

## Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 – Action Plan for 2024/25: Quarter 3 Update

**Key:**

Green – Completed

Amber – In Progress

Issue No.	Issue Identified	Source of Evidence	Summary of Action Proposed	Update up to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2024
1	Recruitment / staff vacancies remain an issue in some areas.	Management Assurance Statements	Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) are reviewing the workforce as part of the Workforce Strategy which is due to be presented to the Executive in September 2024.	Workforce Strategy was approved by the Executive on 19 <sup>th</sup> September 2024. The next step is to develop and agree an action plan to take forward the strategy, including this issue.
2	Ability to complete all financial statutory returns in a timely manner.	Management Assurance Statements	Additional capacity is being added to undertake Collection Fund and support to the Statement of Accounts process and business case production for capital.	The new Project Accountant commenced in October 2024. They are currently going through a bedding in process.
3	The Council has identified gaps between its future spending and income for 2025/26 onwards but has not identified the necessary savings to bridge these gaps. The Council has a remaining budget gap of £1.4m in 2025/26 and £1m in 2026/27. If reserves are used to bridge this gap, instead of identifying savings then Useable Reserves will reduce to less than half of current level. (GT Report – Key Recommendation 1).	MTFP  Budget planning  Savings plans  Financial stability / sustainability	Budget Working Group (BWG) to commence in the Summer 2024 led by the permanent Director of Resources and the first review of the MTFP 2025/26 to 2027/28 will commence in July 2024 following the first draft statement of accounts production.  During 2024/25 a continuous improvement programme with Liberata will be developed.	BWG meetings have commenced with guidance from Director of Resources as to the forecasted financial status of the Council over the Medium Term.  Meetings with Liberata on 'Continuous Improvement' have been set in place.

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4	The roles of Area Committees within the Council's decision-making structures give rise to a significant weakness because of inconsistent and sometimes poor decision making resulting in the Council incurring additional costs, as well as damage to its reputation (GT Report – Key Recommendation 2)	Independent Report  Meeting Minutes	The Council will commission a focussed independent legal report on the consistency, costs and efficiency of its planning process and the potential future impacts on continuing with the current arrangements.	The report has been commissioned with the first draft having been due by the end of September 2024. The report has been delayed and is now expected early in the new year.  The findings and any proposed actions will be reported to Council in due course.
5	The new governance and decision-making processes are not fully understood by Members. As a result, there have been instances of Members of the Executive speaking against decisions made by the Executive at Full Council meetings. (GT Report – Key Recommendation 3)	Member Training Attendance Schedules  Ongoing mandatory development programme in place  Removal of legacy arrangements	The new governance structure will be fully implemented over the summer and autumn 2024 with the following actions already scheduled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A programme of Member training is in place following the local election on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, to include an element in relation to constitutional arrangements, executive working, governance, and decision-making processes. This programme will be mandated.</li> <li>▪ Suitably qualified facilitators have been identified through the LGA to work with Members and will shape an ongoing mandatory development programme.</li> <li>▪ The governance structures and decision-making systems, along with roles and responsibilities required of an effective Executive and Leader</li> </ul>	The LGA facilitators began working with Members in October 2024. This work is ongoing.

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			<p>model will be further reviewed and implemented as part of the mandatory development programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Any legacy arrangements carried over from the Committee system will be removed to ensure that an effective Executive and Leader model is in place.</li> </ul>	
6	<p>There is evidence of failures to manage the relationships between the Council and the joint venture (JV) companies effectively and of conflicts of interest, arising between Members roles as directors of the companies which are significant and create risks of negative impacts on the Council's interests in the companies as a shareholder, and on the reputation of the Council as a whole.</p>	<p>Independent Report</p> <p>Improved governance arrangements in place</p> <p>Updated legal agreements in place</p> <p>Council officer roles clarified</p>	<p>An independent legal advisor will be commissioned to undertake a review of the relationships and governance of its JV companies. The scope will also include a review of potential conflicts of interests arising.</p>	<p>Due to delays the report was received in December. Officers are currently considering the report and next steps.</p> <p>The findings and any proposed actions will be reported to Council in due course.</p>
7	<p>Fundamental weaknesses were identified in the Council's Information Governance processes as a result of an Internal Audit Review (Limited Assurance).</p>	<p>MIAA Recommendations Follow-up and Tracker.</p> <p>Improved Information Governance Arrangements in place, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up-to-date Record of Processing Activity (ROPA), Information Asset Register (IAR) and data flow maps in place with supporting</li> </ul>	<p>The Council will deliver the recommendations in line with the management responses agreed and submitted to MIAA which have been captured in the final report.</p>	<p>The Council has engaged MIAA to assist with implementing the required improvements to our Information Governance arrangements. This work is underway.</p>

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		<p>policies and procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigned and trained Information Asset Owners (IAO) and Information Asset Administrators (IAA).</li> <li>• Dedicated, experienced IG resource.</li> <li>• Training needs analysis and training plan in place.</li> </ul>		
8	<p>Fundamental weaknesses were identified in the Council's Staff Performance Management processes as a result of an Internal Audit Review (Limited Assurance).</p>	<p>Updated PDR and 1:1 forms and central record of completions.</p> <p>Approved related policies / strategies / frameworks.</p> <p>Training and / or guidance documentation.</p> <p>Team Meeting Agendas where 1:1 have been discussed.</p>	<p>The Council will deliver the recommendations in line with management responses agreed and submitted to MIAA and captured in the final report.</p>	<p>Learning and Development Officer post filled with employment commenced on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024. This post is prioritising driving the delivery of a revised PDR process for 2025/26. This is also reflected in the Workforce Strategy.</p>