants to voluntary organisations	4	3	5	4	3	4	4	N.A	Forbes Beverleigh, Acting Voluntary Sector Team Manager
NonStop Gov. System	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	A very well organised and informative audit. The auditor was very helpful and knowledgeable in her area of work. Her excellent interpersonal skills meant she was able to demonstrate that the purpose of the audit was for the benefits of the organisation rather than for fault findings	Judith Young, Head of Policy, Information and Performance
Housing Rents	4	3	5	5	5	4	4	The ladies who did the audit were professional and friendly. On the Whole they grasped most areas of work quickly and were effective on the report produced.	Jeni Silwood
Gladstone Park Primary School	4	4	5	2	3.5	4	4	I was concerned that the feedback given orally did not match the report. I also felt one of the recommendations was phrased inappropriately and implied we were trying to mislead which was not the case. The report format is good and easy to follow.	Mr. Bruce, Head Teacher
Preston Park Primary School	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	Thank you for an excellent service, we feel that your input has helped us on a valuable learning curve. Lynsey was very efficient and communicated with us at all times. This was a vast;y superior service to our previous Audit. Thank you.	John Redpath

Complaints	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	N.A	Mike Dwyer, Head of Standards and Procurement
Housing and Council Tax Benefits	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	We were very pleased with the work generally. Any issues were ironed out quickly and professionally and the audit was conducted in a friendly manner. The final report was fair and balanced	Simon Hardwick, Service Development Manager
Mount Stewart Primary School	3	2.5	4	4	3	3	3	n/a	Linda Redfern, Head Teacher
Repairs and Maintenance (BHP)	4	5	5	4	3	3	3	I think the audit process overall is too long and takes a significant resource in terms of BHP staff time.	Gerry Doherty – Director of Technical Services
Dropped Kerbs	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	The auditor was flexible in accommodating meetings with staff and the recommendations made were helpful.	Sandor Fazekas, Head of Highways
Payroll- Unipay / Interact	4	4	4	5	4	3	5	The team were very thorough and understood the constraints the payroll team are under at present. The recommendations are very helpful in ensuring we develop adequate controls, processes and procedures in the new system.	Simon Britton – Head of Peoples Centre
Waste Charges and Bulky Waste Collections	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	The audit was commissioned, undertaken and reported on in a short period of time. This required a quick understanding of a range of complex issues. The audit was also hampered by a lack of co-operation by a key stakeholder. Despite this the auditor undertook his work effectively and in a professional manner, gaining a full understanding of the relevant issues and setting out a range of relevant	Chris Whyte – Head of Environment

								and helpful recommendations.	
Repairs & Voids (BHP)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	n/a	Gerry Doherty – Director of Technical Services
Council Tax	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	Note that the problem with planning and co-ordination has already been resolved for the 2008/09 audit. My reason for the scoring on 'feedback' was the recommendation that 100% monitoring be considered. This would put an unmanageable burden on the service so sampling is a much more realistic option. This was discussed in the feedback meeting but 100% was still included in the report, albeit it was said that management could decide on a sample size.	Paula Buckley – Head of Revenues & Benefits

Statement of Responsibility

We take responsibility for this report which is prepared on the basis of the limitations set out below.

The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our internal audit work and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Recommendations for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact before they are implemented. The performance of internal audit work is not and should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound management practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls and the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities rests with management and work performed by internal audit should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses in internal controls, nor relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud or irregularity. Auditors, in conducting their work, are required to have regards to the possibility of fraud or irregularities. Even sound systems of internal control can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance and may not be proof against collusive fraud. Internal audit procedures are designed to focus on areas as identified by management as being of greatest risk and significance and as such we rely on management to provide us full access to their accounting records and transactions for the purposes of our audit work and to ensure the authenticity of these documents. Effective and timely implementation of our recommendations by management is important for the maintenance of a reliable internal control system.

Deloitte & Touche Public Sector Internal Audit Ltd June 2008

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