

**MEMBERS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO
AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
19 MARCH 2019**

Councillor EPJ Harvey, Ledbury North

Question

Given that the South Wye Transport Package is a capital programme which has been in existence since 2014 and has already spent more than £5m (15%) of its £35m capital budget, please will the Chairman seek clarification for this Committee from the Chief Executive regarding whether the Chief Executive considers it to be acceptable that this project is still judged not to be to be 'at a point on its journey' – whatever that means - when it may be used to test whether its delivery is in compliance with the professional project management practices required by council to which he personally committed himself in July 2018?"

Response

I understand from the Head of Internal Audit's report that the compliance testing was to ascertain the embedding of the new project management software system which has been introduced in response to the Blueschool House recommendations. That can only be tested once an existing project has been migrated to that system, and this is being done in a phased way. Any assumption that because a project hasn't yet been migrated to the new software it is not being managed appropriately would not be an appropriate assumption. The South Wye Transport Package has been and is being project managed and internal audit are scheduled to undertake a full audit of the project in the coming year

Supplementary question

I have made no assumptions in my carefully worded question as to the appropriateness or otherwise of the management of this project. I ask again since the committee gave clear notice at its meeting in November that this project which is 5 years old and over £5m spent on a £32m budget would be subject to assessment for its compliance with the project management and governance processes agreed by the chief executive back in July 2018. Do our internal auditor, monitoring officer, S151 officer and chief executive each consider it acceptable that no assurance has been provided yet again to this committee of the degree of this project's current compliance with adopted governance and project management practices?

Supplementary response

A written reply will be provided within 10 days.

Written response

I have asked the officers named in the question and they advise that the council places reliance on a range of controls and systems that provide assurance that the South Wye Transport package is well managed and complies with the council's governance and financial controls.

A risk based approach was used to decide the order in which projects were migrated to Verto, and as officers explained at the committee meeting Verto is designed to complement existing project management controls by holding pertinent information in one place.

The internal audit plan progress report presented to the committee provides an update on SWAP's work on the internal control improvement board. The committee agreed that when SWAP have completed their work the report will be circulated to members of the committee.

The committee approved the internal audit work plan for 2019/2020 which includes a scheduled review of the South Wye Transport Project. The committee was assured that the audit would be carried out in the first quarter of 2019/2020.