

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE - Table of Outstanding Issues (January 2020) – ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ACTIONS**

Governance Issue	Action	Current Position / Update
<p><b>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b></p> <p>The Council continues to deliver the ten year approach to budgeting, aimed at maximising savings opportunities whilst delivering growth in underlying income to deliver a balanced budget over a ten year forecast.</p> <p>Risks exist to the plan should savings not be achieved and income generation schemes not materialise while using non-recurrent reserves to addressing budget gaps is not sustainable should austerity continue.</p>	<p>Continue to develop the long term forecast with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring the robustness of assumptions used in financial planning/forecasting.</li> <li>• Prioritising resources whilst maintaining services wherever possible.</li> <li>• Undertaking targeted reviews of significant areas for cost pressures</li> <li>• Continuing to identify opportunities for savings, with the development of a 4 year plan for delivery.</li> </ul> <p>Delivery of a balanced budget in 2020/21 in-line with the forecast.</p>	<p>An updated financial forecast was presented to Cabinet on 24 January 2020 reflecting the most up to date assumptions on items such as inflation, cost pressures, savings targets, underlying income along with the outcome from the annual Local Government Financial Settlement process.</p> <p>The long term forecast remains broadly on target with the delivery of annual surpluses over the life of the forecast are still anticipated to be achieved.</p> <p>To isolate the on-going revenue forecast from potential one-off costs associated with the maintenance of Council Assets, an initial fund of £1.134m was agreed by Cabinet on 13 September to support costs that may emerge over the remaining years of the forecast. This will be complimented by a corporate review of the Council's operational assets to prioritise spending from this fund over the next few years</p> <p>A savings plan covering the period 2021/22 and beyond will be developed in the first half of 2020.</p>
<p><b>Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</b></p> <p>By strengthening the linkages between the Corporate Plan priorities and the Council's investment plans.</p>	<p>To identify and maintain an ongoing corporate investment plan (including the capital programme) supporting delivery of the Council's priorities including the development of relevant strategies as necessary.</p>	<p>As part of agreeing a revised corporate plan and associated priorities over the remainder of 2019/20, an investment plan will be developed alongside it to maintain a direct link to the financial forecast, which will be supported by the reprioritisation of budgets / existing funding and/or as part of the long term forecast.</p>

<p><b>Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</b></p> <p>Supporting the delivery of key housing and development projects and priorities through open and transparent decision making (including informal briefings). Demonstrating effective use of the council's resources throughout continuation of the project development. This will include robust governance arrangements including risk management, funding, skills and capacity.</p>	<p>Consultation on a draft Housing Strategy and approval of a business/action plan setting out delivery, funding and performance of key housing and development building projects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Jaywick Sands;</li> <li>• Garden Communities; and</li> <li>• Other relevant sites across the district.</li> </ul> <p>Additional specific statutory consultation on the Local Plan and future development of the Garden Communities project.</p>	<p>A Housing Strategy for public consultation was agreed by Cabinet on 19 July 2019. The outcome of the consultation will be reported back to Cabinet later in the year before the Strategy is reviewed for recommending to Full Council.</p> <p>Full Council agreed at its meeting on 6 August, that the additional evidence and new Sustainability Appraisal required in support of Section 1 of the Local Plan would be subject to public consultation. The outcome of the consultation was submitted to the Inspector as part of his re-examination of Section 1, which recommenced on 14 January 2020.</p> <p>The development of the Garden Communities project will be set out in future reports with any associated consultation undertaken as necessary</p>
<p><b>Developing the entity's capacity, including the capacity of its leadership and the individuals within it</b></p> <p>Ensuring compliance of the Council's governance arrangements through project board reviews and delivery of transformation projects, through the monitoring of key policies.</p>	<p>For the relevant project board or lead officers to identify sufficient resources to demonstrate and monitor compliance with the Council's policies and procedures (forming the Governance framework) during delivery and embedding the final arrangements.</p> <p>To complete the roll out of the revised business planning and project management approach.</p> <p>Launch the Cabinet report writing through modern.gov using the new template and processes.</p>	<p>A Project Board has now been established with its regular meetings taking place from August 2019. The Project Board will continue to take a key role in supporting the development of projects / business cases, which will include a review of key outcomes / deliverables once the project has been fully implemented.</p> <p>A revised business planning and project management approach has now been rolled out across in the Council with awareness / Q&amp;A sessions undertaken at departmental manager's meetings and senior manager's forums.</p> <p>The roll out of the functionality of Modern.Gov has been fundamentally reviewed and will follow the following phased approach in 2020: Phase I – Planning, Local Plan and Licensing Phase II – HR/Council Tax, Standards and Audit</p>

Recruit to the Senior Governance Officer post.

Develop an induction and training programme for the newly elected Councillors covering a range of topics, including dedicated chairmanship training and an overview and scrutiny workshop.

Phase III – Cabinet and the two OSCs and Council  
This will be supported by meetings and 1:1 sessions for those writing and reviewing reports etc.

Due to the Chief Executive's senior management restructure the review of the Senior Governance Post has been put on hold to ensure the extent of the governance functions and requirements of this role are fully understood in supporting the Council's Statutory Officers and any additional responsibilities going forward.

Further member development and training opportunities have been delivered including a session covering skills, practice and approach to chairing different meetings, and affordable housing for the Planning Committee. An annual tour for members is also being arranged which will highlight issues and sites of interest for members across the district. The overall member development programme is now underpinned by a new Member Development Statement and is ongoing and in addition to the All Member Briefing programme.

Training on chairmanship took place in June (1:1 sessions) and September (a group session) and overview and scrutiny training was provided in June. Access to the LGA's online training portal for Councillors is being rolled out and where LGA courses support Executive/Scrutiny or other training needs, attendance at these is being facilitated. The opportunity to enhance training for Councillors in order to best support the delivery of the new Corporate Plan will be considered as part of the developing the budget in 2020/21 and beyond.

<p><b>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b></p> <p><b>Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law</b></p> <p>Ensure the Local Code of Corporate Governance and key policies and procedures are up to date.</p>	<p>Through a centralised review, develop an action and monitoring plan to include policy review dates and associated decision making.</p>	<p>The work associated with this action is expected to commence over the second half of 2019/20 as it will form a key role of the Senior Governance Officer post discussed above.</p>
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