

Agenda

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Monday, 5 June 2023 at 6.00 pm
At Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

3 Minutes

5 - 12

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023 as a correct record.

4 Additional Items of Business

To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.

5 Improvement Plan Progress and Phase 3 Refresh

13 - 120

To consider and comment upon the progress of the Improvement Plan and the Risk Register up to 11 May 2023.



6 **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
Resolution - Update** 121 - 130

To note the response from the Leader of the Council in relation to the Committee's resolution of 17 March 2022 (Minute No. 23/22 – Appendix 1 to this report).

7 **Cabinet Forward Plan** 131 - 184

Standing item to consider items on the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Shokat Lal
Chief Executive
Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands

Distribution
Councillor Preece (Chair)
Councillors Ager, Anandou, H Bhullar, Dhariwal, L Giles, V Smith, Tipper and Hussain

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Minutes of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

16 March 2023 at 6.00pm
In the Council Chamber at Sandwell Council House

Present: Councillor Preece (Chair);
Councillors Anandou, Choudhry, L Giles, Hinchliff, Khatun
and Lewis.
Mr Ager (Independent Member).

Officers: Peter Farrow (Audit Services Manager); Narinder Phagura
(Business Partner - Audit Services); Guy Grafton (Grant
Thornton); Zoe Thomas (Grant Thornton); Rebecca Maher
(Head of Finance); Sanjay Desor (Head of Technical
Finance, Capital and Strategy); Kate Ashley (Strategic Lead
– Service Improvement); Rebecca Jenkins (Senior Lead -
Service Improvement); Alexander Goddard (Democratic
Services Officer) and Anthony Lloyd (Democratic Services
Officer).

10/23 **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies received.

11/23 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.



12/23 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 January 2023 is confirmed as a correct record.

13/23 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business for discussion.

14/23 **Improvement Plan Progress and Phase 2 Refresh**

An update was provided to the Committee on progress made against the improvement plan.

Significant progress had continued to be made to deliver the actions within the Improvement Plan. This included the completion of the Phase 1 Governance Review with changes to the Constitution agreed, preparations for the new Chief Executive taking up post on 6 February, approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the completion of the reviews of the Serco and Sandwell Children’s Trust (SCT) contracts.

A summary of the current risks and slippages were delivered to the Committee. The Workforce Strategy had experienced slippage from the original delivery date of March 2023; the new target date was May 2023. It was expected that the “One Team Framework” would be approved in March 2023.

Regarding Corporate Oversight progress, issues had been identified in relation to establishing a customer journey programme board. A lack of resources meant that the original timescales would not be met, however, board members were in the process of being confirmed and future board dates would be planned in due course.

Slippage had been seen against the Performance Management Framework. The main delays to the original timescales were due to the required alignment with the workforce strategy and customer journey programme.



A lack of resources and recruitment difficulties had also resulted in slippage against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work, the transition from Children's to Adult's Services, as well as the Customer Journey Strategy. A revised approach to decision making training meant that slippage had been experienced against the estimated dates of completion.

Following further evidence submitted by the third party in relation to the Expert Determination of Lion Farm, the resolution date would now take place later than expected; it was confirmed that a decision would be made by the end of March 2023.

Members were also provided an update on the risk register. In total, there were five green risks, six amber risks and one red risk. The single red risk was a new risk in relation to embedding the constitutional changes. Several risks had been reduced including the performance management framework and data quality and the agreement of constitutional changes risk had been closed completely.

In response to questions from members, officers would provide more specific clarification in relation to difficulties around the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion workstream had a later date.

15/23

Strategic Risk Register Update

Officers provided the Committee with an update on the key strategic risks faced by the Council since the risks were last reported on in September 2022.

Members were minded that the Strategic Risk Register did not include all of the risks faced by the Council. Other risks were captured within directorate, programme and project risk registers in line with the Council's risk management framework.

Five risks rated red had reduced to amber, six risks had been escalated from individual directorate risk registers to the strategic risk register and two risks had been closed from the strategic risk register.



The following risks had been escalated from their individual directorate risk registers:-

- Risk 57b – Customer Journey. Escalated given the priority within the corporate plan
- Risk 66 – Borough Archives.
- Risk 67 – Elections Act. Escalated due to the extensive work required to manage the voter ID process for the May 2023 Elections.
- Risk 68 – Sandwell Local Plan. Escalated as a result of the cancellation of the Black Country Plan.
- Risk 69 – Adult Social Care Market Sustainability – Escalated due to the fair cost of care exercise.
- Risk 70 – Organisational Culture

The following risks had seen a reduction in their risk rating or been removed from the risk register:-

- Risks 27 and 27a – MTGS and Future Government Policies and Funding Sources had been reduced from red to amber as a result of the local government settlement which confirmed that business rates reset, and fair funding would not happen in this Parliament. This allowed the Council more time to prepare.
- Risk 53 - Oracle E Business Suite had been reduced from red to amber as a result of the review and reset of the programme
- Risk 54 – SEND had been removed as a result of the procurement of the contracts in 2022.
- Risk 57 – New Operating Model which had focussed on embedding the hybrid and flexible working model had been removed as it had been rated as green for some time
- Risk 61 – Partner Organisations Contract Services Delivery had reduced from red to amber as a result of the work completed in respect of the contract with the SCT, SLT and Serco contracts.

In response to questions, Officers assured Members that the goals set were realistic. Information regarding voter ID and swimming bath memberships would be provided to members as requested. Assurance was also provided on the hopes of a smooth



implementation of Oracle Fusion. A support partner was assisting the process which planned for the system to go live in April 2024. Issues faced by other authorities using the same system had been investigated and a “lessons learned” document had been created.

16/23 **Internal Audit Plan**

Approval was sought of the internal audit plan for 2023/2024 which contained a list of audits that was intended to be made over the year. Members were minded that it was important that the resources available were focussed on areas that provide the most benefit to the Council. An assurance exercise was undertaken to see what areas would be a priority. Discussions had been underway with Leadership Team to ensure that the issues addressed were the most beneficial.

Agreed that the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 is approved.

17/23 **Internal Audit Progress Report**

The Committee received an update in relation to the Internal Audit Progress Report which detailed progress made against the delivery of the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan.

In particular, information was provided regarding the limited assurance assigned to the “Boscobel TMO Repairs/Voids” auditable area.

A Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) was a means by which Council tenants and leaseholders could collectively take on responsibility for managing the homes that they lived in. TMO’s were an independent legal body and usually elected a tenant led management committee to run the organisation. Boscobel TMO had 115 properties. A review had been undertaken to assess the adequacy of the system for the control and inspection of work and maintenance and flow of progress information. A number of issues where improvement could be made were identified by the Audit and an outstanding issue from a previous report still remained outstanding/



The contract did not contain any GDPR requirements which was a risk of infringement of statutory regulations for both the Council and the TMO. Quotes were not being requested for work undertaken and completed works were not being signed off. It was evident that the TMO had also not undertaken any checks on the electrical contactor's credentials or their ability to undertake electrical work.

Officers reassured the committee that issues with Boscobel TMO were being addressed and that Audit and the Director of Housing had met with the TMO on several occasions to support them. Further updates would be provided when officers were in a position to do so.

18/23 **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee - Terms of Reference Annual Review**

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's Terms of Reference had been static for several years. CIPFA had updated their model of terms and reference and therefore, the Audit Terms of Reference had been edited to reflect the subtle changes. The role of Audit had not changed in any fundamental or significant manner and the role of internal and external audit was now clearer.

Agreed that the terms of reference for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee is approved.

19/23 **Statement of Accounts 2020/21**

The draft accounts for 2021 were presented to the Committee for approval in line with International Financial Reporting Standards. Delays in preparing older accounts had resulted in the Statement of Accounts being delayed for approval due to knock-on effects. Limited resources meant that slippage had occurred against original deadlines.

Members were minded of a particular recommendation set out in the report that sought authorisation for the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), to agree any changes which may



be necessary in order to ensure the finalisation of the external audit being concluded by the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, to ensure completion of the Statement of Accounts for financial year 2020/21.

Additional resources had been obtained to help assist however, the lack of an asset management system had caused issues and further delays. Officers were hopeful that an asset management system would be in place towards the end of 2023.

Members were reminded that all of the Council's primary statements were needed to obtain a full picture of the Council's financial position. The movement in reserves statements reconciled income and expenditure to what the actual tax pay and costs position was. This adjustment reconciled the actual outturn position to a surplus of £11m.

Auditors from Grant Thornton addressed the Committee with the following highlights:-

- Concerns were had around falling too far behind due to the complexity of the accounts;
- Significant errors were present within the financial statements which had caused a back-log in work;
- The Council's usable reserves increased once audit changes were taken into account
- The Audit was substantially complete with just a little more work around the PSI scheme with Serco.
- Several issues appeared when reviewing creditors and accruals. Several budget holders had been accruing to the budget rather than actual expenditure; issues around prepayments were also noted.
- A weakness was present in property records and changes had been made to the way that property had been valued although auditors were confident that this was accounted for in the 2021 financial statements.
- Total corrections resulted in reduction in overdraft and Grant Thornton were now happy with the overall accounts for 2020-2021.



In response to questions, officers confirmed that, in relation to the Serco contract, a PFI model was used instead of PPP. This was due to legacy decisions that were originally decided in 2010 to which the Council was contractually bound.

A new structure was in place and existing staff members were being upskilled. Interim resources had been sourced to help with the backlog however, good technical accountants were hard to recruit. Officers and Grant Thornton were thanked for the hard work in preparing the statement of accounts given the difficult legacy issues faced in the process.

Agreed that that the Director of Finance b authorised, in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), to agree any changes which may be necessary in order to ensure the finalisation of the external audit currently being concluded by the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, to ensure completion of the Statement of Accounts for financial year 2020/21.

Meeting ended at 7.42p.m.

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Report to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

05 June 2023

Subject:	Improvement Plan Progress and Phase 3 Refresh
Director:	Chief Executive Shokat Lal
Contact Officer:	Strategic Lead – Service Improvement Kate Ashley Kate1_ashley@sandwell.gov.uk Senior Lead Officer – Service Improvement Rebecca Jenkins Rebecca_jenkins@sandwell.gov.uk Lead Officer – Service Improvement Dawn Webster Dawn_webster@sandwell.gov.uk

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. That Audit and Risk Assurance Committee considers and comments upon the progress of the Improvement Plan and the Risk Register up to 11 May 2023.
- 1.2. That any recommendations or comments in relation to 1.1 above are reported to Cabinet
- 1.3. That the Committee considers any additional areas of focus for its work plan



- 1.4. That the Committee note that Council will receive a recommendation from Cabinet (subject to their consideration on 7 June) in relation to the Council's 6 monthly report to the Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities

2. Reasons for Recommendations







- 2.1 This report provides a quarterly update on progress against the Improvement Plan agreed by Council on 7 June 2022. The Improvement Plan incorporates all recommendations from the Grant Thornton Governance Review, the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and the CIPFA Financial Management Review, as well as the Statutory Directions from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 2.2 On 28 June 2022, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee received the Improvement Plan and accompanying risk register and requested regular updates on progress. This report is the fourth quarterly progress report to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.
- 2.3 As part of the governance and assurance arrangements for the Improvement Plan, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board review progress of the Improvement Plan and utilise the plan for work programming purposes. Both Committees are due to consider progress at their meetings in June and any recommendations or comments will be presented for Cabinet's consideration.
- 2.4 As part of the council's assurance framework for the Improvement Plan, the LGA, Grant Thornton and CIPFA conducted follow-up reviews in Autumn 2022 to evaluate the council's progress on implementing the specific recommendations from those individual reviews. The responses to the findings from the follow-up visits from Grant Thornton and the LGA were reported to the Committee in March 2023. The response to the CIPFA FM Model Re-Assessment Report is included within this report.
- 2.5 The Improvement Plan is intended to be a live document updated to take account of progress and relevant changes. Changes to the Improvement Plan are tracked through programme management mechanisms. As a result of the findings from the CIPFA FM follow up review, new and/or updated activity has been required within the Improvement Plan. This has been managed through the established change control process to form a refresh of the Improvement Plan.



2.6 Under the Statutory Directions, the council is required to report progress against the Improvement Plan to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities every six months. The first report was submitted in December 2022. The next report is due in June 2023. Council are responsible for approving the report made to the Secretary of State and Cabinet will make a recommendation to Council.

3. How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

3.1 Sandwell Council’s Improvement Plan focuses on the governance arrangements of the council and areas of improvement across the organisation. The underpinning objective of the Improvement Plan is to ensure that the council is able to deliver on the aims and priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. The deliverables set out in this Improvement Plan will achieve long-term sustainable improvements in how the council operates and is able to make effective decisions focused on improving outcomes for residents and experiences of service users. Therefore, this impacts on the council’s ability to deliver all the objectives in the Corporate Plan.

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 Background



4.1.1 A single Improvement Plan was agreed by Council on 7 June 2022 to address recommendations from a Value for Money Review into the council's governance arrangements, a CIPFA financial management review, an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, and Statutory Directions from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The single Improvement Plan replaced the Governance Review Improvement Plan which was approved in January 2022.

4.1.2 To ensure that senior officers and members have oversight of delivery against the Improvement Plan, Council approved that progress will be monitored by Leadership Team monthly and reported to Cabinet quarterly. This will continue until all actions have been completed, or changes have been embedded into business as usual.

4.1.3 This report is the fourth quarterly update to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on progress of the Improvement Plan.

4.2 Improvement Plan Progress

4.2.1 Over this quarter, significant progress has continued to be made to deliver the actions within the Improvement Plan. This includes reaching a significant milestone in the Lion Farm Expert Determination process and this action moving to business as usual.

4.2.2 A comprehensive monitoring tool has been developed which includes a progress status rating for all actions. The monitoring tool provides quick reference around which actions are on track for delivery, as well as highlighting areas that may require remedial action or additional levels of assurance. The Improvement Plan Monitoring Tool is included at Appendix 1.

4.2.3 Progress against each theme of Improvement Plan is contained within the Improvement Plan Annual Report included at Appendix 2. The Annual Report includes milestones achieved since June 2022, the next areas of focus, and commentary on our progress against measures of success. This provides information around the impact our improvements. A summary of the quarterly achievements along with any progress issues is provided below.



4.2.4 Organisational Culture Theme

4.2.4.1 Achievements this quarter:

- Revision of Corporate Induction
- Effective decision-making training (report writing) complete
- Member- Officer survey launched
- Project plan in place for embedding constitutional changes

4.2.4.2 Organisational Culture Progress Issues:

- **Identify mechanisms for ongoing insight and assurance around the Officer and Member Relationship**
 - A Member-Officer relationship survey was launched in April.
 - The reason for the exception report is that the survey received a lower response rate from Officers and Members than was expected.
 - An initial analysis of the survey findings was considered by Leadership Team in May. Next steps are to identify actions and to discuss findings with Members. Consideration will be given to timescales for repeat survey and reasons for response rate as part of lessons learnt.
- **Approval of next iteration of the Member Development Programme (MDP) that includes actions as a result of Member Personal Development Plan analysis**
 - The MDP is regularly updated and approved by Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee. A delegation has been put in place for the Chair of the Committee to agree next update, which will include the updated Member Induction plan.
 - The reason for the exception report is that there has been slippage in the timescale. This occurred due to revisions needed to the Member Induction arrangements as a result of the number of new Councillors following the election.
 - The induction has now been finalised and a new Member toolkit is being produced to support new Members.



4.2.5 Corporate Oversight Theme

4.2.5.1 Achievements this quarter

- Workforce development engagement sessions have been completed to inform the financial services workforce plan
- Draft report and recommendations received for the Corporate Debt Recovery business process review.
- Transactional Finance Reviews completed, and recommendations being implemented.

4.2.5.2 Corporate Oversight Progress Issues:

- **Corporate Transformation**
 - Transformation activity is taking place across the council including the Oracle Programme, a review of business support arrangements and financial services business process reviews. Resources from across the council have been brought together to consolidate resources.
 - Local Partnerships are supporting a review of Corporate Transformation and PMO arrangements in the council. This is underway and is due to report in June.
 - The reason for exception report is that timescales for the establishment of the of the Corporate Transformation PMO, associated governance, and the implementation of a programme and project management system have exceeded the original dates within the Improvement Plan. The dates did not reflect the review that is being undertaken by Local Partnerships.
 - The dates have been reprofiled through change control for the Corporate Transformation PMO to be established in September 2023 (subject to the recommendations of the Local Partnerships Review), the Programme and Project Management System to be implemented in in July 2023, and the Corporate Transformation Board to be operational in June 2023.
- **Develop a Continuous Improvement framework and Lessons Learnt Framework**
 - Continuous improvement and lessons learnt activity is underway throughout the council. Examples include



continuous improvement around the scrutiny function and lessons learnt around SEND transport and a case study around supporting residents around damp and mould.

- A Continuous Improvement Framework and Lessons Learnt Framework are intended to provide a set of standards, tools techniques and guidance around how continuous improvement and lessons learnt are to be conducted across the council. The intention was for these to be prepared and reported to Leadership Team in June 2023.
 - The reason for the exception report is that the June date will not be met due to resource availability, as work on the Levelling Up Partnership has taken priority. The Continuous Improvement and Lessons Learnt Frameworks have been reprofiled for October 2023 through change control.
- **Directorate level restructuring and review of Spans and Layers**
 - Recruitment for Assistant Chief Executive is underway.
 - The reason for the exception report is that the Directorate-level structure is under discussion, and the spans and layers review is being considered in line with the workforce strategy implementation.
 - Actions are currently placed on hold.
- **Workforce development plan implemented for financial services section**
 - Engagement sessions have been completed and the report has been received. The recommendations include a competency framework, which will be aligned to the One Team Framework.
 - The reason for the exception report is that the planned due date of March 2023 has not been met and the workforce development plan is now due to be finalised by July 2023.

4.2.6 Strategic Direction Theme

4.2.6.1 Achievements this quarter

- Commercial Strategy approved by Cabinet Member
- Early Help 'one year on' event held to capture impact and partnership focus on next steps.



- Direct awarded offer to data analysis consultant for the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- 5 Surveys published on Citizenspace (consultation platform) as part of the council's corporate approach to consultation and engagement

4.2.6.2 Strategic Direction Progress Issues

- **Regeneration Pipeline: Internal infrastructure established for delivery (strategic delivery partner)**
 - The intention is to procure a strategic delivery partner to support the delivery of the regeneration pipeline. Engagement with one of the framework providers is being carried out and a report is being prepared for July Cabinet.
 - The reason for the exception report is that this is later than the original date of March 2023. This has been refiled to July through change control.
- **Customer Journey Strategy**
 - Work is progressing on the Customer Journey Programme with governance arrangements now established and workstreams in place.
 - The reason for the exception report is that a small response rate was achieved for a Member-survey around the customer journey.
 - Meetings with Members are being arranged focusing on ward and casework management.
- **HRA Business Plan: Stock condition surveys**
 - The HRA Business Plan was agreed by Cabinet in February.
 - A range of factors need to be taken into account in reviewing and amending the plan in future years including the results of stock condition surveys. Procurement of stock condition surveys has commenced.
 - The reason for the exception report is that only one tender was received through the procurement and an award was not made.
 - The next steps are for the specification to be reviewed and re-tendering to take place

4.2.7 Decision Making Theme

4.2.7.1 Achievements this quarter



- All major milestones in this theme have been achieved

4.2.7.2 Decision Making Progress Issues

- No issues in this theme

4.2.8 Procurement and Commercial Theme

4.2.8.1 Achievements this quarter

- Lion Farm key milestone in Expert Determination process reached and moved to 'business as usual' for managing at directorate level and reporting to Leadership Team and members at an appropriate point in the future.

4.2.8.2 Procurement and Commercial Progress Issues:

- **Performance Management System: Options Appraisal**
 - A performance management system is being explored to support business intelligence across the council and facilitate reporting within the performance management framework.
 - The reason for the exception report is that the original timescales to bring forward an options appraisal have been delayed due to resources.
 - Resources and a project plan are now in place. The options appraisal includes consideration of utilisation of current systems/tools, including Verto, Oracle Fusion and Power BI or the procurement of a new Performance Management System.
 - The options appraisal is due to be completed by August 2023, with recommendation to Leadership Team to follow.

4.2.9 Partnerships and Relationships Theme

4.2.9.1 Achievements this quarter

- SCT performance reports considered by Children and Education Scrutiny Board

4.2.9.2 Partnerships and Relationships Progress Issues

- **Consultation on VCS Draft Strategy**



- A VCS Strategy is being prepared for approval in Autumn.
- The reason for the exception report is that the strategy is being developed over a longer period to enable a more fundamental look at the relationship with the VCS to take place. An annual report is being prepared focusing on investment and impact. A Cabinet session is then planned for July, with the strategy due for approval in Autumn 2023

4.3 Statutory Recommendations

4.3.1 The Grant Thornton Value for Money Governance Review 2021 included three statutory recommendations that the council has a legal obligation to respond to. These recommendations are incorporated into the single Improvement Plan and are embedded across each of the six themes.

4.3.2 In their follow up review 2022, Grant Thornton recognised progress against all three statutory recommendations. Appendix 3 extracts the key actions that respond to each of the recommendations, and they are summarised below.

4.3.3 **Statutory Recommendation 1** - It is imperative that senior officers and senior members take effective corporate grip of long-standing service issues highlighted by the findings in this report (including SLT, SCT, the waste service, the ERP system, and Lion Farm) and prioritise corporate effort in managing the issues identified and embed the solutions into the Council.

Progress update:

- Continuing to implement strategies to address the service issues highlighted in the Grant Thornton report.
- Sandwell Leisure Trust – progressing the approach agreed by Cabinet in June 2022 to transfer services to a Local Authority Trading Company.
- Sandwell Children’s Trust – Governance arrangements remain in place. Joint work in place with SCT in relation to corporate parenting and early help. Revised contract commenced April 2023
- Waste Contract – Contract Monitoring framework progressing well and embedded in PMF reporting. Review of the Contract is complete.
- ERP (Oracle Fusion) – support provider in place and implementation commenced. Project Management and Governance arrangements are in place.



- Lion Farm – key milestone reached in expert determination process and has now moved to ‘business as usual’.
- Regeneration Strategy and Pipeline to underpin significant regeneration in Sandwell approved by Cabinet 23 March 2022. First monitoring provided to Cabinet in November.

4.3.4 **Statutory Recommendation 2** - The Council must ensure that the learning in relation to commercial decisions, procurement and contract management highlighted in this report are understood through the organisation.

Progress Update

- The first phase of the Governance Review has completed with approval granted to the revised Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules, thresholds for decisions, Sale of Land and Buildings Protocol, Scheme of delegations and refresh
- Corporate Governance Training - Programme of training and development commenced in September 2022 on effective decision-making, good governance, and revised contract procedure rules. Next phase of Corporate Governance Development is being planned for roll out during 2023-2024.
- Commercial Strategy approved in April 2023.
- Corporate Asset Management Strategy approved by Cabinet in November 2023.

4.3.5 **Statutory Recommendation 3** - Senior leadership, both officers and members, must demonstrate that they can continue to work together effectively, that they operate in line with the Council’s values, codes, policies and procedures, and that there is zero tolerance to inappropriate behaviours. This includes changing the organisational culture in relation to complaints so that they restore balance and proportionality.

Progress Update

- Member Development – New Member induction arrangements are in place. Member Development Programme is being regularly reviewed by Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee.
- Officer Development – A consolidated programme of fundamental training for managers on Corporate Governance matters has commenced. A broader Management Development Programme will be rolled out in 2023 following the approval of the Workforce Strategy.



- Organisational Culture – Extensive engagement held to inform the One Team Framework (Values and Behaviours) which was approved in March 2023. Launch of values and behaviours taking place.
- Meeting structures to facilitate Cabinet Member and Leadership Team cross-working in place and meeting needs.

4.4 Specific Recommendations from External Reviews relating to Audit

4.4.1 The Statutory Directions set out that the Council must secure improvement in relation to the proper functioning of the scrutiny and associated audit functions.

4.4.2 In their follow-up review in Autumn 2022, Grant Thornton commented on the positive progress to improve the culture and professionalism of key Council committees and commenting that the Audit Committee has continued to operate throughout the year in a manner focussing on significant governance matters.

4.4.3 In the original Value for Money Governance Review (2021) Grant Thornton set out four recommendations that relate to scrutiny and audit. Grant Thornton made an additional recommendation relating to audit in their 2022 follow-up review relating to the Executive confirming their position on historic matters. Appendix 4 sets out an overview of progress against the recommendations made by Grant Thornton in relation to scrutiny and audit.

4.5 External Reviews

4.5.1 External assurance continues to play a part in our improvement journey to monitor our progress in addressing the recommendations made through external reviews. Grant Thornton, LGA and CIPFA conducted follow up reviews in late 2022. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee received the follow up review reports in January 2023.

4.5.2 Actions to respond to the findings in the Grant Thornton and LGA follow-up reports were embedded in the Improvement Plan as reported to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee in March 2023.

4.5.3 Responses to the recommendations raised in the CIPFA FM Model reassessment Report (appendix 5) are set out in Appendix 6. Changes



required to the Improvement Plan as a result have been managed through the established change control process.

4.6 Changes to the Improvement Plan – Phase 3 Refresh

- 4.6.1 The Improvement Plan is intended to be a live document updated to take account of progress and relevant changes.
- 4.6.2 The Improvement Plan report to Council in June 2022 set out that changes (which may include the addition of new workstreams or objectives, or the amendment of timescales for delivery of actions) will be tracked through programme management mechanisms and that Cabinet will retain oversight of changes through regular formal reporting.
- 4.6.3 The Phase 2 refresh to the Improvement Plan, ensured that it remained fit for purpose by implementing the use of Focus 1 and 2 areas (to express areas of the plan that are a current delivery focus for leadership team) and theme status rating no longer being used.
- 4.6.4 As we move through our improvement journey it is important that our key actions to deliver the required improvement become part of our normal business. For this reason, the key actions or ‘we wills’ that sit under the strategic outcomes in the Corporate Plan have been reviewed and, where appropriate, amended to ensure that core elements of the Improvement Plan are captured. Cabinet will consider the revised Corporate Plan in June 2023.
- 4.6.5 The Improvement Plan Monitoring Tool has been updated to include a cross-reference to the relevant actions within the Corporate Plan or business plans, as appropriate. This alignment paves the way for our improvement activity to be monitored within our performance management framework whilst retaining the assurance mechanisms to manage progress and performance.
- 4.6.6 This refresh to the Improvement Plan also includes the responses to the CIPFA FM follow up review. As such, this refresh of the Improvement Plan is referred to as the Phase 3 Improvement Plan.



4.6.7 The list of all changes is provided in Appendix 7. Where new actions have been added to the Improvement Plan, these are displayed within the monitoring tool with red font colour. Changes as a result of the CIPFA FM follow up review are also referenced within Appendix 6.

4.6.8 The changes made are summarised below.

- 10 sub-actions have been added, this includes 4 actions that are a result of the response to CIPFA follow-up review.
- 18 changes have been made to action delivery timescales, and milestones (10 of which are of more than 3 months)
- 3 changes have been made to descriptions of actions
- 4 actions have been closed as the activity is complete

4.7 Risk Management

4.7.1 The Improvement Plan Risk Register underpins the council's strategic risk relating to the council's Improvement Plan (59a 02/22) and is currently rated as an overall Amber risk. The risk register is reported monthly to Leadership Team and quarterly to Cabinet and Audit & Risk Assurance Committee.

4.7.2 The current risk register is attached as Appendix 8. The main risks are associated with:

- **Resources** – for delivery of key components of the plan including the performance management framework, asset management system implementation and culture change programme. The financial resources required have been identified and were approved by Council in June.
- **Communication** – to ensure everyone is aware of their respective roles and responsibilities. Communication is taking place through a range of methods including briefings, live events, and regular messages.
- **Performance Management Framework** – to ensure that we can effectively monitor progress and evidence improvement. Each theme includes an outline of how success will be evidenced. Processes for monitoring progress are in place
- **Investment and Financial Resources** – to ensure financial resources are made available resource gaps/ pressures associated with the Improvement Plan have been identified



- **Constitutional Changes-** If key governance changes (agreed during 2022) are not embedded throughout the organisation then opportunities will be missed. First round of training has been delivered along with revised templates and guidance. Phase 2 of the Corporate Governance Review is underway and this will focus on embedding the constitutional changes

4.7.3 Since the last report to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, the following risks have reduced:

- IP2 Programme Management Arrangements- Amber to Green

4.7.4 Since the last quarterly report to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, the following risks have been closed:

- IP7- Organisational culture- moved to Strategic Risk Register.
- IP8- Impact of Covid 19 on the Project Resources- target score achieved.

4.8 Reporting Framework and Governance

4.8.1 To ensure that senior officers and members have oversight of delivery, Council approved the reporting mechanism for the Improvement Plan in June 2022. This set out that progress will be monitored by Leadership Team monthly and reported to Cabinet quarterly until all actions have been completed, or changes have been embedded into business as usual. The diagram included at Appendix 9 sets out the governance framework.

4.8.2 The Government Directions require reporting on the delivery of the Improvement Plan at six monthly intervals to the Secretary of State from the council and the Commissioners. The last report was made in December 2022. The next report is due June 2023

4.8.3 Member-led committees, such as the Governance & Constitution Review Committee, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee and Scrutiny Committees, are used for providing a steer and maintaining oversight of the actions and implementation of the Improvement Plan.

4.8.4 The Governance & Constitution Review Committee and cross-party Working Group have been integral to the development and review of the governance documents, ahead of decisions taken by Council last year.



4.8.5 Audit & Risk Assurance Committee receive quarterly updates on the Improvement Plan and the Improvement Plan Risk Register.

4.8.6 Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board has included several elements of the Improvement Plan on their work programme as well as regular reports on overall progress. This has included a ‘deep dive’ focus on the work under the Organisational Culture theme and engagement with the workforce.

4.8.7 Any recommendations or comments from Audit & Risk Assurance Committee and Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board will be reported to Cabinet.

5 Implications

<p>Resources:</p>	<p>The monitoring of the Improvement Plan is being carried out within existing resources. Council’s approval of the single Improvement Plan included allocation of resources to ensure delivery of the Improvement Plan. These resources are monitored regularly by the Programme Management Office and Leadership Team.</p>
<p>Legal and Governance:</p>	<p>On 22 March 2022, The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities issued Directions under Section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 (the 1999 Act) in order to ensure that the council can comply with the requirements of Part 1 of the 1999 Act. Failure to comply with these Directions may lead to further intervention measures for the council.</p> <p>The delivery of actions within the Plan agreed by Council in June 2022, as well as any subsequently identified actions, will support the council to achieve sustainable improvement. This will support the end of government intervention.</p>



	<p>Ultimately, the changes made through the Improvement Plan will enable the council to effectively deliver its strategic priorities and ensure it is delivering value for money for Sandwell.</p>
Risk:	<p>If the Council fails to take appropriate action to meet the requirements set out in the government Direction, or the Commissioners appointed by the Secretary of State do not have sufficient confidence that appropriate actions are being taken to implement and sustain the required improvements, then the council risks not having appropriate arrangements in place to comply with its best value duty under Part 1 of the 1999 Act. This could lead to further government intervention, increased costs and damage to reputation.</p> <p>A risk register is in place and will be maintained for the duration of the Improvement Plan which will underpin the council's strategic risk relating to the council's Improvement Plan (59a 02/22). This will be reported monthly to Leadership Team, quarterly to Cabinet and will be regularly reported to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.</p>
Equality:	<p>The successful delivery of this Improvement Plan will require the development and review of many of the council's policies and procedures. These changes will build in consideration of the impact on equalities throughout the development and will include an Equality Impact Assessment where appropriate.</p>
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>The underpinning objective of the Improvement Plan is to ensure the council is able to achieve the strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. These priorities focus on improving the health and wellbeing</p>



	of our residents and tackling health inequalities in a multi-faceted way. Therefore, any improvements to the council's governance structures will strengthen the council's ability to deliver services that will improve the health and wellbeing of Sandwell.
Social Value	Within the Improvement Plan, the council is committed to developing the Social Value Policy in conjunction with the refresh of the Procurement & Contract Procedure Rules. Through strengthening our asks of contractors through this Social Value Policy and linking them to the Corporate Plan objectives, the council will be able to maximise its social value return.
Climate Change	The underpinning objective of the Improvement Plan is to ensure the council is able to achieve the strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. Green in everything we do is one of the Fairer Sandwell principles running throughout the Corporate Plan. Any improvements to the council's governance structures will strengthen the council's ability to embed this principle and further the climate change agenda.
Corporate Parenting:	The underpinning objective of the Improvement Plan is to ensure the council is able to achieve the strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. These priorities include being a good Corporate Parent for the children in our care and supporting young people once they leave care. Therefore, any improvements to the council's governance structures will strengthen the council's ability to be a good Corporate Parent.

6 Appendices

1. Improvement Plan Monitoring Tool April 2023
2. Improvement Plan Annual Report
3. Statutory Recommendations Reporting April 2023
4. Scrutiny and Audit Recommendations Reporting April 2023
5. CIPFA FM Model Re-assessment Report



6. Response to CIPFA FM Model Re-assessment Review
7. Improvement Plan Risk Register April 2023
8. Changes to the Improvement Plan April 2023
9. Improvement Plan Governance Diagram

7 Background Papers

- [Sandwell Council Improvement Plan](#)
- Approval of Sandwell Council Improvement Plan [Report to Council 7 June 2022](#)
- Improvement Plan Progress Reports:
 - To Council: [13 December 2022](#)
 - To Cabinet:
 - [March 2023](#)
 - [December 2022](#) including LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review Report Nov 2022
 - [September 2022](#)
 - To Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
 - [March 2023](#)
 - [January 2023 \(External Review Reports\)](#)
 - [November 2022](#)
 - [September 2022](#)
 - [June 2022](#)
 - To Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board
 - [March 2023](#)
 - [November 2022](#)
 - [September 2022](#)
- External Review Reports
 - [Grant Thornton Value for Money Governance Review Follow-up Report 2022](#)
 - [Grant Thornton Value for Money Governance Review December 2021 – reissued October 2022](#)
 - [LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review Report 2022](#)
 - [LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report February 2022](#)
 - [CIPFA Financial Management Report January 2022](#)



- Reports to the Secretary of State for Levelling up Housing and Communities:
 - [Sandwell Council Report to Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, December 2022](#)
 - [Sandwell Council Commissioners: second report to Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, December 2022 \(published March 2023\)](#)
 - [Ministerial response to second letter \(March 2023\)](#)





IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Progress against Plan Status Rating	Definition	Leadership Team Action as a result
On Track	Progress against the action is good and there is i) a low level of issues; and/or ii) progress is in line with the delivery date with no/ minor slippage (e.g. less than 1 months); and/or that	Leadership Team note progress and seek assurance that on track
Medium progress	Progress on the action is being made but there is i) a medium level of issues and/or ii) slippage (actual / projected) of 1-2 months	Leadership Team watching brief and review impact on dependencies
Significant issues / slippage	There is a significant level of issues and/or slippage (e.g. more than 2 months)	Leadership Team review and remedy
Not due to start	Work on the action is not due to start	N/a
Complete	Action is complete	N/a
Closed	Action is complete and there is evidence that the measures of success have been fulfilled	Evidence to be provided
N/A	Update not required at this time	N/a
On hold	Action placed on hold due to different approach being considered	

Theme 1 -Organisational Culture

Static data			Owners				Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	April Update Due		
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (initial and Date)(March 2023)	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating
													Status (April 2023)	Update (initial and Date)(April 2023)
Establishing Organisational Culture	OC.A1.0	Establish the desired organisational culture for Sandwell Council		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader		Head of HR	May 2022	Dec 2022	Focus 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Establishing Organisational Culture	OC.A1.2	Phase 2 Engagement: Determining Desired Culture		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader		Head of HR	Aug 2022	Mar-23	N/A	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete
Establishing Organisational Culture	OC.A1.3	Approval of document setting out the desired organisational culture		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader		Head of HR	Autumn 2022	Mar-23	N/A	Complete	Cabinet endorsed the new desired values and behaviours on 15 March 2023. Discussed at Wider leadership team 9.3.23 and sharing on All Staff Briefing 22.3.23. DS 20.3.23	Complete	complete
Establishing Organisational Culture	OC.A2.0	Create the right environment for that organisational culture to thrive	(New) O1 We will embed the One Team Framework	Chief Executive	Deputy Leader					Focus 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Establishing Organisational Culture	OC.A2.1	Workforce Strategy approved		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader		Head of HR	Dec-22	May-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Priorities and action plan developments are underway	On Track- little or no slippage	Priorities and action plan developments are underway
Establishing Organisational Culture	OC.A2.3	Roll out of One Team framework - Launch and share events with people managers (June & July 2023) - Alignment of One Team framework values and behaviours in people practices and L&D offer		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader		Head of HR	23-Mar	23-Jul	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	As above A1.3	On Track- little or no slippage	As above A1.3
Establishing Organisational Culture	OC.A2.4	New action: Employee performance review and objective setting, linked to Corporate Plan and Directorate Plans (Appraisal) a) confirm approach for 2023 b) determine fully refreshed approach for 2024 onwards		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader		Head of HR	23-Mar	24-Mar	N/A	New Action Added	new action	New Action Added	new action
Officer Learning and Development	OC.B2.0	Develop a clear programme of management development	(New) O2 We will develop and embed excellent people management practices, by effectively leading, supporting and improving our workforce, fostering a workforce that is engaged and productive	Chief Executive	Deputy Leader	Director- Law & Governance				Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Officer Learning and Development	OC.B2.1	Management and Development Programme Scope, Content and Budget Agreed		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader	Director- Law & Governance	Head of HR	Oct-22	April 23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Manager essentials ready to launch and pilot to be held in April 23 with open cohort May 23 and further dates	On Track- little or no slippage	Pilot session took place 20 April for Manager skills workshop. Sessions booked for May and June and promotion
Officer Learning and Development	OC.B2.4	Management Development Programme Delivery		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader	Director- Law & Governance		23-Apr	tbc	N/A	Not due to start	Apr-23	Not due to start	Apr-23
Officer Learning and Development	OC.B2.5	New action: Senior Leadership Development Programme Scope, Content and Budget Agreed		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader		Head of HR		TBC	N/A	New Action Added	new action	New Action Added	new action
Officer Learning and Development	OC.B3.0	Officer Learning and Development	(New) O4-We will continue to improve Officer-Member Relationships	Chief Executive	Deputy Leader	Director- Law & Governance				Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Officer Learning and Development	OC.B3.1	Revision of Corporate Induction		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader	Director- Law & Governance	Head of HR	Autumn 2022	Feb-23	N/A	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	As reported February	Complete	Monthly face to face induction sessions in place for new starters without laptops. Data on completion of induction will be collected as part of Oracle implementation. Briefing note prepared for SL.
Officer and Member Relationship	OC.C4.0	Assurance Activity to sustain positive Officer and Member Relationship	(New) O4-We will continue to improve Officer-Member Relationships	Director - Law & Governance	Leader of the Council			Jan-23		Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Officer and Member Relationship	OC.C4.1	Identify mechanisms for ongoing insight and assurance around the Officer and Member Relationship		Director - Law & Governance	Leader of the Council			Jan-23	23-May	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Member-Officer Relationship Survey in final stages of preparation. Member survey launched 27/03/23. Officer survey due to be launched in early April. On track for analysis to be presented to IPRM in May.	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	Member Officer Survey launched in April with closing date at end of April. Amber rating reflects issues in response rate. Further comments with staff and Group Leaders and Chief Whips has taken place to encourage responses. Analysis will proceed for 11 May IPRM. Consideration to be given to timescales for repeat survey and reflection on reasons for response rate.
Member Learning and Development	OC.D3.0	Continue forward plan for all Member briefings based on themes of work / areas for development	(New) O4-We will continue to improve Officer-Member Relationships	Director - Law & Governance	Leader of the Council					Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Member Learning and Development	OC.D3.2	Leadership Team Review of All Member Briefings to ensure they are meeting needs		Director - Law & Governance	Leader of the Council			Mar-22	Ongoing	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	All Member briefings have continued to take place and briefings with LT taking place as part of the preparations. Reflections on this municipal year and proposals for next municipal year are being pulled together for discussion with LT in line with the results from the Officer-Member survey response.	On Track- little or no slippage	All Member briefings have continued to take place and briefings with LT taking place as part of the preparations. Reflections on this municipal year and proposals for next municipal year are being pulled together for discussion with LT in line with the results from the Officer-Member survey response.

Static data													April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Owners			Dates		Focus		Progress against plan		Evidence of status rating	
				Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)/March 2023	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating
Member Learning and Development	OC.D4.0	Induction training for Leader and Cabinet Members on appropriate processes relating to the employment of Chief Officers, and in particular Statutory Officers	(New) O4-We will continue to improve Officer-Member Relationships	Director - Law & Governance	Leader of the Council			Jun-22	Jul-22	Focus 2	Complete	MDP signed off by Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee and this includes the induction programme.	Complete	Complete
Member Learning and Development	OC.D5.0	Member development programme	(New) O4-We will continue to improve Officer-Member Relationships	Director - Law & Governance						Focus 2	N/A		N/A	
Member Learning and Development	OC.D5.1	Approval of next iteration of MDP that includes actions as a result of Member PDP analysis		Director - Law & Governance	Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee			Mar-23	23-Mar	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	MDP update considered by Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee in March. Delegation agreed for Chair to approve final version. Ongoing work with the Chair to respond to any emerging needs between now and the start of the Municipal Year, specifically Induction Programme following confirmation of at least 17 new Cllrs to be elected in May. Member PDP take-up is included within the Corporate Governance work.	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	As per update last month, MDP approved by ESMDC and delegation in place for Chair to agree final version. Following confirmation that min. 18 new Councillors, the induction programme within MDP is undergoing further updates to reflect that significant change. The induction programme to MDP due to be signed-off by early May.
Internal Communications	OC.E2.0	Deliver the communications strategy to assist with more effective internal communications	(New) O5- We will ensure we are effectively communicating and engaging with our residents, internal workforce and external stakeholders (See O20 - O22)	Chief Executive	Leader of the Council			Feb-22	Ongoing	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Internal Communications	OC.E2.1	Internal comms channels used to deliver comms messages on an ongoing basis including: - All staff briefing - Team Talk Leadership Updates - Member bulletin - Director live events - Boslin People e-bulletin (New)		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead - Communications	Ongoing	Monthly updates through IP	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	All staff briefing to launch new values and behaviours and update on improvement plan progress held on 22 March. Other internal comms activity has continued.	On Track- little or no slippage	Series of work planned with culture group and comms to embed the values across the org. Looking at how we can showcase the behaviours being demonstrated through employee stories/ we are Sandwell. From April 24 the values will form part of the appraisal guidance.
Internal Communications	OC.E2.2	Chief Executive's Comms Plan launch		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead - Communications	Spring 2023 TBC	TBC	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Weekly CE blog established. Video shared with staff introducing the new CE.	On Track- little or no slippage	Comms introducing the CE to the organisation have been delivered. A forward plan is being developed with the CE that sets out how ongoing comms will be delivered.
Internal Communications	OC.E2.3	Develop proposal for all staff conference		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead - Communications	TBC Aligned to CEX 100 day plan	TBC	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Programme of visits to service areas by CE and Directors underway. Plans being developed to hold in person briefings as part of rollout of new values and behaviours.	On Track- little or no slippage	Working towards a July in person briefing.
Internal Communications	OC.E2.4	Formal Employee Recognition Scheme - approach and resources identified		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead- Service Improvement	Mar-23	Oct-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Initial scoping of options for an employee recognition scheme has taken place. Next step is a survey to staff. The survey launch has been delayed due to the launch of the One Team Framework as the employee recognition scheme is linked to embedding the new values. Timescales for introduction of recognition scheme will be identified. RJ 30/03/23	On Track- little or no slippage	Update as per last month. Ongoing work is in place around recognition through comms approach e.g. recognition of good practice and shout outs, and through ongoing approach taken by Directors and Leaders. Employee experience strand within the workforce strategy includes employee recognition and reward. Considerations around formal recognition scheme will be a deliverable within the workforce strategy. RJ 25/04/23
Internal Communications	OC.E2.5	Continuous feedback on effectiveness of internal comms		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead - Communications	Ongoing	Quarterly Reporting Jan, Apr, July, Oct	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Pulse survey will be carried out ahead of the next EES.	On Track- little or no slippage	the next EES. Regularly run surveys in director live events, team talk. Looking at what colleagues are engaging with across internal comms channels.
Internal Communications	OC.E2.6	Regular comms activity around the scale of financial activities and how the organisation is addressing them.		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council	Director - Finance	Strategic Lead - Communications	Jan-23	ongoing	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	All staff newsletter from Finance Director shared.	On Track- little or no slippage	Director of Finance had leadership bulletin in Feb, and regular updating colleagues on live events, re: budget across team talk
Internal Communications	OC.E2.7	Review social media policy and create guidance/ protocol for working with MPs		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead - Communications AD - HR	Jan-23	23-Aug	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Comms and HR have met to discuss. Amendments to the social media policy have been drafted and are now being shared for comment.	On Track- little or no slippage	The social media policy has been agreed with TUs, and will now be shared with the CE before dissemination across the organisation.
Internal Communications	OC.E2.8	Regular comms activity around the golden thread		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead - Communications	Jan-23	ongoing	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	We are working with the LGA to develop a new corporate narrative which will enable us to use consistent language to describe council priorities and actions.	On Track- little or no slippage	a new corporate narrative which will enable us to use consistent language to describe council priorities and actions. The LGA are coming in June.
Embedding Constitutional Changes	OC.G1.0	Governance review Phase 2	(New) O10- We will ensure that our refreshed governance arrangements are embedded	Director - Law & Governance	Leader of the Council			Jan-23	TBC	Focus 2	N/A		N/A	

Static data			Owners					Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating
Embedding Constitutional Changes	OC.G1.1	Agree project plans relating to each of the changes within the constitution		Director - Law & Governance	Leader of the Council			Jan-23	Feb-23	N/A	Significant issues / actual/projected slippage	Draft Project Plan was due to be finalised by the end of March but it will now be end April. Activities have already commenced and have not been delayed by the formation of the overriding action plan. This includes report writing training, revising the induction programme for Members, specific training requested by the Leader, addressing streaming issues, and revising scrutiny procedure rules (which will go to Annual Council for approval). Seeking additional resources to help with BAU delivery so that there is capacity to deliver the Governance Review actions (including the finalisation of the action plan).	Complete	Overall project plan being finalised for end May.
Embedding Constitutional Changes	OC.G1.2	Effective decision-making training		Director - Law & Governance	Leader of the Council			Jan-23	May-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Dates are in place for the initial report writing training in March and April. Further training around procurement, financials etc. and scenario-based learning are being planned (within action OC.G1.1 above).	Complete	Effective report writing training delivered in April. As a result of feedback from the training, more training will be rolled out focusing on the process around effective decision-making.
Embedding Constitutional Changes	OC.G1.3	Delivery of Corporate Governance Development Programme		Director - Law & Governance	Leader of the Council	Director-Finance		Jan-23	May-24	N/A		See OC.G1.1 and OC.G1.2 above.	On Track- little or no slippage	See OC.G1.1 and OC.G1.2 above. Focus for this quarter has been the delivery of effective decision making training and budget holder training. Action title to be updated to reflect next phase.
Embedding Constitutional Changes	OC.G1.4	Annual Refresher of Corporate Governance Training		Director - Law & Governance	Leader of the Council			TBC	tbc	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Part of Corporate Governance Development Programme. It is included within the induction programme for 2023-2024.	On Track- little or no slippage	Part of Corporate Governance Development Programme. It is included within the induction programme for 2023-2024. Action to be monitored within IP until it has been delivered. Dates to be included.
Embedding Constitutional Changes	OC.G1.5	Delivery of Directorships and Trusteeships Training		Director - Law & Governance	Deputy Leader			Jan-23	Jul-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Training was delivered in 2022. Part of Corporate Governance Development Programme for annual refresh. It is included within the induction programme for 2023-2024.	On Track- little or no slippage	Training was delivered in 2022. Part of Corporate Governance Development Programme for annual refresh. It is included within the induction programme for 2023-2024. Action to be monitored within IP until it has been delivered.
Role and Function of Scrutiny and Audit	OC.H1.0	Assurance Activity to ensure effective contribution of Scrutiny and Audit is sustained	New O10- We will ensure that our refreshed governance arrangements are embedded	Director - Law & Governance						Focus 2	N/A		N/A	
Role and Function of Scrutiny and Audit	OC.H1.1	Confirm mechanisms for ongoing insight and assurance around the effectiveness of Scrutiny and Audit		Director - Law & Governance		Chairs of ARAC and Scrutiny				N/A	Complete	Range of mechanisms in place including regular review of work programmes, survey, meetings between Chairs and Officers. Regular engagement between Lead Scrutiny Chair and Lead Executive Cabinet Member. Scrutiny guidance published. Scrutiny annual reporting in place. Practice is embedded.	Complete	Complete
Role and Function of Scrutiny and Audit	OC.H1.2	Quarterly survey of Member and Officers participating in Scrutiny and Audit meetings		Director - Law & Governance			Strategic Lead - Service Improvement Democratic and Member Services Manager		Jan April July October	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Last analysis shared with LT in January. Any immediate concerns/actions are being picked up by Democratic Services for action in between quarterly reporting. On agenda for April IPRM reporting. On agenda for April IPRM reporting.	On Track- little or no slippage	Last analysis shared with LT in January. Any immediate concerns/actions are being picked up by Democratic Services for action in between quarterly reporting. On agenda for April IPRM to conclude quarterly reporting cycle. Discussions underway on arrangements for next Municipal Year.

Theme 2- Corporate Oversight

Static data			Owners				Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating		April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)
ERP	CO.A1.0	Implement Oracle Fusion	(New) O15 We will deliver the Oracle transformation programme	Director-Finance	Deputy Leader	Director-Business Strategy & Change Director- Law		Apr-22	Apr-24	Focus 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ERP	CO.A1.8	Completion of discovery phase		Director-Finance	Deputy Leader		PMO lead	Jan-23	Feb-23	N/A	Complete	Phase complete	Complete	Complete
	CO.A1.9	Completion of the modelling phase		Director-Finance	Deputy Leader		PMO lead	Feb-23	Jun-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Project milestones on track. Some resources issues but being managed by the PMO	On Track- little or no slippage	Project milestones on track. HR and payroll is on the critical path and risk of slippage but this is being managed by PMO.
ERP	CO.A1.10	Go live		Director-Finance	Deputy Leader		PMO Lead	Apr-24	Apr-24	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	No slippage being reported against key project milestones	On Track- little or no slippage	Within Project Milestones to date. Resources in place. Main risk of slippage relates to HR and Payroll.
ERP	CO.A1.11	Programme benefits will be defined during the duration of the programme and agreed with the programme board -a process will be agreed for monitoring and reporting the benefits -benefit realisation will take place post go live.		Director-Finance	Deputy Leader		PMO lead	Feb-23	quarterly	N/A	Assurance Action	Update due May	Assurance Action	Update due May
Improvement Planning, Monitoring and Learning	CO.B1.0	Single Improvement Plan Phase 1		Leadership Team	Leader of the Council			Mar-22	Jun-22	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Improvement Planning, Monitoring and Learning	CO.B1.4	Ongoing Monitoring of Improvement Plan (Monthly Monitoring by Leadership Team, Quarterly Monitoring by Cabinet, ARAC regular review of IP and IP Risk Register, Scrutiny regular review of IP)		Leadership Team	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead: Service Improvement	Ongoing	Monthly assurance	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	February report presented to IPRM 02/03 and to Leader's meeting 08/03. Quarterly report made to Cabinet on 15/03, ARAC on 16/03 and due at scrutiny on 29/03. RJ 16/03/23	On Track- little or no slippage	March report presented to IPRM 06/04 and Leader's Meeting 12/04. Next Quarterly reports due to Cabinet, Scrutiny and Audit in June together with SoS letter. An annual report is being prepared. 24/04/23 RJ
Improvement Planning, Monitoring and Learning	CO.B1.5	6 monthly report to Secretary of State		Leadership Team	Council		Strategic Lead: Service Improvement	Dec-22	June each year throughout intervention	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	December report submitted. Next report due June 2022. SoS response to Commissioners' December letter received 16/03/23. RJ 16/03/23	On Track- little or no slippage	Preparations underway for June report. 24/04 RJ
Improvement Planning, Monitoring and Learning	CO.B1.6	Employee Engagement Survey Action Plan monitored and reviewed by Leadership Team	(New) O2 We will develop and embed excellent people management practices, by effectively leading, supporting and improving our workforce	Chief Executive	Deputy Leader			Jan-23	Jan July each year	Focus 2	On Track- little or no slippage	Leadership considered the progress update in January 2023. Agreement reached to conduct next Employee Engagement Survey in Autumn 2023. Next update on survey action plan due July. RJ 16/03/23	On Track- little or no slippage	Leadership considered the progress update in January 2023. Agreement reached to conduct next Employee Engagement Survey in Autumn 2023. Next update on survey action plan due July. RJ 17/04/23
Improvement Planning, Monitoring and Learning	CO.B2.0	Single Improvement Plan Phase 2	(New) O7 We will hold ourselves to account for the delivery of the improvement plan and will continuously improve	Leadership team	Leader of the Council			Dec-22	Mar-23	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Improvement Planning, Monitoring and Learning	CO.B2.1	Approval of Improvement Plan Phase 2		Leadership team	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead: Service Improvement	Dec-22	Mar-23	N/A	Complete	Changes to Improvement Plan as a result of External Follow up Reviews were included in the Quarterly Report to Cabinet in March to form the phase 2 plan. 16/03/23	Complete	Complete
Improvement Planning, Monitoring and Learning	CO.B2.2	Approval of Improvement Plan Phase 3		Leadership team	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead: Service Improvement	Mar-23	Jun-23	N/A	New Action Added	Phase 2 plan agreed March 2023 to reflect external review findings from Grant Thornton and LGA. Phase 3 plan to be agreed in June to align with the update to the Corporate Plan and Directorate Business Plans.	On Track- little or no slippage	Phase 3 plan due to Cabinet in June 2023 to reflect response to CIPFA review and that IP activity embedded within Corporate Plan and Business Plans, as appropriate.
Improvement Planning, Monitoring and Learning	CO.B3.0	Continuous Improvement		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council			Autumn 2022	Spring 2023	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Improvement Planning, Monitoring and Learning	CO.B3.1	Develop a Continuous Improvement framework		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council			Autumn 2022	Jun-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Preparations underway for Leadership Team discussion in April and on track for approval in June. RJ 16/03/23	Medium Progress- actual/projected slippage of 1-2 months	Continuous Improvement activity is underway as part of improvement plan actions. Framework development has been delayed due to re-prioritisation of resources on LUP development. Timescales to be re-profiled.

Static data				Owners				Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating		April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Progress against plan	Status (April 2023)	Evidence of status rating
Improvement Planning, Monitoring and Learning	CO.B3.2	Develop a lessons learnt framework		Chief executive	Leader of the Council			23-Jan	23-Jun	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Initial scoping of work is taking place. Lessons learnt for SEND has been reported to LT. Further lessons learnt around a multi-agency approach to a damp and mould issue is being captured. These examples of lessons learnt will inform the Presentation prepared to aid dissemination of lessons learnt and the actions in place to respond. Lessons Learnt scheduled for face to face WLT in June. Action due to be closed from IP once assurance in place that actions are	Medium Progress- actual/projected slippage of 1-2 months	As update above. Lessons learnt capture is taking place and is informing our plans e.g. seeking lessons learnt around closure of accounts and Oracle implementation in other I&A. Framework development is incorporated.	
Improvement Planning, Monitoring and Learning	CO.B3.3	Ensure SEND 2 lessons learnt applied		Leadership Team	Leader of the Council			23-Jan	June* to time with embedding actions in business plans	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Lessons learnt and the actions in place to face WLT in June. Action due to be closed from IP once assurance in place that actions are	On Track- little or no slippage	Scheduled for WLT in June. Action due to be closed from IP once assurance in place that actions are embedded in business plans (June).	
Performance Management	CO.C1.0	Performance Management Framework (PMF)	(new)U16 - we will embed an evidence-based continuous improvement	Chief Executive	Deputy Leader			Sep-22	Ongoing	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Performance Management	CO.C1.3	Quarterly Performance Reports made to Cabinet		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader			Ongoing action	Quarterly monitoring to ensure approach embedded	N/A	Assurance Action	Q3 report made to Cabinet in March. RJ 16/03/23	Assurance Action	Preparations underway for Q4 report to Cabinet in July. RJ 24/04/23	
Performance Management	CO.C1.4	Review Corporate KPIs for organisational health to reflect workforce strategy		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader			January 2023	Jun-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Work underway to refresh Corporate Plan including measures within the performance management framework. Due to be reported to Cabinet in June.	Significant issues / actual/projected slippage-more than 2 months	There are significant capacity issues in HR services due primarily to the (growing) demands of Oracle Fusion. A new HR dashboard will be developed over the next few quarters ready for reporting in Q1 2024/25. The existing set of organisational health metrics have been prepared for year end reporting within the PMF.	
Performance Management	CO.C1.5	Review Corporate KPIs for customer experience to reflect customer experience programme		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader			January 2023	Apr-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Work underway to refresh measures within performance management framework linked to the Corporate Plan refresh. This includes a set of customer service standards. These have been drafted and the next stage is to confirm the final metrics. This is due for Leadership Team consideration in April.	On Track- little or no slippage	Work underway to refresh measures within performance management framework linked to the Corporate Plan refresh. This includes a set of customer service standards. These have been drafted and the next stage is to confirm the final metrics. Leadership Team discussed this in April and a revised/final set is going to Leadership Team in May.	
Performance Management	CO.C1.6	Review PMF and put in place plans to address data gaps		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader			Mar 23	Jun-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Work underway to refresh PMF alongside Corporate Plan refresh.	On Track- little or no slippage	Work is continuing to refresh the PMF alongside Corporate Plan refresh. This is going to Leadership Team in May and Cabinet in June.	
Performance Management	CO.C1.7	Q4 SCT Contract Report to include overview of ITS (invest to save) activity.		Director - Children & Education	Deputy Leader			June-23	Jun-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Preparations being made for inclusion of this information in Q4 report.	On Track- little or no slippage	The Q4 Contract Report is being prepared for Leadership Team in June and will include specific update details relating to Invest to Save.	
Performance Management	CO.C1.8	Corporate performance team in place		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader			Dec-22	Sep-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Team manager has commenced and additional capacity is in place focusing on data and intelligence. JDs for additional posts are being prepared.	On Track- little or no slippage	Team manager has commenced and additional capacity is in place focusing on data and intelligence. Shortlisting for G Grade post underway and interviews due to take place in May. JD for remaining post being confirmed. RJ 25/04/23	
Performance Management	CO.C1.9	New action: Consider integrating revenue, Capital and Performance reporting		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			July 23	Mar-24	N/A	New Action Added	new action	New Action Added	new action	
Performance Management	CO.C2.0	Budget Monitoring	New O11- We will set a sustainable and balanced budget each year	Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Mar-22	Ongoing	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Performance Management	CO.C2.4	Assurance action: Quarterly Budget Monitoring Reports made to Leadership Team, Cabinet and Scrutiny		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Ongoing action- March, June, Sep, Dec	Quarterly monitoring to ensure approach embedded	N/A	Assurance Action	Monthly reports are continuing and these are being reviewed for further improvement by the Interim Financial Strategy Manager	Assurance Action	(due June 23) Monthly reports are continuing and these are being reviewed for further improvement by the Interim Financial Strategy Manager	
Performance Management	CO.C2.5	Assurance action: Where budget pressures identified, assurance provided that action has/is being taken (monthly summary comment from S151 Officer / raise issues)		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Ongoing action	Monthly monitoring	N/A	Assurance Action	Budget pressures and mitigations are discussed at LT each month	Assurance Action	As previous update	
Performance Management	CO.C2.6	Embed financial benchmarking in budget planning		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Apr-23	Jan-24	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	As February update	On Track- little or no slippage	As previous update	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D1.0	Restructuring		Leadership Team	Deputy Leader			Dec-20	Dec-22	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D1.1	Directorate Level restructuring		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader				Head of HR	N/A	Action on Hold	Directorate-level structure is under discussion. Planning stages for recruitment of Assistant Chief Executive.	Action on Hold	Directorate-level structure is under discussion. Planning stages for recruitment of Assistant Chief Executive.	

Static data			Owners					Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating		April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D1.2	Review of spans and layers across Council's managerial structures in line with LGA Guidance (likely to be incorporated within Target Operating Model Programme in due course)		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader		AD - Transf Head of HR	TBC	TBC	N/A	Action on Hold	as above	Action on Hold	This review is to be addressed through the workforce strategy implementation. Currently on hold.	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D2.0	Embedding Finance Business Partner role	New O13- We will embed the finance business role	Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Jan-22	Aug-22	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D2.3	Workforce development plan implemented for financial services section		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader	Finance Improvement Manager	Finance Improvement Manager		Mar-23	N/A	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	Due to limited progress internally, C Co has now been commissioned to deliver this and the work is underway. This includes baselining the current position, workshops with staff, a gap analysis and an action plan.	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	Engagement sessions completed and report due by end of April which will allow plan to be developed by July in line with Change Control.	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D2.5	Assurance Action: Performance against KPIs for financial services section		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader	Finance Improvement Manager	Finance Improvement Manager	Ongoing- start date required	Quarterly	N/A	Assurance Action	KPI's agreed and will be embedded from April 2023 for the new financial year to allow for training and recruitment.	Assurance Action	quarterly update	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D3.0	Reduction of financial transactional activity	New O17- We will establish a corporate transformation programme and Governance Structures	Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Jan-22	Mar-23	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D3.3	Review of corporate debt recovery processes completed		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader				Mar-23	N/A	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	Review of current debts and debt processes is complete and final recommendations and Business Case for centralising debtors function is due mid-April.	Complete	Review is largely complete and draft report and recommendations received. Implementation of recommendations will be longer process.	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D3.6	New action: Implement recommended processes for a single view of debt		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader				TBC	N/A	New Action Added	new action	New Action Added	new action	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D3.4	Programme of end to end process reviews		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			May-22	Mar-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Reviews on track to complete by the end of March 2023 with the exception of Business Support which has a completion date of May 2023.	On Track- little or no slippage	Transactional Finance Reviews completed and recommendations being implemented. Ongoing process so further areas for review are being identified. Also recommendations from some reviews are longer term e.g. business support	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D3.5	Implementation of Recommendations from CIPFa in relation to internal charges		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Oct-22	Apr-24	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	New methodology and process now being implemented	On Track- little or no slippage	New process now being implemented	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D3.7	New action: Develop Business case for Transactional Finance Unit		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader				TBC	N/A	New Action Added	new action	New Action Added	new action	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D4.0	Resolve issues relating to the completion and sign off of final accounts.	New O11- We will set a sustainable and balanced budget	Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Jan-22	May-22	Focus 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D4.4	Assurance Action: GT sign-off of 2020/21 Accounts (assurance that previous issues raised have been resolved)		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Monthly monitoring	Monthly monitoring	N/A	Assurance Action	Accounts approved by ARAC on 16th March but Director of Finance has delegated authority to make final amendments before GT can issue the audit opinion and complete the audit. Staff sickness has slowed progress.	Assurance Action	Updated 20/21 accounts to be completed and handed over to Grant Thornton w/c 8 th May	
Organisational Structure and Enabling Corporate Core	CO.D4.5	Assurance Action: Preparation of Draft Accounts for 2021/2022 (assurance that approach to completion and sign-off of final accounts is becoming embedded)		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Monthly monitoring	Monthly monitoring	N/A	Assurance Action	Agreed early June for completion of 2021/22 accounts as GT have limited capacity before then due to NHS audits. Also gives further time for internal quality assurance of accounts to ensure accuracy is improved	Assurance Action	Slippage due to further asset valuation issues identified in 20/21. Decision to be made on timescale for 21/22 w/c 2nd May.	
Corporate Transformation	CO.E1.0	Corporate Transformation programme	New O17- We will develop a corporate transformation programme and governance structure	Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Dec-21		Focus 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Static data												April Update Due		
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Focus Main Action Risk	Progress against plan Status (March 2023)	Evidence of status rating Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Progress against plan Status (April 2023)	Evidence of status rating Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)
Corporate Transformation	CO.E1.3	Corporate Transformation PMO established - Local Partnerships Review Concludes - Establishment of PMO		Director-Finance	Deputy Leader		AD-Transformation		Late 2022	N/A	Significant issues / actual/projected slippage- more than 2 months	Review underway with Local Partnerships to inform establishment of Corporate PMO but this won't be completed until June.	Significant issues / actual/projected slippage- more than 2 months	Review underway with Local Partnerships to inform establishment of Corporate PMO but this won't be completed until June. Establishment of PMO will depend on outcomes of review. September indicative date
Corporate Transformation	CO.E1.4	Programme and Project Management System Implementation		Director-Finance	Deputy Leader		AD-Transformation		Mar-23	N/A	Medium Progress- actual/projected slippage of 1-2 months	Verto build ongoing and meeting with internal stakeholders to agree extended deadline to incorporate revised transformation approach.	Medium Progress- actual/projected slippage of 1-2 months	Revised project plan in place linked to Local Partnerships PMO review.
Corporate Transformation	CO.E1.5	Corporate Transformation Board operational -ToR Finalised -Membership confirmed -Board dates in place		Director-Finance				23-Jan	Mar-23	N/A	Medium Progress- actual/projected slippage of 1-2 months	CTB is being reviewed in line with PMO Review being undertaken by Local Partnerships. TOR and Membership will be reset once review is complete. In the interim, updates on Customer Journey and progress with other workstreams will be reported to Leadership Team.	Medium Progress- actual/projected slippage of 1-2 months	As March update
Customer Journey	CO.F5.0	Customer Journey Programme	New O8 We will deliver the customer journey programme	Director – Regeneration & Growth	Deputy Leader		Transformation Programme Manager	22-Sep	TBC	Focus 1	N/A		N/A	
Customer Journey	CO.F5.1	Structure and Governance for Customer Experience Programme approved		Director – Regeneration & Growth	Deputy Leader		Transformation Programme Manager	22-Sep	Oct-22	N/A	Complete	complete	Complete	complete
Customer Journey	CO.F5.2	Workstream Plans agreed (timeline, cost and resource) for 5 workstreams (fix the backlog, fix the OSS, customer experience strategy, contact centre/community hubs approach, technology)		Director – Regeneration & Growth	Deputy Leader		Transformation Programme Manager	22-Dec	Feb-23	N/A	Complete	Project briefs in place for the 4 workstreams as backlogs has been removed and will be incorporated in to PMF.	Complete	Complete
Customer Journey	CO.F5.3	Programme Board in place and regular meetings scheduled (first programme board to involve ToR, scope of workstreams, nominations for resources for each workstream, and high level milestones)		Director – Regeneration & Growth	Deputy Leader		Transformation Programme Manager	Nov-22	Feb 23	N/A	Complete	CI Programme Board in place. Meetings scheduled and Programme Manager in situ.	Complete	Complete
Customer Journey	CO.F5.4	Ward and Casework Management - Member Engagement held		Director – Regeneration & Growth			Strategic Lead - Customer	TBC	TBC	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Discussions have taken place with Member services. Meetings to be arranged with members but this will not happen before pre-election period.	On Track- little or no slippage	Update remains same as March 2023. Sessions will be booked in for towards the end of May and will include any newly Elected Members.
Customer Journey	CO.F5.5	Ward and Casework Management - Action plan in place		Director – Regeneration & Growth			Strategic Lead - Customer	TBC	TBC	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Meeting held with Member services, action plan devised, that will be developed further following sessions - this is with Director for approval prior to putting in to place. Pre-election period will delay this.	On Track- little or no slippage	Update remains same as March 2023. Action Plan has been refined and is ready to be implemented following pre-election period and Director sign off.
Strategic Planning framework	CO.G1.0	Strategic Planning framework	(New)O16 - We will embed an evidence-based continuous improvement approach to ensure we are directing our resources to meet our priorities	Chief Executive						Focus 2	N/A	new action	N/A	new action
Strategic Planning framework	CO.G1.1	Refresh of partnership wide vision 2030		Chief Executive			Strategic Lead - Service Improvement		early 2024	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Engagement with partners, and development of a State of the Borough report has commenced. Aiming for refresh of Vision in early 2024. RJ 16/03/23	On Track- little or no slippage	Work continues on the State of the Borough report, this will inform the Vision refresh.
Strategic Planning framework	CO.G1.2	Finalise directorate business plans 2023-2026		Chief Executive			Strategic Lead - Service Improvement		Jun-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Approval of Directorate Level Business Plans due in June alongside a refresh to the Corporate Plan. Initial drafts in place and being refined. RJ 23/03/23	On Track- little or no slippage	Work on the refresh of the Corporate Plan is nearly complete, work to understand implications for Directorate Business Plans has been completed. Once LT have finalised the 'we wills' within the CP relevant actions in directorate BP's will be rerouted accordingly.
Strategic Planning framework	CO.G1.3	Refresh appraisal process		Chief Executive			AD - HR Strategic Lead - Service Improvement		TBC	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	LT agreed update to process for 2023 ahead of implementation of Oracle Fusion and Talent module in April 2024	On Track- little or no slippage	LT agreed update to process for 2023 ahead of implementation of Oracle Fusion and Talent module in April 2024
Strategic Planning framework	CO.G1.4	Pilot an approach to service planning		Chief Executive			Strategic Lead - Service Improvement		TBC	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Conversations have taken place with two Directorates to shape the approach to service planning. Initial priority is refreshing Corporate Plan and aligning Directorate Business Plans to Senior management structure. Timescales to be confirmed.	On Track- little or no slippage	Resource remains focused on refreshing the Corporate Plan and ensuring Directorate Business Plans are aligned. Service.

Theme 3 -Strategic Direction

Theme 3 -Strategic Direction													April Update Due	
Static data				Owners				Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A1.0	Regen Pipeline Development and Delivery	E10- We will develop an overarching Regeneration Strategy supported by an approved Pipeline of Regeneration Projects to support economic recovery from Covid19.	Director-Regeneration & Growth	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth			Autumn 2021	Apr-27	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A1.2b	Assurance Action- Pipeline projects updated to IPRM on a 6-monthly basis		Director-Regeneration & Growth	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth			22-Dec	6 monthly update	N/A	Assurance Action	Due June 23	Assurance Action	Due June 23
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A1.3	Regeneration Pipeline: Agreement to procure a strategic delivery partner		Director-Regeneration & Growth	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth			Mar-22	Mar-23	N/A	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	Engagement with one of the framework providers is being carried out currently. This will feed into the report (to procure a strategic delivery partner) planned to go to Cabinet in June/July.	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	Update as March 23- Engagement with one of the framework providers is being carried out currently. This will feed into the report (to procure a strategic delivery partner) planned to go to Cabinet in June/July.
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A3.0	Communications and Corporate Affairs Strategy Development and Delivery	(New) O5 - We will ensure we are effectively communicating and engaging with our residents, internal workforce and external stakeholders	Chief Executive	Leader of the Council		comms	Autumn 2021	Ongoing	Focus 2	On Track- little or no slippage	Discussions have been held with the LGA to bring in support from comms associates to help deliver a series of workshops in April to develop a corporate narrative. The LGA will also be carrying out a comms health check to advise on the next steps in ensuring the comms team is set up to meet the ambitions of the organisation.	On Track- little or no slippage	Discussions to be held with the LGA in June
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A4.0	Refresh and embed the Corporate Procurement Strategy	E2 - We will spend more money directly with suppliers in Sandwell. We will do this by developing better intelligence and improving our knowledge of local supply chains, as well as working with major contractors to encourage spending and sub-contracting with local suppliers.	Director- Finance	Deputy Leader		Interim Procurement Strategy Manager	Autumn 2021	Jul-22	Focus 2	N/A	May update due	N/A	May update due
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A4.3	Training delivered		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader		Interim Procurement Strategy Manager	Autumn 22	Dec-22	N/A	Complete		Complete	
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A4.4	New actions: Action Plan to address gap analysis in strategy to be completed		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader		Interim Head of Procurement	Apr-23	Jul-23	N/A	New Action Added	new action added	On Track- little or no slippage	Action Plan currently being drafted
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A5.0	Develop and implement the Commercial Strategy	(New) O18 - We will develop our commercial approach including our approach to contract management and monitoring and deliver our first commercial business streams.	Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Autumn 2021	Jul-22	Focus 2				
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A5.1	Commercial Strategy Approved		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader				Mar-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Strategy to be approved by Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources - 28th March 2023	Complete	Strategy approved by Cabinet Member
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A5.2	Business Cases Presented for commercial workstreams		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			TBC	Feb-23	N/A	Complete	Whilst Strategic Business Cases have been presented there are no pre-mobilisation actions required before full Business Cases can be presented. Various deadlines have been agreed for each business stream and Corporate Transformation Team are providing support. LT also agreed to recruitment of a Commercial Project Manager and this is underway.	Complete	Complete
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A5.3	Complete Full Business Cases for identified Business Steams in line with Commercial Project Plan approved by Leadership Team		Director- Finance					Oct-23		New Action Added	new action added		

Static data			We will statement (code & statement in full)	Owners				Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action		Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A5.4	Recruit Commercial Project Officer		Director- Finance				Jun-23			New Action Added	new action added		
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A6.0	HRA 30 year Business Plan	H17- We will ensure that council homes are safe places to live by fully complying with fire and building safety requirements and regularly reviewing compliance. We will support people in the private rented sector to ensure their landlords comply with safety standards too. H15- We will modernise our tenancy and estate management offer, delivering a more proactive service, early identification and intervention to mitigate risks to tenancy sustainment and a new neighbourhood management working in partnership with communities to address their priorities.	Director- Housing	Cabinet Member for Housing	Assistant Directors - Housing Management and Asset Management		Autumn 2021	Apr-23	Focus 2				
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A6.2	HRA Business Plan developed		Director- Housing	Cabinet Member for Housing	ADs		May-22	Mar-23	N/A	Complete	Plan approved by Cabinet 15th February 2023	Complete	Plan approved by Cabinet 15th February 2023
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A6.3	HRA Business Plan approved (in line with budget approval 2023-24)		Director- Housing	Cabinet Member for Housing				Apr-23	N/A	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A6.4	Procurement of stock condition surveys		Director- Housing	Cabinet Member for Housing				Jun-23	N/A	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	Tender deadline is 17/3/23.	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	Only one tender was received and so were not able to award the contract. The specification needs to be reviewed with a view to re-tendering in May 2023.
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A7.0	Refresh the Early Help Strategy	B11 -We will work with partners to make sure that vulnerable children in our community receive the right support to enable them to thrive and have successful adult lives. B15- We will work with partners to ensure early help is available to children and young people at the earliest opportunity depending on their need.	Director- Children & Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Autumn 2021	Mar-22	Focus 2				
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A7.2	Early Help Strategy to be reviewed annually at the early help partnership board		Director- Children & Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Apr-23	Annually	N/A	Assurance Action	Due April 23	Assurance Action	An 'one year on ' event was held in March 2023 to capture updates since the launch of the early help strategy. The early help strategy remains unchanged for now.
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A8.0	Refresh Corporate Parenting Strategy	B14- We will be a good Corporate Parent for the children in our care, ensuring that those children are fully a part of our 'family', and promoting fostering and adoption.	Director- Children & Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Jan-22	Sep-22	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Strategy development and refresh	SD.A8.3	Corporate Parenting Strategy - yearly assurances provided to the Corporate Parenting Board		Director- Children & Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Sep-23	Annually	N/A	Assurance Action	Due September 23	Assurance Action	Due September 23

Static data			Owners					Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	SD.B1.0	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	(New) O3 - We will progress and drive our equality performance through the Equality Framework for Local Government and utilise Council resources to support our equalities agenda	Director- Law & Governance	Leader of the Council			Autumn 2021	Ongoing	Focus 1				
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	SD.B1.12	Refresh staff network- -Package of Corporate commitment -Identify network chairs -Established United Networks meeting		Director- Law & Governance	Leader of the Council		Manager, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team	Feb-23	Jul-23	N/A	Complete	Report made to LT. All networks are now up and running with Chairs and Co-Chairs in place. Network chairs have held initial meeting with CEx and ST.	Complete	Complete
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	SD.B1.13	Refresh Equalities Commission Board Renew Terms of reference		Director- Law & Governance	Leader of the Council		Manager, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team	Feb-23	Apr-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Conversations with Leader have commenced. Report to Executive being prepared for the start of the Municipal Year for approval to the terms of reference.	On Track- little or no slippage	Conversations with Leader have commenced. Report to Executive being prepared for the start of the Municipal Year for approval to the terms of reference.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	SD.B1.14	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy developed - appointment of consultant for data analysis - appointment of consultant for strategy development		Director- Law & Governance			Manager, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team	Feb-23 ?? ??	Jun- 24 ?? ??	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Currently evaluating submissions for data analysis consultant. Anticipated award by end of March. Consultant for strategy development will commence following the data analysis. Currently on track for development of Strategy by June 2024.	On Track- little or no slippage	Direct award offered for data analysis consultant. Due to commence at start of June. This is later than planned but will not impact on the overall timescale of the strategy approval of June 2024. Strategy will form part of an EDI action plan. This is being discussed with the Leader and CEx at end April.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	SD.B1.15	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy approved and publication		Director- Law & Governance	Leader of the Council		Manager, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team	Jun-24	Sep-24	N/A	Not due to start		Not due to start	due June 24
MTFP & Capital Strategy	SD.D1.0	Fundamental review of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Capital Strategy	O12 - We will update the Medium Term Financial Strategy at least annually	Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Jan-22	Autumn 2022	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
MTFP & Capital Strategy	SD.D1.2	Approval of MTFP and Capital Strategy		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader				Nov-22	N/A				
MTFP & Capital Strategy	SD.D1.3	New Assurance Action (strategy implemented through budget plans): Budget Report to Cabinet (2023-2026) reflects funding gaps identified in MTFP		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			Feb-23	and annually thereafter	N/A	Assurance Action	Cabinet report agreed 15/02/23.	Assurance Action	Due Feb. 2024
MTFP & Capital Strategy	SD.D1.4	New Assurance Action (embedding the approach): MTFP and Capital Strategy refreshed and approved in October each year		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			October 2023	and annually thereafter	N/A	Assurance Action	Due October 2023	Assurance Action	Due October 2023
Performance Management	SD.D1.5	Approval of updated MTF5		Director- Finance	Deputy Leader			23-Jan	Feb-23	N/A	Complete	complete	Complete	complete
Consultation and Engagement	SD.E2.0	Incorporate Public Consultation Results into Performance Management Framework	(New) O5 - We will ensure we are effectively communicating and engaging with our residents, internal workforce and external stakeholders (New)O16 - We will embed an evidence-based continuous improvement approach	Chief Executive	Leader of the Council			Autumn 2022	May-23	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Consultation and Engagement	SD.E2.3	Survey results embedded within PMF and used to inform insight into how the Council is performing		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council			Autumn 2022	May-23	N/A	Complete	Action complete. Refer to SD.E2.6. Results from the 2022 resident survey will continue to be used and utilised for benchmarking/comparison purposes.	Complete	Complete

Static data			We will statement (code & statement in full)	Owners				Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action		Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating
Consultation and Engagement	SD.E2.6	Procurement of Consultant to deliver regular residents' survey, budget consultation and Citizens' Space		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead - Service Improvement			N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Contract awarded for delivery of the resident survey and the budget consultation. Initiation meeting due to take place early April.	On Track- little or no slippage	Timetable of activity agreed for the budget consultation and the resident survey. Work commenced on development of the question set for the budget consultation.
Consultation and Engagement	SD.E2.7	Consultation and Engagement Framework produced		Chief Executive	Leader of the Council		Strategic Lead - Service Improvement			N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Citizen space procurement complete and site deployed. Training undertaken by cohort of staff from across the Council, roll out plan commenced, first survey going live on 27/3/23.	On Track- little or no slippage	Five surveys published on the Sandwell Citizen space Site. Roll out of comms plan and training commenced.
Customer Journey	SD.F1.0	Customer Journey Strategy	O8 - We will deliver the customer journey programme and improve customer experience across all of our channels	Director-Regeneration & Growth	Deputy Leader	Director Business Strat	Strategic Lead - Customer	Oct-22	Aug-23	Focus 2	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	Survey has gone out to all Elected Members. The engagement plan has been completed - engagement to commence May following pre-election period and a variety of sessions have been planned, to be delivered in a variety of methods from May to August. Further research in to other LA CES has taken place. Draft Strategy to be completed by September with final version ready for October 2023.	Medium Progress- actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	Very small amount of returns received from survey that went out to Members and therefore reminders have been sent. Work is on-going to prepare for engagement sessions.

Theme 4 - Decision Making

Static data											April Update Due			
Static data			We will statement (code & statement in full)	Owners				Dates		Focus Main Action Risk	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating
Workstream	Ref	Action		Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date		Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)
Role and Function of Scrutiny and Audit	DM.C3.0	Manage position on historic issues through work with ARAC chair		Director - Law & Governance	Deputy Leader			Dec-21	Ongoing	Focus 2	On Track- little or no slippage	Response provided to Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and scheduled for ARAC at first meeting of next Municipal Year (est June 2023).	On Track- little or no slippage	Response provided to Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and scheduled for ARAC at first meeting of next Municipal Year (est June 2023).

Theme 5- Procurement & Commercial

Static data				Owners				Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)
Waste Contract	PC.A1.0	Introduction of a more focused framework for contract monitoring	(New) O18 - We will develop our commercial approach including our approach to contract management and monitoring and deliver our first commercial business streams.	Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services			Autumn 2021	Aug-22	Focus 2	Complete	assurance actions in place	Complete	assurance actions in place
Waste Contract	PC.A1.3	Assurance Action- Report provided to Officer Leadership on a quarterly basis. Regular reporting through PMF		Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services			Feb-23	quarterly (from Feb) Feb May Aug	N/A	Assurance Action	5/1/2023 next report to Leadership	Assurance Action	Report to Leadership delivered 21/03/23
Waste Contract	PC.A1.4	Assurance Action- Annual report on leisure and waste contracts going through to cabinet member		Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services			Nov-22	annually	N/A	Assurance Action	Next annual reports due by Nov 23	Assurance Action	Next annual reports due by Nov 23
Waste Contract	PC.A1.5	Assurance Action- The large contracts in BE for waste/street cleansing, and both leisure providers will be added to the Intend contract management module.		Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services				monthly	N/A	Assurance Action	Currently working with InTend in order to add the waste contract by April 2023. Once the waste contract has been uploaded we will add the leisure contract.	Assurance Action	Further work configuration work undertaken by Intend to allow upload of key performance management (quantitative) aspects of contract. Work anticipated to be completed May 2023.
Waste Contract	PC.A2.0	Review of the contract to refocus our communications and contract monitoring in areas of poor performance and to ensure the council receives the full provisions within the contract from Serco	(New) O18 - We will develop our commercial approach including our approach to contract management and monitoring and deliver our first commercial business streams.	Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services			Autumn 2021	Jan-23	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Waste Contract	PC.A2.3	Recommendations reviewed		Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services				Oct-22	N/A	Complete	Final report received from Friths. LT briefing date completed in March 2023	Complete	Final report received from Friths. LT briefing date completed in March 2023
Waste Contract	PC.A2.4	Recommendations adopted, as appropriate		Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services				Jan-23	N/A	Complete		Complete	
Waste Contract	PC.A2.5	Delivery of recommendations – as appropriate		Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services			Apr-23	Mar-24	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Further report to Leadership April 2023	On Track- little or no slippage	Leadership reporting in place

Static data				Owners				Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)
Waste Contract	PC.A4.0	Street Cleansing Recovery Plan – completion and implementation	(New) C14- We will improve the energy efficiency of council housing through retrofit programmes and stock improvements.. C15- We will increase recycling rates and encourage cultural change.	Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services			Autumn 2021	Mar-23	Focus 2	N/A		N/A	
Waste Contract	PC.A4.2	Recovery plan implemented		Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services			22-Oct	Mar-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Delivery continues with Serco	On Track- little or no slippage	Service Delivery Plan includes street cleansing plan 2023/24
Waste Contract	PC.A4.3	Assurance Action- Senior management meeting - annual plans requested- service delivery plan from SERCO is contractually compliant and includes elements of street cleansing.		Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services			22-Nov	quarterly (from Nov) Nov Feb May Aug	N/A	Assurance Action	Complete for 2022/23	Assurance Action	Complete for 2022/23 New plan for 2023/24 due to Contract Senior Management meeting and next Waste Board
Waste Contract	PC.A5.0	Manage the delayed Serco Fleet replacement programme in line with the requirements of the contract	(New) C14- We will improve the energy efficiency of council housing through retrofit programmes and stock improvements.. New C12 We will review our corporate fleet, so	Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services			Autumn 2021	Mid 2023	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Waste Contract	PC.A5.2	Fleet replacement complete		Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services				Mid 2023	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Serco is replacing the order for the next 14 RCVs. The review of the PAYMACH indicated there was no benefit in SMBC capital	On Track- little or no slippage	Next RCV order placed by Serco (add date)
Waste Contract	PC.A5.3	Assurance Action- Monthly fleet steering group taking place where the documentation considered by the group is contractually compliant.		Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Environment Services			22-Nov	quarterly (from Nov) Nov Feb May Aug	N/A	Assurance Action	Fleet group meetings are taking place as scheduled the next one is on 30th March 2023.	Assurance Action	Next update due May

Static data				Owners				Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)
SEND Transport	PC.B3.0	Procurement of 2024 SEND Transport Contract	B16- We will ensure that children and young people with SEND can access high quality local services when they need them, by working with partners to ensure there is a comprehensive local offer available to children and families	Director - Children and Education				Nov-22	Sep-24	Focus 2	N/A	n/a	N/A	n/a
SEND Transport	PC.B3.1	Leadership review of lessons learnt from SEND 2		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education Dept Leader	Director - Law & Governance Director - Finance	Group Head - Education	Sep-22	Nov-22	N/A	Complete	Lessons learnt review has been completed and was presented to IPRM 2nd Feb 2023	Complete	Complete
SEND Transport	PC.B3.2	Mobilise project team and establish project governance		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education Dept Leader	Director - Law & Governance Director - Finance	Group Head - Education	Feb 2023	April 2023	N/A	Not due to start		Not due to start	not due to start
SEND Transport	PC.B3.3	Commence Procurement		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education Dept Leader	Director - Law & Governance Director - Finance	Group Head - Education	Spring 2023	Sep 2024	N/A	Not due to start	not due to start	Not due to start	not due to start
SEND Transport	PC.B3.4	Contract Monitoring Arrangements in Place		Director- Finan	Dept Leader / Cabinet Member for Children and Education	Director - Children & Education		Jan-23	Ongoing	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	First meeting with GBS to take place w/c 27th March 2023	On Track- little or no slippage	GBS appointed to deliver robust contact management procedures and to support upskilling of team to ensure sustainability
New System Procurement	PC.C1.0	Explore implementation of a corporate performance management system	(New)O16 - We will embed an evidence-based continuous improvement approach to ensure we are directing our resources to meet our priorities	Chief Executive	Deputy Leader			Jun-21		Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New System Procurement	PC.C1.1	Options Appraisal		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader				Mar-23	N/A	Significant issues / actual/projected slippage- more than 2 months	Corporate Performance Manager now in place. Options appraisal commenced linked to Local Partnerships PMO conversation around use of Verito. New timescale to be confirmed by next monitoring period	Significant issues / actual/projected slippage- more than 2 months	Corporate Performance Manager now in place. Options appraisal focusing on utilisation of current systems/tools, including Verito, Oracle Fusion and Power BI or the procurement of a new Performance Management System. Options appraisal including internal consultation and engagement to be completed by August 2023, with recommendation to Leadership Team to follow.
New System Procurement	PC.C1.2	Business Case and Implementation Plan Considered		Chief Executive	Deputy Leader				TBC based on selected option	N/A	Not due to start	Not due to start	Not due to start	Not due to start
Lion farm	PC.D1.0	Lion Farm: Action plan to agree way forward and resolve matter	Business plan - Develop an agreed way forward for Lion Farm, including development of an action plan	Director - Regeneration & Growth	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth			Dec-21	Dec-23	Focus 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Static data				Owners				Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating
Lion farm	PC.D1.4	Implement approved way forward		Director – Regeneration & Growth	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth			Feb-22	In progress ED due March 2023	N/A	Significant issues / actual/projected slippage- more than 2 months	The anticipated date for resolution was 24th March 2023. Both parties complied with all the deadlines required. The other party provided witness statements to the Expert, with their representations, and in order to provide SMBC the opportunity to respond to these statements, the timeline has been extended to the 5th of Final	Complete	Same update as March- Final determination now due 5th May.
Leisure Contract	PC.E1.0	Governance arrangements to manage, develop and support the current and future delivery of leisure services across the borough, including the new Aquatic Centre	L4 - We will work with our partners, including the community and voluntary sector, to reduce social isolation and ensure people are connected within their local communities and beyond. L6- We will create lots more community-based opportunities with local people, working across our partnerships, including the Voluntary and Community Sector, and we will commission a range of services that make the most of Sandwell's assets (including leisure centres, libraries, parks, community centres, youth centres, museums, canals and Sandwell Valley).	Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism			Autumn 2021	May-23	focus 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Leisure Contract	PC.E1.5	Arrangement in place for future delivery of leisure facilities		Director - Borough Economy	Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism				May-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Alongside LATC company setup parallel discussions are now being conducted with SLT regarding a potential extension with them until 2027. This reflects the improved relationship between SMBC and LATC and also the need to mitigate the utility cost pressures (SLTs fixed utility tariffs cannot be novated to LATC).	On Track- little or no slippage	Agreed (subject to Board and Cabinet Member approval) an extension to the termination notice to allow for finalisation of Deed of Variation. Will extend the current Management and Funding Agreement to the point of the handover of the Sandwell Aquatics Centre 13 July.
Leisure Contract	PC.E1.6	Aquatic Centre Handover		Director - Borough Economy					Jul-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Target practical completion date 13 July 2023. Hand over to leisure/ living well leisure / SLT will be no later than 14 July 23.	On Track- little or no slippage	Dates remain on track for hand over no later than 14 July 2023

Static data				Owners				Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	April Update Due	
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)
Asset Management	PC.F1.0	Asset Management	New O19- We will implement a new Corporate Asset Management system to ensure the Council has sufficient, comprehensive information to make best use of its assets and assist with timely and accurate completion of annual accounts.	Director – Regeneration & Growth				23-Jan		Focus 2				
Asset Management	PC.F1.1	Implementation of Phase 2 Tech Forge: Integration of Data in to the system		Director – Regeneration & Growth			Assistant Director – Property, Strategic Assets and Land Transforming Local services-programme manager		May-23	N/A	Medium Progress-actual/ projected slippage of 1-2 months	Integration Training and meetings are being carried out . Customer portal session is taking place on 29 March 2023. The integration of data in to the system is still on track for May 23. Phase 2 should be completed by August 23.	On Track- little or no slippage	The integration of data in to the system is still on track for May 23.
Asset Management	PC.F1.3	New action: Implementation of Phase 2 Tech Forge: Configuration and organisation of data		Director – Regeneration & Growth			Assistant Director – Property, Strategic Assets and Land Transforming Local services-programme manager	23-May	Aug-23	N/A	New Action Added	new action	New Action Added	new action
Asset Management	PC.F1.2	Corporate Asset Management Strategy delivery plan in place		Director-Regeneration & Growth	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth			23-Jan	ongoing	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	A report to Leadership team end of April, Agreed action plan needs to be done by May 23. Will be presented to an informal meeting of cabinet	On Track- little or no slippage	Asset management savings plan to be presented on 25/04.

Theme 6-Partnerships & Relationships

Static data													April Update Due	
Workstream			Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Owners		Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating
Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)				
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A1.0	Continue with robust governance arrangements in place ensuring the accountability of SCT to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people in Sandwell in line with the contract	B13 - We will work with Sandwell Children's Trust to improve the quality of children's social care.	Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Autumn 2021	Ongoing	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A1.2	KPI Suite reviewed		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet member for Children and Education			Mar-22	Dec-22	N/A	Complete	KPI suite reviewed.	Complete	KPI suite reviewed.
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A1.3	Revised KPI suite agreed		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Summer 2022	Dec-22	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	as February update- Final KPI will be agreed before the commencement of the contract on 1 April 2023	Complete	The KPIs along with accompanying tolerances will be implemented in Q2
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A1.4	Review of Contract concludes		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet member for Children and Education				Dec-22	N/A	Complete	Completed and submitted to the DfE.	Complete	Completed and submitted to the DfE.
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A1.5	Contract Review with DfE		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet member for Children and Education	Director - Finance			Spring 23	N/A	Complete	Submitted to DfE	Complete	Submitted to DfE
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A1.6	Contract commences		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Apr-23	Apr-23	N/A	Not due to start	due April 23	Complete	In place, commenced 1/4/23
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A1.7	New KPIs reported through PMF		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Aug-23	Sep-23	N/A	Not due to start	due Sept 23	Not due to start	due Sept 23
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A1.8	New action: KPI's (along with accompanying tolerances) implemented in Q2		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Jul-23	Oct-23	N/A	New Action Added	new action	New Action Added	new action
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A2.0	Establish and maintain positive relationship between SMBC and SCT at senior officer and member level	B13 - We will work with Sandwell Children's Trust to improve the quality of children's social care.	Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Autumn 2021	Ongoing	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A2.3	Assurance action: Feedback provided on a 6 monthly basis on the continuation of regular cross - SMBC/SCT leadership team meetings.		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Jan	6 monthly Jan July	N/A	Assurance Action	July update	Assurance Action	July update
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A3.0	Establish corporate approach to working with SCT on shared issues, such as corporate parenting and delivery of Early Help service	B15-We will work with partners to ensure early help is available to children and young people at the earliest opportunity depending on their need.	Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Autumn 2021	Ongoing	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Static data													April Update Due	
Static data			Owners					Dates		Focus	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating	Progress against plan	Evidence of status rating
Workstream	Ref	Action	We will statement (code & statement in full)	Director Lead	Cabinet Member	Other Leads	Update Owner (if different)	Start date	Due date	Main Action Risk	Status (March 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(March 2023)	Status (April 2023)	Update (Initial and Date)(April 2023)
Sandwell Children's Trust	PR.A3.3	Assurance action- Twice yearly performance reports tabled at Children and Education Scrutiny Board		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education			Apr-23	6 monthly	N/A	Assurance Action	Due Apr 23	Assurance Action	Report was tabled at the March 23 Children and Education Scrutiny Board
Regional and Sub-Regional presence	PR.B1.0	Continue to develop the relationship with and actively participate in regional and sub-regional bodies (e.g. WM Combined Authority, Black Country LEP) to maximise opportunities for Sandwell	A1 -We will work with the WMCA to ensure that our residents can access employment opportunities across the region, particularly by public transport. H18 Housing - CP Action	Director-Regeneration & Growth	Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth	Cabinet Chief Executive		Jan-22		Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Regional and Sub-Regional presence	PR.B1.6	Assurance Action: Update provided on a 6 monthly basis by Director of Regen and Growth to confirm representation at key meetings continues and brings benefit to the council. Key meetings for Members to attend at sub regional and regional level are: ABCA Leaders; WMCA Board; WMCA Economic Growth Board; WMCA Housing and Land Board.		Director-Regeneration & Growth	Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth			Mar-23	6 monthly update	N/A	Assurance Action	participation in key regional and sub regional partnerships such as the WMCA Board, the CA Economic Growth Board, CA Housing and Regen Board and the ABCA Leaders. One example of the benefit of this participation is that Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council has secured support from the Mayor and all Met Leaders to the agreed allocation of £2m from the Commonwealth Games 2022 budget underspend of £70m and this is being	Assurance Action	due Sept
Effective Local Structures	PR.C1.0	Review partnership structures within the 'People's sphere'	(New) L17 We support people to manage their health and wellbeing so they can maximise their independence, choice and control, live healthier lives and where possible, reduce future needs for care and support.	Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education / Cabinet Member for Adults, Social Care and Health	Director-Adult Social Care Director- Public Health				Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Effective Local Structures	PR.C1.1	Initiation of Project to review and remodel the pathway between children's and adults' services (preparing for adulthood project)		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education / Cabinet Member for Adults, Social Care and Health	Director-Adult Social Care Director- Public Health			May-23	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	OBC refined in partnership with SCT and will include key external partners. •Governance structure agreed for both Sandwell Council and the Trust •Project board reps' agreed and workstream leads identified •Failure to recruit (twice) to the project managers post has prompted the Job description to be redefined and is due to be advertised imminently. Interest in the post has already been expressed. •Additional resource from within the business has been identified to progress activities included in the outline business case. •Final sign off for the business case is planned for the	On Track- little or no slippage	No change, on schedule
Effective Local Structures	PR.C1.2 b	To broaden scope of partnership structures to explore the integration of adult services where appropriate		Director - Children and Education	Cabinet Member for Children and Education / Cabinet Member for Adults, Social Care and Health			Feb-23	TBC	N/A	On Track- little or no slippage	Specific agenda item at the five boards governance group	On Track- little or no slippage	As previous month too
Effective Local Structures	PR.C1.5	Assurance action: link to PC.C1.4 Receive a quarterly update from DPH and DAS to provide assurance that governance remains in place to test adequacy of partnerships through system-wide thematic deep dives and that any issues are being addressed by the partnership.		Director - Public Health		Director - Adult Social Care		Quarterly	Jan 23 Apr 23 July 23 Oct 23	N/A	Assurance Action	Apr-23		
VCS Relationships	PR.D1.0	Relationship with Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) and Funding to Voluntary & Community Sector.	C1 We will ensure our grant funding of community/voluntary sector activity supports the priorities we're outlining in this plan.	Leadership Team	Cabinet Member for Communities			Mar-22	Jul-23	Focus 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
VCS Relationships	PR.D1.2	VCS Strategy formation commences		Leadership Team	Cabinet Member for Communities		Director - Housing	2023	2023	N/A	Complete	New milestones captured as PR.D1.3 and PR.D1.4	Complete	New milestones captured as PR.D1.3 and PR.D1.4
VCS Relationships	PR.D1.3	Consultation on VCS Draft Strategy		Leadership Team			Director - Housing	Jan-23	Apr-23		Action on Hold	A more fundamental look a the relationship with the VCS is being taken. An annual report is being prepared that will focus on investment and impact. A Cabinet session is planned for June/July with the strategy due for approval in Autumn.	Action on Hold	A more fundamental look a the relationship with the VCS is being taken. An annual report is being prepared that will focus on investment and impact. A Cabinet session is planned for June/July with the strategy due for approval in Autumn.
VCS Relationships	PR.D1.4	Approval of VCS Strategy		Leadership Team			Director - Housing	23-Apr			Not due to start	Not due to start	Not due to start	Not due to start

Improvement Plan

May 2023





Kerrie Carmichael
Sandwell Council Leader

A year on from the approval of our Improvement Plan, we are proud to look back over our achievements.

We have embarked on whole-scale organisational change at the same time as delivering on our Corporate Plan commitments.

The long-standing service issues raised by external reviews in 2021 have now either been addressed or are well-progressed with robust delivery plans in place. This has enabled the council to shift its focus to longer-term planning. We welcomed follow-up external reviews from Grant Thornton, the Local Government Association and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy in Autumn 2022. Together with our Commissioners, they noted our significant progress.

Over the past year our achievements have been recognised. Sandwell's Emotional Wellbeing Programme has been shortlisted as one of eight finalists in the Innovation in Partnerships category at The Municipal Journal Awards. The project has supported more than 2,000 children and young people who are struggling with mental health issues. The prestigious Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) West Midlands Awards

for Planning Excellence 2022 honoured Sandwell Council's planners for shaping the regeneration of Smethwick. Our Housing Team were also shortlisted for an Inside Housing Development award for Best Older People's Housing Development - in 2022.

The launch of our One Team Framework, which sets out the organisational values and behaviours, was a significant milestone in our improvement journey. The five new organisational values and behaviours set out an ambition to be 'one team united and working together with a shared purpose of achieving great results' that is customer focused, inclusive, ambitious and accountable.

Over the past year, firm foundations have been laid and we have established mechanisms and approaches for new ways of working. More of our work is being driven by engagement, co-production, and using evidence effectively. We are also benefitting from strengthened relationships between Members and Officers and effective input from Audit and Scrutiny Committees as part of our One Council approach.

Examples of this include:

- Proposals around Brandhall Golf Course and consideration of the 4-Yearly Election Cycle, which involved resident engagement and consultation, and Scrutiny involvement to inform the decision-making process
- Using our resident's consultation to inform business planning and budget setting
- Development of the One Team Framework through staff engagement
- Developing our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy through focusing on insight and data

This report presents our progress against each of the six Improvement Plan themes. It contains the objectives for each theme, a timeline of the milestones achieved, evidence of success, and the next areas of focus.

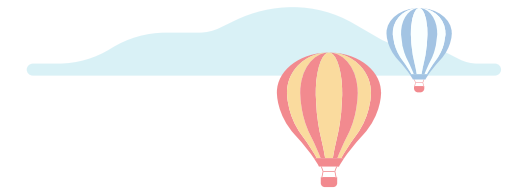
We have refreshed our Corporate Plan for 2023 to reflect priorities raised during our business planning process, the significant amount of change over the past 12 months, and the longer-term activity contained within the Improvement Plan. This paves the way for our improvement activity to be embedded within our Performance Management Framework and to move away from a stand-alone plan in forthcoming months.

Our ambition is not simply to see the end of Government intervention; we're striving for excellence.

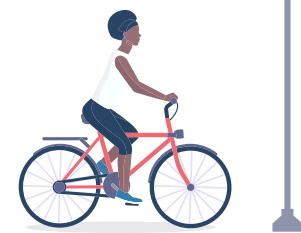
Within the Improvement Plan our key areas of focus over forthcoming months are driving our plans around Organisational Culture, Customer Journey, Transformation and Delivering the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

We enter the year ahead with pride in our achievements and a commitment to continue to work as One Team to drive the council's improvement.

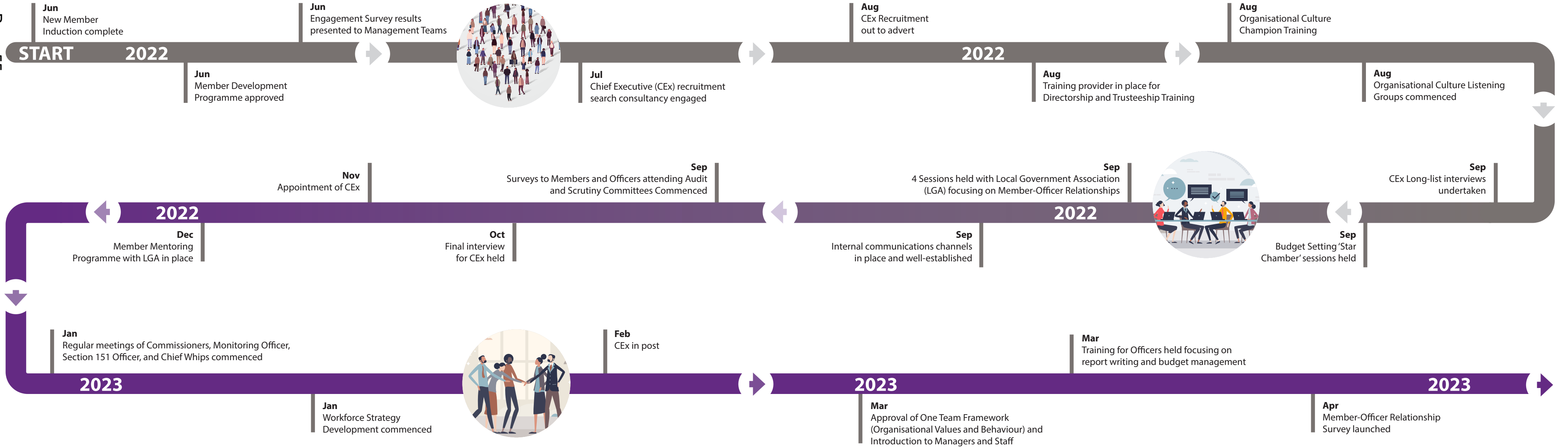
Our progress so far could not have happened without the commitment and dedication of Members and Officers alike and we want to pass on our thanks and appreciation to them.



Shokat Lal
Sandwell Council Chief Executive



Organisational Culture



Objectives

- For Senior Leadership (Officers and Members) to work together effectively
- That Officers receive appropriate support and direction from Senior Leaders
- For the council's organisational culture to change, ensuring sustainable improvement through a focus on improving outcomes for residents, empowering staff to make decisions at the right levels, learning lessons and embedding customer focus throughout the organisation

Evidence of Success

We said that when we have made progress towards embedding an effective organisational culture, we would see evidence of:

- Employee engagement results improving
- Managers demonstrating expected behaviours (via employee engagement survey results)
- Members demonstrating effective behaviours
- Officers and Members having confidence in their decisions
- Healthy and regular dialogue between Senior Leaders (Officers and Members)
- Improved take-up of Member Development Programme opportunities
- Improvements in external review outcomes

The launch of our One Team Framework (organisational values and behaviours) marks the start of the next phase of our organisational culture change programme. The framework is the result of cross-council staff engagement which was facilitated by an internal network of Culture Champions. It sets out an ambition to be one team 'united and working together with a shared purpose of achieving great results' that is customer focused, inclusive, ambitious and accountable.

The repeat of our employee engagement survey in Autumn 2023 will further our insight into how our organisational culture is changing and how well the values and behaviours are becoming embedded. We have learnt from our 2022 Employee Engagement Survey results and we are committed to involving staff in the changes that affect them. An example includes staff views being used to inform policy development around hybrid working through a survey which received more than 1,350 responses from staff and managers.

474

staff involved in developing the One Team Framework



Our comprehensive Member Development Programme has been developed based on Members' needs and learning from previous years. Member and Officer training around decision-making and governance has been well-received and is helping to embed the constitutional changes made during the year. Personal Development Plans have been developed for Members and learning needs are being addressed within the next update to the Member Development Programme.

We have made significant strides in the relationship between Members and Officers which was acknowledged by our external reviewers. Along with training and support, a range of meetings are in place to facilitate a healthy and regular dialogue which includes meetings with Group Leaders and Chief Whips and cross-party working groups. The strength of the relationship has enabled the council to move forward on difficult decisions such as the 4-Yearly Election Cycle, development of Brandhall Golf Course, the introduction of garden waste charging, and setting a balanced and sustainable budget for 2023/24 without reliance on reserves.

We know that culture change will take time. We are committed to continuous improvement

and have recently launched a Member-Officer Relationship Survey to build on insight gained to date through seeking views from Officers and Members participating in Audit and Scrutiny Committees and the Employee Engagement Survey.

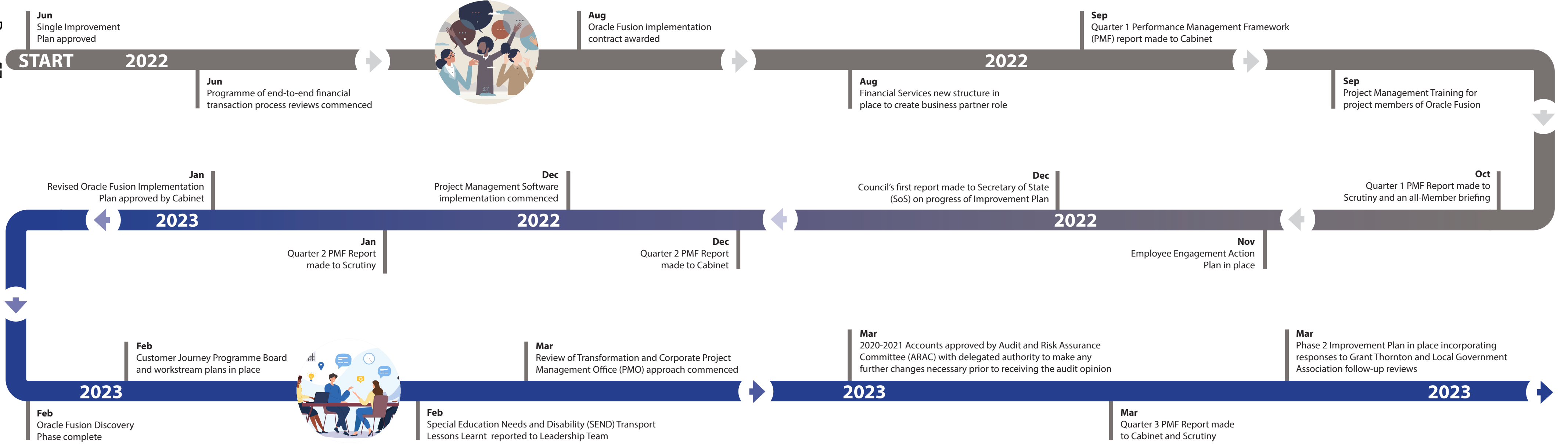
'Cabinet and Leadership Team are working increasingly well'

LGA

Next Steps

- Roll out of the One Team Framework to embed values and behaviours
- Continued focus on Member-Officer Relationships and New Member Induction
- Workforce Strategy approved and implemented
- Continued focus on learning and development for Members and Officers to embed corporate governance changes
- Using insight to drive continuous improvement - Employee Engagement Survey and Member Officer Relationship Survey

Corporate Oversight



Objectives

- Take effective corporate oversight of long-standing service issues and the council's overall improvement journey
- Embed learning from service issues identified in external reviews
- Provide a corporate approach to performance management and the delivery of programmes and projects
- Ensure the role of the Corporate Core is strengthened to enable front line services and staff to focus on outcomes for residents

Evidence of Success

When we are demonstrating effective corporate oversight, we said that we would see evidence of:

- Performance information being used by Leadership Team and Members to set strategic direction and respond to issues
- Improvement in performance measures relating to One Council
- Improvement in Employee Engagement Score
- Improvement in the views of external reviews

The long-standing service issues raised by Grant Thornton in their original Value for Money Governance Review have either been resolved or good progress has been made with a firm delivery plan in place. A major area of focus for the council is around improvements to the customer journey and we are developing a far-reaching programme of work linked to our One Team Framework.

'The council has a greater corporate grip over improvement, performance and decision making'

Grant Thornton Autumn 2022

In June 2022 we made our first quarterly report on our newly agreed Performance Management Framework. Over the past year we have reported quarterly on our progress in delivering the Corporate Plan along with our key performance measures around organisation health, finance and customer. Governance structures have been established to ensure regular monitoring and performance conversations are taking place. The Local Government Association (LGA) commented that 'the [Performance Management] Framework, and the information and insights it provides, act as a prime example of the way in which an increased evidence-base for decision-making can be seen in the council.'

Performance information is being used to set strategic direction and respond to issues. Examples include:

- Prioritising work around the customer journey
- Conducting additional analysis around recruitment and retention issues to inform a corporate approach
- Taking in-year action to manage the projected budget position e.g. through vacancy management arrangements
- Work to improve our response rates on Subject Access Requests (SAR) and Freedom of Information Requests (FOI) bringing them closer to target

- Reducing the number of Corporate Plan actions with significant progress issues
- Using an evidence bundle, including performance information and the outcomes from resident's consultation to inform our refreshed Business Plans and Corporate Plan
- Pulling together activity into a comprehensive transformation programme that will improve accessibility, systems, service and embed a customer focused culture

FOI response rate from
62% at Q1
to
82% at Q3

Strong governance arrangements were put in place to deliver the Commonwealth Games with regular updates to Leadership Team. Close working partnerships between the council, Commonwealth Games Organising Committee (CGOC) and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) allowed for the robust management of issues that arose throughout the project, resulting

in the successful cross-council delivery of the Commonwealth Games events at the Sandwell Aquatic Centre.

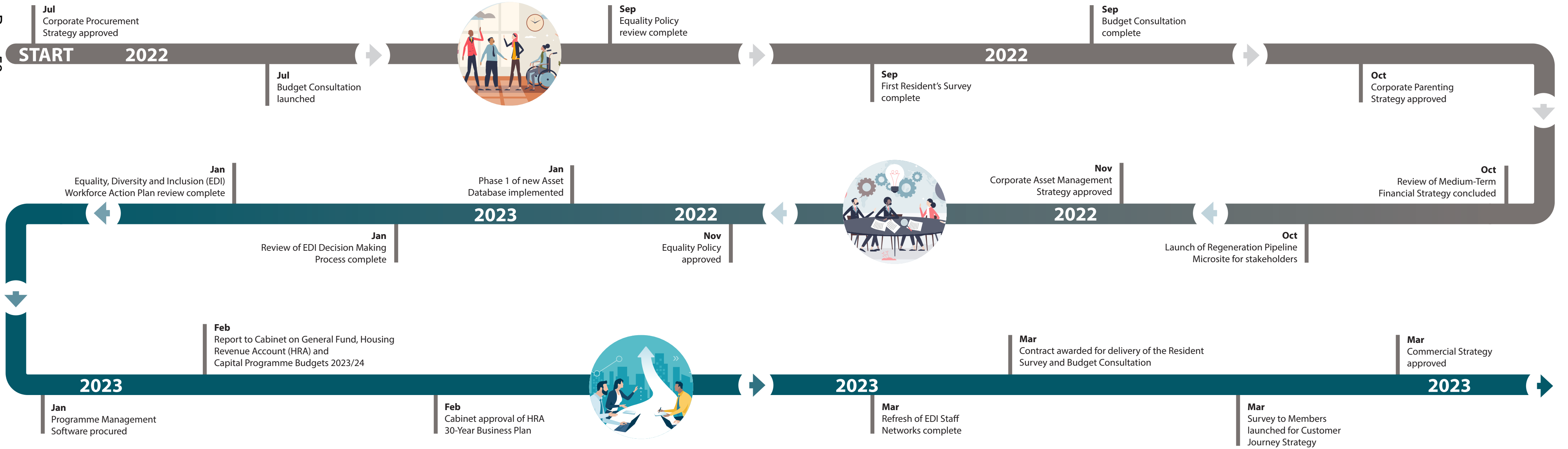
The Oracle Fusion Programme now has a more robust governance and resource model in place. A new Systems Integration Partner was procured in 2022 and a revised, realistic implementation plan and budget was approved by Cabinet in January 2023. A comprehensive Change Strategy is now in place.

We are taking time to reflect and learn. We completed a lessons learnt exercise around Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Transport Procurement. This is informing the council's overall approach to procurement such as through the creation of a procurement pipeline to help manage resources along with revised guidance and templates. It has also informed developing plans around the creation of a Programme Management Office and approach. This is currently under review with Local Partnerships. We are undertaking a lessons learnt exercise with Grant Thornton around the closure of our financial accounts and have sought out and have reflected on lessons learnt from a neighbouring local authority around their implementation of Oracle Fusion to assure ourselves around our approach and mitigations. A standard approach to lessons learnt is being developed.

Next Steps

- Continued focus on using performance information and insight to set strategic direction and respond to issues
- Implementation of service standards
- Creation of Corporate Project Management Office
- Transformation Programme in place
- Oracle Programme 'go live'
- Sign-off of final accounts for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023
- Delivery of Customer Journey Programme

Strategic Direction



Objectives

- Ensure that focus is maintained on longer-term direction through effective strategies being in place to support our Corporate Plan outcomes
- Ensure that sustainable financial planning is in place that is aligned to our priorities
- Conduct consultation and use the findings to inform budget setting and our understanding of how the council is performing

Evidence of Success

We said that when we are maintaining focus on our longer-term plans, we will see evidence of:

- Improvement to Corporate Plan Outcome Measures
- Sustainable Financial Planning in Place aligned to priorities
- Consultation and Engagement Shaping Strategic Direction and Financial Planning
- Examples of Sandwell's national profile showcasing the good work of the council

Through focused reporting, we have demonstrated significant progress on our Corporate Plan, and have reduced the number of areas with significant issues over the year (from 9 to 3, between quarter 2 and quarter 3). In July 2023 we will make our first report against Corporate Plan measures which will further grow our insight into performance to drive our strategic thinking and direction.

The original Grant Thornton Review of 2021 identified the disproportionate amount of time spent firefighting in recent years. In their follow-up review of 2022, Grant Thornton commented that 'by taking a grip of many long-standing operational challenges the leadership of the council is starting to create time and space to better consider the long-term'.

Our strategic capacity is growing. Leadership Team are dedicating more collective time to strategic thinking, for example through our recent work around the cost of living crisis and the customer journey.

We now have a set of new long-term strategies in place developed through engagement with partners. These include strategies around Early Help, Corporate Parenting, Green Spaces and Health and Wellbeing along with the £2.3bn pipeline of regeneration projects set to transform Sandwell's six towns in the coming years. We are monitoring the delivery of these strategies through the Performance Management Framework and we are making a positive impact. Of families who received multi-agency early help, 76.2% were not referred back to Early Help services or Children's Social Care within 12 months. New strategies around the Customer Journey, Workforce and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion are in development. All of which are drawing on extensive engagement.

We have set a balanced budget for 2023-24 that is aligned to our Corporate Plan priorities. Our Medium-Term Financial Strategy has been fundamentally reviewed and looks ahead to 2026. It identifies medium term savings options, closer integrates capital and revenue planning and we are committed to reviewing this annually.



CIPFA rating from 2* to 3* rating for Financial Management

In Summer 2022 we conducted a Resident's Wellbeing and Perception Survey and Budget Consultation. This has informed our 2023-2026 budget and business planning. For example, residents' preferred way to close the budget gap was to introduce more charging for non-essential services and to make savings through reducing buildings. This shaped our considerations of charging for garden waste collections, and informed our Corporate Asset Management Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in November. We are committed to continuing this approach and have a commission in place for resident's engagement and budget consultation for the next three years.

We enjoyed national and international coverage of Sandwell through the Commonwealth Games, and we are continuing to build Sandwell's profile for example with coverage in Local Government press for the Assistant Chief Executive recruitment, and successes in awards. These include:

1,062

participants of resident's survey – providing a representative sample

- Sandwell's Emotional Wellbeing Programme which has been shortlisted for the Innovation in Partnerships category at the Municipal Journal Awards
- Our Planners being awarded for the shaping of the regeneration of Smethwick by the prestigious Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) West Midlands Awards for Planning Excellence 2022
- Our Housing Team being shortlisted for an Inside Housing Development award for Best Older People's Housing Development - in 2022.

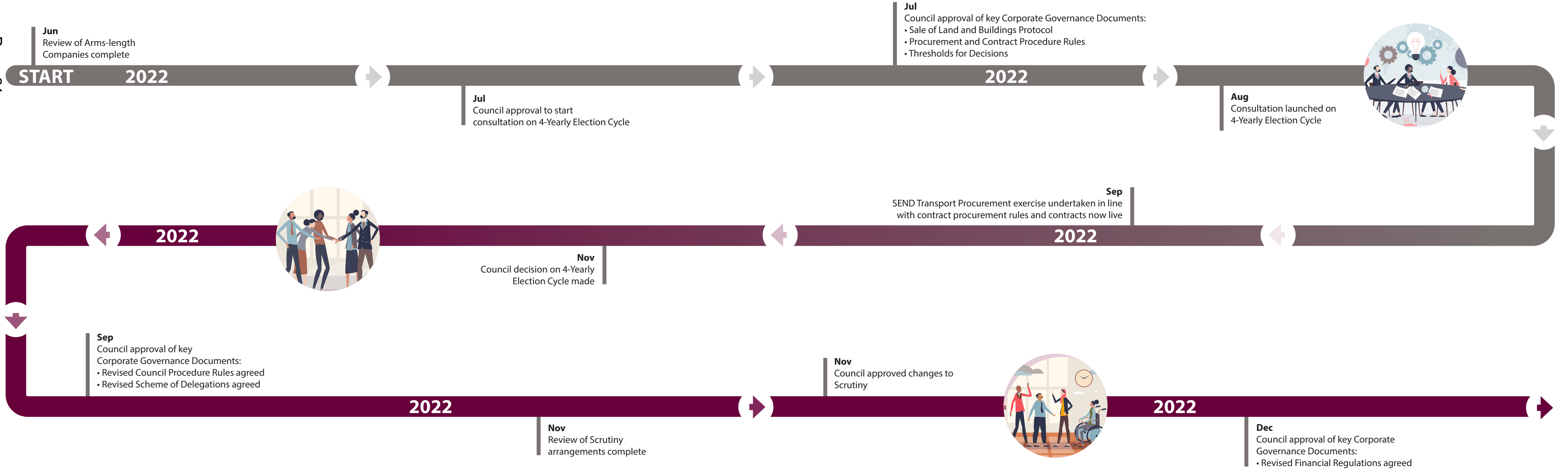
Sandwell has some of the highest levels of deprivation in the country and the challenges facing residents have been exacerbated by the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis. Sandwell has been recognised as an area in need and we are excited to be working in partnership with the Government to bring forward proposals for a Levelling Up Partnership to further our regeneration aspirations.

Next Steps

- Development of our strategies around Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion and Customer Journey
- Prioritising Leadership Team collective time on strategic matters
- Continuing to use insight from consultation and engagement and the Performance Management Framework to inform strategic direction



Decision Making



Objectives

- Review and refresh key corporate governance documents laying the foundations for robust decision-making, audit and scrutiny and culture change
- Create a clear and strong role for Scrutiny and Audit and embed in practice
- Explore options around a 4-yearly electoral cycle

Evidence of Success

When we are demonstrating clear effective decision making, we said that we would see evidence of:

- Decision reports written which set out options and an assessment of their impact on outcomes for residents
- Evidence of effective scrutiny work through robust scrutiny review / input into priority areas
- Audit input driving assurance and improvement
- Commissioners' role embedded and understood across the council

Over the last twelve months we have undertaken a comprehensive corporate governance review, building in best practice and taking a co-production approach by engaging Members and Officers throughout. As a result, key corporate governance documents have been revised that clearly set out roles and responsibilities at all levels improving the transparency in decision making and ensuring decisions are made at the appropriate level. These include Thresholds for Decisions, Financial Regulations, Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules, Sale of Land and Buildings Protocol, and a revised Scheme of Delegation.

The current focus of the governance review is to embed the constitutional changes. This involves a series of learning and development activities for

Members and Officers, implementation of phase 2 of the Mod.gov system, and developing a new set of performance measures within the Corporate Performance Management Framework to track our progress.

In October 2022 the LGA revisited us to review our progress and reported positively on the effective work of Scrutiny. Examples of effective scrutiny work include a call-in around the Brandhall development, scrutiny of the SEND Transport Procurement, work underway on the customer journey, and a review into the impact of lockdown on children and families.

'Scrutiny is going from strength to strength'

LGA 2022

Grant Thornton also provided feedback on their return visit around the positive contribution of Audit and acknowledgement of the focus on matters of strategic importance rather than historic matters. A series of improvements to Audit and Scrutiny have been embedded throughout the course of the Municipal Year including agenda setting meeting and pre-meeting briefings with Chair and Committee Members. In order to

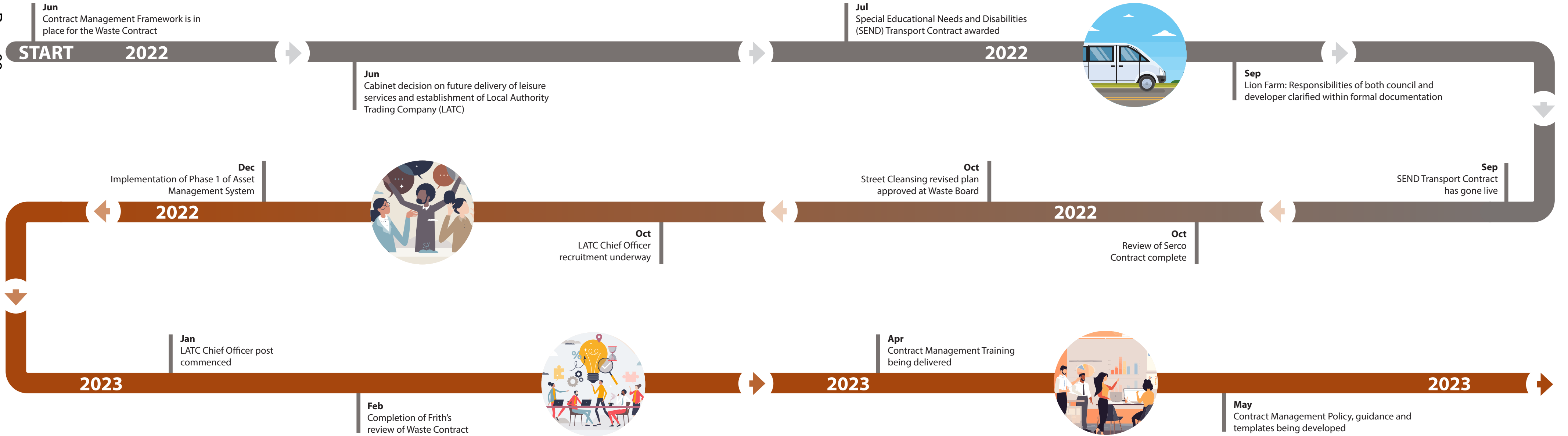
provide continued assurance around the work of Scrutiny and Audit, a survey is sent out at the end of each meeting to collate Officer and Member responses that are used to aid the continuous improvement work around these committees. The insight has led to conversations around etiquette in meetings to clarify expectations, improving the robust questioning from panel members and it has informed the Member Development Programme.

The Commissioners' role has been embedded within the council and the understanding of the role has been aided by regular staff communications. This included an 'All Staff Briefing' held January 2023 where updates were provided on the transition arrangements when the new incoming Chief Executive was due to join the council. The Commissioners' priorities were also shared at this meeting and live Q&A allowed for staff to ask questions.

Next Steps

- Continuing to embed constitutional changes
- Focus on continuous improvement in decision-making including the development of metrics within the Performance Management Framework





Objectives

- Conclude procurement and commercial matters in relation to key legacy issues
- Ensure that learning in relation to issues around commercial decisions, procurement and contract management are understood across the council
- Ensure corporate ownership and effective contract management of major contracts
- Ensure that major contracts have an effective focus on service quality and outcomes
- Conduct effective procurement for the new systems that are needed to support the delivery of the council's Improvement Plan

Evidence of Success

When we have robust systems and processes around procurement, commercial matters and contracts, we said we will see evidence of:

- Key contracts being effectively managed
- Improved outcomes from key contracts and commercial decisions as demonstrated by performance indicators for leisure, and waste
- Lessons learnt documented

In the original report from Grant Thornton, it was highlighted that contracts had been impacted by either poor specification during procurement, lack of clear contract management responsibility or poorly defined approaches to contract management. During their return visit in October 2022, they were able to see that there was clear evidence that the council was making better procurement and commercial decisions.

They pointed to Sandwell, Land and Property (SLaP) having been dissolved, Lion Farm and Providence Place being managed to a conclusion and notice having been served on Sandwell Leisure Trust. It was also noted that Sandwell Children's Trust had seen their rating improve on their most recent Ofsted inspection representing significant improvement.

Key major contracts are being managed across the council and they are embedded within the Corporate Performance Management Framework

to review their performance and service outcomes.

As a result of this focused monitoring, resident reported missed bins have been reducing month on month, and a clear plan is in place to improve street cleansing. Serco has now purchased a suite of new equipment including mini-sweepers, large mechanical sweepers and electric street vacuums, all of which should significantly improve the borough's cleanliness.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Transport Contract was awarded in September 2022 following a robust procurement process. Lessons learnt sessions were carried out with staff involved in the process and documented to aid continuous improvement. The findings are being shared and embedded within business plans.

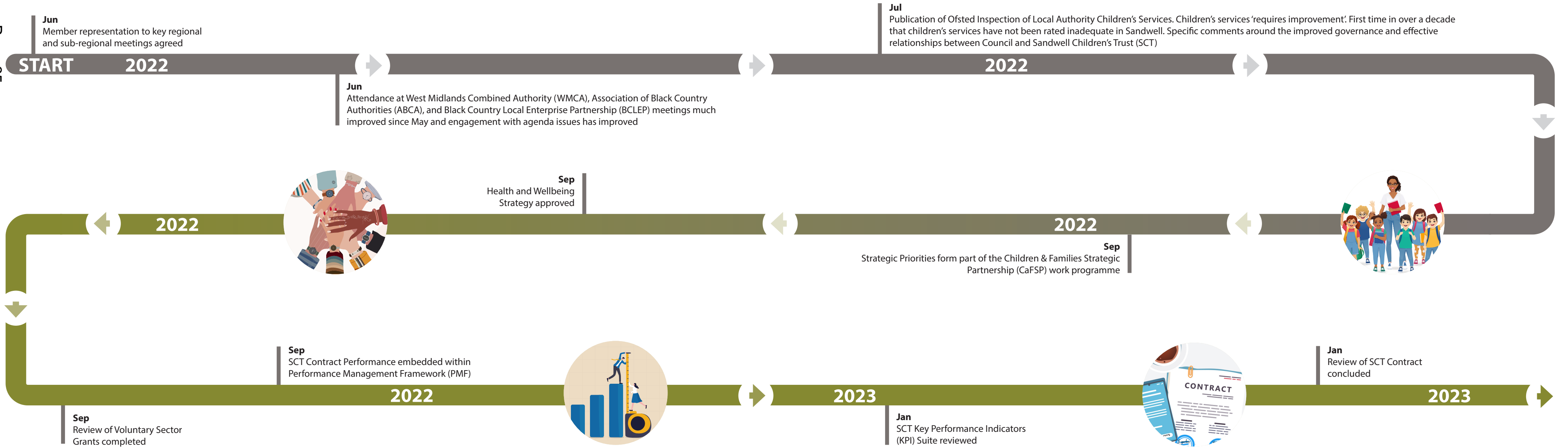
We have commissioned a piece of work to review the council's current contract management arrangements, provide training for relevant officers and develop a suite of contract management policies and templates. Specific contract management support is being provided externally for a small number of key contracts.

Next Steps

- Waste and Leisure Contracts being added to In-tend Contract Management Module to assist contract monitoring
- Review of council's current contract management arrangements
- Corporate Performance Management System in place
- Report to Cabinet on determination of position of developer for Lion Farm
- Establishment of Local Authority Trading Company for future delivery of leisure services
- Phase 2 of Asset Management System implementation



Partnerships and Relationships



Partnerships and Relationships

Objectives

- Improve Sandwell Council's standing with key partners and professional bodies at national, regional and local level
- Improve corporate approach to partner relationships
- Determine the future relationship between Sandwell Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and the approach to funding

Evidence of Success

When we have effective partnerships and relationships at all levels, we said that we will see evidence of:

- Improved outcomes for children and young people in Sandwell evidenced in Key Performance Indicators
- Improved external review outcomes
- Regular and active presence at regional and sub regional meetings resulting in more opportunities linked to Sandwell's priorities (e.g. Sandwell's financial asks realised)
- Improved performance in outcomes on the impact of health inequalities on individuals
- Clear understanding of the relationship between the council and the VCS that is embedded in practice – evidenced by feedback from VCS

Key Performance Indicators relating to the contract with Sandwell Children's Trust are reported and tracked through the Corporate Performance Management Framework to support senior leadership oversight. Over the year, there has been a significant reduction in the number of children in care and continued efforts across the Trust and council on workforce issues. New KPIs have been reviewed and will be introduced during Q1 following the commencement of the Sandwell Children's Trust

contract on 1 April 2023, and a dashboard of KPIs has been developed to support the Early Help Strategy delivery.

We regularly attend and participate in key regional and sub regional partnerships such as the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board, the WMCA Economic Growth Board, the WMCA Housing and Regeneration Board and the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA) Leaders. This participation has meant that we have secured support from the Mayor and all Metropolitan Leaders to the agreed allocation of £2million from the Commonwealth Games 2022 budget underspend of £70million to fund increased utilities costs for the Sandwell Aquatic Centre. We have also fully participated in the negotiations and discussions on the proposals for a Devolution Deal with Government and formal decisions will be taken on this in the Autumn of 2023.

External Partners were spoken to by the Local Government Authority (LGA) when they returned in October 2022 and noted that Sandwell Council was much better again at sub-regional level, with the Leader of the Council being seen to engage in all the right places.

'Sandwell's voice is now being heard more widely'

LGA 2022

We are also working well with local partners, as demonstrated by our recent Cost of Living Emergency Summit. The summit brought together more than sixty public, private and voluntary sector partners to coordinate our efforts to support our community through this crisis. It resulted in a series of partnership-wide commitments and asks.

Our relationship with the VCS continues to deliver significant outcomes for Sandwell. A comprehensive review of grant funding across the sector demonstrated that our investment is to be aligned to our corporate objectives, and we continue to be committed to working in partnership in the long-term. Our partnerships are recognised as good practice, e.g., Community Cost of Living Champions and the Emotional Wellbeing Programme (shortlisted for MJ Award 2023 Innovation in Partnerships).

Next Steps

- Transitions Project (Children's to Adult Services) commences
- Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy to be formulated and approved
- Continuation of participation at regional and sub-regional level



Appendix 3 – Statutory Recommendation Status Summary April 2023

Page 67

Statutory Recommendation	Summary	Milestones
<p>S1 - It is imperative that senior officers and senior members take effective corporate grip of long-standing service issues highlighted by the findings in this report (including SLT, SCT, the waste service, the ERP system, and Lion Farm) and prioritise corporate effort in managing the issues identified and embed the solutions into the Council</p>	<p><u>Organisational Culture</u> Assurance Activity to ensure effective contributions of Scrutiny and Audit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey to Scrutiny and Audit Members, and Officers attending Committees is being carried out on an ongoing basis to support continuous improvement. Findings were reported to IPRM in April 2023. The information continues to be shared with Democratic Services on a weekly basis so improvement can be implemented at first opportunity. • Consideration being given to survey for 2023-24 Municipal Year linked to the Member-Officer relationship survey (conducted in April). <p><u>Corporate Oversight</u> ERP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project milestones on track. HR and payroll are on the critical path and risk of slippage, but this is being managed by PMO. On track for April 2024 Go Live. <p><u>Strategic Direction</u> Strategy Development and Refresh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regen Strategy and Pipeline: Update report across all the projects covering April- September was presented at November Cabinet. Next update due June 2023. • The options for procuring a strategic delivery partner are being actively explored. Engagement is taking place with one of the framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oracle Fusion Implemented- On track. • Regeneration pipeline: strategic delivery partner in place – due in July <p>Completed milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of SCT Contract concludes- Complete • Review of scrutiny arrangements- Complete • Approval of any changes to scrutiny (if required following review)- Complete • Termination notice for SLT contract approved by Cabinet- complete • Revised contract governance arrangements in place for Serco contract- complete • Waste and Recycling Recovery Plan Implementation - Complete • Street Cleansing Recovery Plan approval – Resubmission to Waste Management Board in - Complete

	<p>providers. This will feed into the report to procure a strategic delivery partner planned for Cabinet in June/July</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VERTO- Procurement complete and implementation phase has commenced. <p><u>Decision Making</u> No actions in this theme</p> <p><u>Procurement & Commercial</u></p> <p><u>Waste Contract:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Delivery Plan includes street cleansing plan 2023/24 • Annual Plans complete for 2022/23 New plan for 2023/24 due to Contract Senior Management meeting and next Waste Board • Next RCV order placed by Serco • Fleet group meetings are taking place as scheduled the last one was held on 30th March 2023. • Continuation of quarterly monitoring through PMF. <p><u>SEND Transport:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBS appointed to deliver robust contact management procedures and to support upskilling of team to ensure sustainability • Preparations being made for SEND3 procurement • Lessons learnt completed and being presented to Wider Leadership Team in June. <p><u>New System Procurement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management System- Corporate Performance Manager now in place. Options appraisal commenced linked to Local Partnerships PMO conversation around use of Verto. New timescale to be confirmed by next monitoring period <p><u>Asset Management</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SERCO contract performance reporting embedded in Performance Management Framework - Complete • Option appraisal for future leisure management options – Complete • Scrutiny work Planning event - Complete • Procure new support provider to deliver Oracle Fusion-complete • Approval of Regeneration Strategy and Pipeline- Complete • Early Help Strategy approved and launched- Complete • Corporate Parenting Strategy Refresh Approved- Complete • SEND Transport procurement published- complete • SMBC/SCT Leadership meetings - Complete • SCT Contract performance reporting embedded within Council PMF-Complete
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 2 of Tech Forge project underway. Integration of data into the system is expected in May 23. Phase 2 configuration and integration due to be completed August 23. <p>Lion Farm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some slippage in timescales due to the Expert Determination process. Final determination now due 5th May. <p>Leisure Contract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An extension to the termination notice with SLT was agreed (subject to Board and Cabinet Member approval) to allow for finalisation of Deed of Variation. This will extend the current Management and Funding Agreement to the point of the handover of the Sandwell Aquatics Centre 13 July. Continuation of quarterly reporting through PMF. <p><u>Partnerships & Relationships</u></p> <p>Sandwell Children’s Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract commenced 01/04/23 The new KPIs along with accompanying tolerances will be implemented in Q2 Continuation of quarterly reporting through PMF alongside SCT governance arrangements 	
<p>S2 - The Council must ensure that the learning in relation to commercial decisions, procurement and contract management</p>	<p><u>Organisational Culture</u></p> <p>Officer Learning and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management and Development Programme Broad scope agreed- Manager essentials Pilot session took place 20 April for Manager skills workshop. Sessions booked for May and June and promotion in April Team Talks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Resident Survey in place – in procurement Corporate Governance Training Delivery -Commenced <p>Completed milestones</p>

highlighted in this report are understood through the organisation

- Monthly face to face induction sessions in place for new starters without laptops.
 - Data on completion of induction will be collected as part of Oracle implementation.
- Embedding Constitutional Changes**
- Series of learning and development activity has taken place during 2022. This month, effective report-writing training and contract management training has been delivered.
 - Development and Training plan for 2023-2024 in final stages of preparation (including decision making, procurement, fin regs).
- Member Learning and Development**
- All Member briefings have continued to take place and pre-meeting briefings with LT taking place as part of the preparations. Reflections on this municipal year and proposals for next municipal year are being pulled together for discussion with LT in line with the results from the Officer-Member survey response.
 - As per update last month, MDP approved by ESMDC and delegation in place for Chair to agree final version. Following confirmation that min. 18 new Councillors following the election, the induction programme within MDP is undergoing further updates to reflect that significant change. The induction programme is due to be signed-off by early May.
- Corporate Oversight**
- Performance Management**

- Commercial Strategy approved – approved
- HRA 30 Year Business Plan approved
- Revised Financial Regs - approved
- Implementation of Asset Management System -phase 1 complete
- Revised Scheme of Delegation – approved
- Corporate Asset Management Strategy Approved- Approved
- Budget Holder Role Profile agreed - Complete
- Establish Performance Management Framework – Complete
- First Performance Management Report - - Complete
- Revised PCR, and Sale of Land and Buildings Protocol – Complete
- New Member Induction- Complete
- Member Development Programme - Complete and BAU
- Asset Management System Procured- complete

- Preparations underway for Q4 report to Cabinet in July.
- Work underway to refresh measures within performance management framework linked to the Corporate Plan refresh. This includes a set of customer service standards. These have been drafted and the next stage is to confirm the final metrics. Leadership Team discussed this in April and a revised/final set is going to Leadership Team in May.

Strategic Direction

Strategy Development and Refresh

- **Commercial Strategy:** strategy approved by Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources in March 2023

Procurement & Commercial

Corporate Asset Management:

- Phase 1 implemented.
- Phase 2 commenced. The integration of data into the system is on track for May 23.
- Phase 2 Configuration and organisation of data due for completion by August 23.

Partnerships & Relationships

No actions in this theme

<p>S3 - Senior leadership, both officers and members, must demonstrate that they can continue to work together effectively, that they operate in line with the Council's values, codes, policies, and procedures, and that there is zero tolerance to inappropriate behaviours. This includes changing the organisational culture in relation to complaints so that they restore balance and proportionality.</p>	<p>Organisational Culture Establishing Organisational Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Strategy priorities and action plan developments underway. <p>Officer Learning and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and Development Programme Broad scope agreed, and pilot took place in April. • Monthly face to face induction sessions in place for new starters without laptops. • Data on completion of induction will be collected as part of Oracle implementation. <p>Officer and Member Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Officer Survey launched in April as an additional mechanism for insight into the health of the Officer and Member Relationship to aid continuous improvement. Response rate has been low. Further comms has taken place with staff and Group Leaders and Chief Whips to encourage responses. Consideration to be given to timescales for repeat survey and reflections on reasons for response rate. <p>Member Learning and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Member briefings have continued to take place and briefings with LT taking place as part of the preparations. Reflections on this municipal year and proposals for next municipal year are being pulled together for discussion with LT in line with the results from the Officer-Member survey response. • As per update last month, MDP approved by ESMDC and delegation in place for Chair to agree final version. Following confirmation that min. 18 new Councillors, the induction programme within MDP is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Strategy – On track for May 2023 <p>Completed milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational Culture – Part 2 Engagement – determining the desired culture – complete • Approval of document / statement setting out desired organisational culture – ‘Our Values: Our Behaviours’- Complete • Organisational Culture - Part 1 Engagement – Starting the Conversation- Complete • New Member Induction - Complete • Meeting structures to support Senior Leadership (Officer and Member) – Complete • Member Development Programme approved- Complete
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undergoing further updates to reflect that significant change. The induction programme to MDP is due to be signed-off by early May.

Corporate Oversight

No Actions in Theme

Strategic Direction

No actions in Theme

Decision Making

No actions in Theme

Procurement & Commercial

No actions in Theme

Partnerships & Relationships

No actions in Theme

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Appendix 4 – Scrutiny & Audit Recommendation Status Summary April 2023

Grant Thornton Key Recommendation 7 (2021): Members in key statutory roles, in particular in relation to Cabinet, scrutiny, standards and audit, need to be provided with effective development training and support. The Member Development Programme should be reviewed to ensure corporate governance forms part of the training for members with governance roles	
External Follow-up Reviews 2022 Findings	<p>Grant Thornton acknowledged the progress of the Member Development Programme and noted that it has been augmented with additional training sessions delivered by the LGA focusing on the Member and Officer Relationships, and in delivering a development programme for Cabinet.</p> <p>In their follow-up review, Grant Thornton made a further recommendation in relation to the Member Development Programme as a whole, but did not make any points around learning and development in relation to scrutiny specifically, as they acknowledged the improvements made.</p> <p>The recommendation made by Grant Thornton relating to the MDP was: Improvement Rec 19 (2022): The Council needs to build on the progress being made on member development and conclude the 2022/23 programme including the review of member PDPs and take further steps to finalise arrangements on succession planning for members in SRA roles.</p> <p>The LGA commented on the council's commitment to review the member development programme at regular intervals and set out that it is important to ensure that the pace of delivery is made to feel sustainable. The LGA follow-up review acknowledged that the improvements to scrutiny have been supplemented with a range of training.</p>
Summary of activity and next steps	<p>The current MDP has been updated to reflect the review of Member PDPs and updated arrangements for new Member Induction following the number of new Members elected in May.</p> <p>Scrutiny Members' and ARAC Committee Members' learning needs remain under review by the Chairs together with supporting Officers. Scrutiny Chairs are also receiving coaching and mentoring training from external providers. A learning and development plan for audit members is currently being drafted to ensure that key skills needed for the role is clear. This is linked in with CIPFA's 'Audit committees: practical guidance for local authorities and the police' guidance.</p>

	Over Municipal Year 2022-23 a regular survey was offered to Audit and Scrutiny Members and Officers attending. This included questions around Learning and Development received and any new needs arising to help ensure that the Member Development Programme is flexible to meet emerging needs. Discussions are underway around the continuation of the survey for Municipal Year 2023-2024 and has thus far been helpful in identifying any gaps in learning or identifying where improvements can be made.
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Grant Thornton Improvement Recommendation I4 (2021): Officer and Member Relationships – the forward plan of the Cabinet should be shared with the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Board to help structure their agenda planning	
External Follow-up Reviews 2022 Findings	Grant Thornton acknowledged that the ‘forward plan of Cabinet business has been made available to all members to improve awareness and transparency.
Summary of activity and next steps	The forward plan is shared with all scrutiny boards (in so far as it relates to that respective scrutiny board) to help identify areas for pre-decision scrutiny activity and to ARAC at every meeting to assist with the Committee’s work planning. This will continue.

Grant Thornton Improvement Recommendation 12 (2021): Officer and Member Relationships – There is a need to ensure that members of scrutiny and audit committees are aware of their governance roles including how to interrogate reports and ask the right questions	
External Follow-up Reviews 2022 Findings	<p>Positive feedback was received about scrutiny and audit in the follow up reviews.</p> <p>In their follow up review Autumn 2022, Grant Thornton set out that ‘There is a more mature engagement between the Leader, Cabinet, Committee Chairs and senior officers, supporting good planning and work programming across the different committees across different Council committees and a greater level of professionalism in how business is conducted by these committees.’... and ‘Overall, positive progress has been made to improve the culture and professionalism of key Council committees, with the scrutiny function making particular progress.’</p>

	<p>The LGA commented that ‘it is clear from the people we spoke to that this key strand of the council’s governance arrangements [scrutiny] is going from strength to strength’. And commented on scrutiny’s ‘renewed sense of energy and drive’.</p> <p>Grant Thornton did not make any further recommendations around the role of scrutiny or audit.</p>
<p>Summary of activity and next steps</p>	<p>Ongoing activity is in place to ensure that scrutiny and audit continue to make an effective contribution to the Council’s governance arrangements.</p> <p>This includes the regular meetings to develop and nurture strong, healthy working relationships with members and officers. Chairs of scrutiny boards have regular agenda setting meetings with Directors and officers to ensure that the content of reports enables a rich discussion and debate at Scrutiny and not just information sharing. Scrutiny Board chairs collectively are meeting regularly, whether it is a pre-meeting or prior to Cabinet to agree lines of questioning in advance as well monitoring performance of Board’s, attendance, engagement, etc. Audit are having pre meetings and work is ongoing to ensure shared learning and cross cutting areas are discussed at regular meetings between the overarching Chair of Scrutiny and the Audit Chair as well as regular meetings with the Chair of Audit and the Section 151 Officer.</p> <p>Job roles, scrutiny protocols and a framework have been developed and embedded to guide the way scrutiny is conducted, details how Cabinet members and officers interact with scrutiny and also helps to support and drive a change in culture and mindset of both members and officers to ensure that Sandwell has an effective overview and scrutiny function.</p> <p>A learning and development plan for audit members is currently being drafted to ensure that key skills needed for the role is clear and members of ARAC can work towards the skills identified as part of their PDP.</p> <p>These arrangements will continue over Municipal Year 2023-2024.</p>

Grant Thornton Improvement Recommendation 34 (2021): Audit Committee – now that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee has agreed the action to bring this long-standing matter to resolution [review into the Cox and Wragge Report], it will be important that – as the Audit and Governance Panel recognised – the Council manages its position so that the matter does not resurface, so that it can move on and focus on its corporate objectives	
External Follow-up Reviews 2022 Findings	<p>In their follow up review, Grant Thornton outlined that: ‘The Audit Committee has continued to operate throughout the year in a manner focussing on significant governance matters’ and that ‘ Overall, we found no evidence of any significant weaknesses in the Council’s arrangements for ensuring that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks’. Grant Thornton noted that the Council Leader is due to confirm the Executive’s position on any further review and made an additional improvement recommendation as follows:</p> <p>Grant Thornton Improvement Recommendation 22 (2022): A final decision on the Cox report needs to be made by the Leader before this matter can be considered formally closed.</p>
Summary of activity and next steps	A report is scheduled for ARAC in June setting out the Executive’s position.

Sandwell MBC

CIPFA FM Model Re-assessment

Final Report

A Report by:

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

December 2022

CIPFA, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, is the professional body for people in public finance. CIPFA shows the way in public finance globally, standing up for sound public financial management and good governance around the world as the leading commentator on managing and accounting for public money.

Further information about CIPFA can be obtained at www.cipfa.org

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1 Summary

1.1 Purpose of the follow-up review

In late 2021, CIPFA were commissioned to review Sandwell Council's financial management performance, using the CIPFA Five Star FM Model. In that review, on which we reported in January 2022, Sandwell achieved a score 1.81 which equates to progressive 2* rating. CIPFA have now been asked to review progress throughout the year in improving the scoring. This report represents our findings.

1.2 Approach adopted

We have conducted a range of interviews, supplementing last year's. These interviews have included staff and senior members, who in some cases have joined the Council since the last review and importantly, a number that were new in to post at the time of the 2021 review. We have also added to our previous document review by examining new material, including crucial reports that were not available previously. Based on this evidence, we have rescored the Council against the model.

1.3 Findings

The previous January 2022 scoring is below.

Sandwell Council – January 2022 Position				
	Management dimensions			
Financial management styles	Leadership	People	Process	Stakeholders
Delivering Accountability	**	**	**	**
Supporting performance	**	*	*	**
Enabling transformation	**	*	*	*****
Overall	**			

As indicated above the individual questions and statements score was 1.81 the threshold for 2* is 1.99 hence the conclusion of a progressive 2* rating.

Following our re-assessment, the summary scoring matrix is below.

Sandwell – December 2022 Position				
	Management Dimensions			
Financial Management Styles	Leadership	People	Processes	Stakeholders
Delivering Accountability	****	****	***	***
Supporting Performance	***	***	**	***
Enabling Transformation	***	***	**	****
Overall	***			

The review and scoring indicate improved statement and question scores from the previous review and therefore a score of 2.36 which represents a progression to a 3* rating (there is a threshold of 2.25 for achieving the 3* rating). Our detailed findings are now more positively within the 2* range. Indeed, few further improvements should take Sandwell Council towards a strong 3* score.

1.4 Updated findings

In the remainder of this report, we have set out the original findings.

These are divided into the CIPFA model topic headings – leadership, people, process, stakeholders – which are then subdivided into three themes – delivering accountability, supporting performance and enabling transformation. We have then provided the revised scoring and commentary.

2 The follow-up review findings

2.1 Leadership

The section below shows a scoring comparison between the 2021 and 2022 reviews along with a commentary on our findings. scoring for leadership was as follows.

Delivering Accountability		2021	2021	2022	2022
L1	Financial capability is regarded as integral to supporting the delivery of the organisation's objectives. The CFO is an active member of the board, is at the heart of corporate strategy/business decision making and leads a highly visible, influential and supportive finance team.	****	2.75	****	3.25
L2	The organisation has an effective framework of financial accountability that is clearly understood and applied throughout, from the board through executive and non-executive directors to front line service managers.	**	2.00	****	2.75
L3	Within an annual budget setting process the organisation's leadership sets income requirements including tax and allocates resources to different activities in order to achieve its objectives. The organisation monitors the organisation's financial and activity performance in delivering planned outcomes.	***	2.00	***	2.50
Overall				****	

Supporting Performance		2021	2021	2022	2022
L4	The organisation has a developed financial strategy to underpin medium- and longer-term financial health. The organisation integrates its business and financial planning so that it aligns resources to meet current and future outcome focussed business objectives and priorities.	**	2.00	***	2.50
L5	The organisation develops and uses financial/leadership expertise in its strategic decision-making and its performance management based on an appraisal of the financial environment and cost drivers.	**	2.00	***	2.50
Overall				***	

Enabling Transformation		2021	2021	2022	2022
L6	The organisation's leadership integrates financial management into its strategies to meet future business needs. Its financial management approach supports the change agenda and a culture of customer focus, innovation, improvement and development.	**	2.00	***	2.50
Overall				***	

Key areas of Improvement since the last review

Our fieldwork findings accord broadly with this year's LGA's peer review follow-up report. This indicates a positive direction and improvement for Sandwell. The Director of Finance is well respected. Messages about the Council's need to get a grip on its finances and achieve savings are increasingly robust and heard. The MTFs is now much stronger. The positive progress we have encountered is extremely welcome, evident, and represents a step change in under a year. It is to be commended.

We would draw attention to the following areas which indicate key improvements since the last review:

- Finance is seen as a key function and priority from a leadership, financial management and financial governance perspective. The development of the finance improvement programme and its progression since the last review is evidence of the positive commitment and its actions are and will make a difference.
- The impact of finance leadership (from the CFO and team) is improving financial planning (including MTFP), improving financial awareness, better quality engagement with budget holders. This will contribute to developing a culture of ownership and accountability, it is still early days, but the signs are positive.
- The budget setting process has developed since the last review with increased rigour. Training has been delivered on budgeting techniques which will improve the quality of budgets in the future.
- The process for reviewing and developing forecasts has also changed in the last year, again this is still developing, but the changed approach will improve the engagement with budget holders, develop the role of finance as advisors and improve ownership. This is a culture change which takes time, which is recognised.

Key development areas of focus for 2023

There are still areas for improvement which have been identified through the review and these are also recognised by the Council, which provides a good foundation for continued development of financial management and governance. The budget process for example, while clearly much improved, will need further work and refinement. There are a few headline issues which require attention to ensure that the improvements in leadership continue. These include:

- **Leadership depth.** It has been argued that whenever the Director of Finance is absent, messages are less resonantly communicated.
- **Top/down reform.** It is perhaps inevitable given the intervention and the emphasis on governance, leadership and central 'grip' in the reviews to which Sandwell has been subject, that its reforms are somewhat top/down in character. It is apparent that the commitment to or understanding of the reform agenda diminishes the further one gets in the organisation from the leadership.
- **Prioritisation, communication and focus.** The Improvement Plan is a portmanteau of many initiatives. As such it could be considered unwieldy. The further towards the frontline we have ventured, the more likely staff have been to suggest that they do not know what initiatives their primary focus should be. We understand that work is in progress to prioritise the Improvement Plan, which will help.

- Sustainability.** The sound narrative in the MTFS should be complemented by strong and robust deliverable savings plans. Some interviewees were concerned that the drive for savings might mean that undeliverable plans would be accepted in the budget process, leading to future overspends and calls on balances. In our earlier review work, we noticed some separation of capital, including the use of assets and the understanding of liabilities, from revenue matters. This time, we have been informed of a more positive and proactive approach to capital and asset management. There are also some genuinely innovative uses of physical or digital assets to personalise services and achieve efficiency. Going forward, we would expect to see a clearer relationship between capital and revenue strategies in Sandwell service planning than has been evident previously.

Nevertheless, the signs on leadership are positive and promising and the matters listed above are comparatively straightforward ones to address.

2.2 People

The section below shows a scoring comparison between the 2021 and 2022 reviews along with a commentary on our findings. Scoring for leadership was as follows.

Delivering Accountability		2021	2021	2022	2022
P1	The organisation identifies its financial competency needs and puts arrangements in place to meet them.	*	1.50	***	2.50
P2	The organisation has access to sufficient financial skills to meet its business needs.	****	2.75	****	3.00
Overall				****	

Supporting Performance		2021	2021	2022	2022
P3	The organisation manages its finance function to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.	*	1.00	**	2.00
P4	Finance staff provide business partner support by interpreting and explaining performance as well as advising and supporting on key business decisions.	*	1.50	***	2.50
P5	Managers understand they are responsible for delivering services cost effectively and are held accountable for doing so. Financial literacy is diffused throughout the organisation so that decision takers understand and manage the financial implications of their decisions.	*	1.00	***	2.25
Overall				***	

Enabling Transformation		2021	2021	2022	2022

P6	The organisation develops and sustains its financial management capacity to help shape and support its transformational programme.	*	1.50	***	2.25
Overall				***	

Key areas of Improvement since the last review

The principal improvement in the people position is the finance restructuring and the emphasis on business partnering. With a few exceptions, which we will touch on below, the changes have been broadly welcomed and indicate a positive response to the issue raised in our previous review. They are plainly part of a coherent agenda and programme of financial reform and are linked to the positive leadership position. Again, this is real progress and to be commended.

We would draw attention to the following areas which indicate key improvements since the last review:

- Developing the people aspect of finance across the organisation is a key objective of the improvement plan, this a positive step and a driver for change.
- The restructuring of the finance team with a concentration on alignment of function to service requirements (demonstrated through the business partnering drive) will help strengthen the role of finance and the overall finance environment.
- Recruitment has been underway during 2022 to strengthen the finance team and also reduce the reliance on interim staff. This will continue into 2023, though the market for skilled and qualified accountants is a challenge. The interim staff in place are seen as adding value, transferring learning and adding wider local government experience.
- Training has been delivered and more is planned for both finance and budget holders. This was a weakness in the previous review and now being addressed. In addition continued training and development is seen as an element of the overall improvement plan.

Key development areas of focus for 2023

Our review has highlighted some issues requiring further work so that this progress can be maintained and built upon. They include:

- **Implications of the pace of change.** The restructure, with associated re-alignment of responsibility, staff departures, and the slimming down of the finance function, have been received in varying ways across the Council. At least one senior officer on the business side has spoken of losing a skilled principal accountant who (in their opinion) exhibited the behaviours of a business partner, and their replacement by a new and interim appointment therefore losing some service-related knowledge. Though the same interviewee expressed a broadly positive assessment of the quality of finance staff and the information they provide, the experience has been unsettling in a mission critical area of the business. It will be worth assessing whether pockets of crucial service activity needs targeted support as the restructure progresses.

- **Sustainability.** While the business partnering shift has been welcomed, it has been widely observed that new business partners are frequently interims. How sustainable that will be, what challenges it will mean for consistency, continuity, corporate memory over time, are matters the reform programme should address.
- **Uneven financial management acumen across the wider business.** This has cultural implications, which we will touch on in the next section. As indicated above a programme starting with a budget holder survey has now developed into a programme of training for budget holders. More immediately, non-finance officers who lack good understanding of finance matters are ill-equipped to make the most of new business partnering arrangements. Even supported by strong systems, they will struggle to move towards self-service. Instead, they will continue in some cases to be excessively dependent on the finance function. There has been some initial training, setting out the responsibilities of budget-holders in the context of the business partnering approach. This should be supplemented by a comprehensive development and training programmes across the Council, and we are aware that this is part of the improvement plan.

Nevertheless, these caveats aside, we are happy to report strong intent and good progress on people matters.

2.3 Process

The section below shows a scoring comparison between the 2021 and 2022 reviews along with a commentary on our findings. Scoring for leadership was as follows.

Delivering Accountability		2021	2021	2022	2022
PR1	Budgets are accrual-based and robustly calculated	**	2.00	**	2.00
PR2	The organisation operates financial information systems that enable the consistent production of comprehensive, accrual based, accurate and up to date data that fully meets users' needs.	**	2.00	**	2.00
PR3	The organisation operates and maintains accurate, timely and efficient transactional financial services (e.g., creditor payments, income collection, payroll, and pensions' administration).	*	1.50	***	2.25
PR4	The organisation's treasury management is risk based. It manages its investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions, balancing risk and financial performance.	****	3.00	****	3.00
PR5	The organisation actively manages budgets, with effective budget monitoring arrangements that ensure 'no surprises' and trigger responsive action.	***	2.50	***	2.50
PR6	The organisation maintains processes to ensure that information about key assets and liabilities in its balance sheet is a sound and current platform for management action.	*	1.00	**	2.00
PR7	Management understands and addresses its risk management and internal control governance responsibilities.	***	2.25	***	2.25

PR8	Management is supported by effective assurance arrangements, including internal audit, and audit and risk committee(s).	****	2.75	****	2.75
PR9	The organisation's financial accounting and reporting are accrual based and comply with international standards and meet relevant professional and regulatory standards.	*	1.25	**	2.00
Overall				***	

Supporting Performance		2021	2021	2022	2022
PR10	The organisation's medium-term financial planning process underpins fiscal discipline, is focussed upon the achievement of strategic priorities and delivers a dynamic and effective business plan.	**	2.00	**	2.00
PR11	Forecasting processes and reporting are well developed and supported by accountable operational management. Forecasting is insightful and leads to optimal decision making.	**	2.00	**	2.00
PR12	The organisation systematically pursues opportunities to reduce costs and improve value for money in its operations.	*	1.00	**	2.00
PR13	The organisation systematically pursues opportunities for improved value for money and cost savings through its procurement, commissioning and contract management.	*	1.00	**	2.00
Overall				**	

Enabling Transformation		2021	2021	2022	2022
PR14	The organisation continually re-engineers its financial processes to ensure delivery of agreed outcomes is optimised.	*	0.25	*	2.00
PR15	The organisation's financial management processes support organisational change.	*	0.50	*	2.00
Overall				**	

Key areas of Improvement since the last review

In both the initial review and in this follow-up, the quality of financial information and the nature of financial processes were a major theme. Many officers in service areas were complimentary about the willingness and ability of the finance function to provide usable financial information. The recent exercise of providing comparatively unstructured raw data to the business and anticipating that forecasts could be derived from it does is work in progress and a positive step in both increasing ownership by budget holders and the engagement with business partners. It prompts better quality

discussions with budget holders and will, in time reduce the reliance on finance and increase adoption of the self-serve approach.

Again, however, there are positive developments to note. Our previous report reflected some extremely critical material on procurement and contract management. We note that there is now a vigorous and committed reform agenda here. Moreover, some of the scoring in this section has improved where we have been able to identify clearer evidence of strategic and operational awareness of issues and the intent to action them.

Overall, Sandwell's ability to deliver improved financial process will be a function of an improved culture. Staff at all levels should understand the relationship between the Council's priorities, the delivery of effective services, and prudent financial management.

We would draw attention to the following areas which indicate key improvements since the last review:

- The Council and the finance team have responded to the weaknesses in transactional activities with the commencement of a review of transactional finance, debt recovery and business support. This redesign work has started to have an impact and responds to a risk area highlighted in the previous review.
- The budgetary process has improved during 2022. There is greater challenge, and this has strengthened the overall process. As a consequence, the approach to identifying and including savings within the agreed budget has also improved where challenge seeks not only to confirm suggestions but seeks alternative or additional areas to deliver value for money.
- The Council, as part of budget setting process for 2023/24 has also carried out a review of their Statutory and Discretionary spending which led to discussions with the Cabinet about priorities and corporate plan priority gaps. This shows a maturing relationship between both officers and members and the relationship between funding and demand.
- The Council has undertaken work to improve procurement and its contribution. This has included simplifying the approval process, along with authorisation and approval levels. Process have been reviewed and the procurement training introduced, all of which will have a positive impact on the service contribution, operation and effectiveness.
- A weak area under process was enabling transformation. As indicated above the use of external reviews and advisors to assess and develop processes is a positive step. As part of the improvement programme additional resource was brought in to develop and change the budgeting and forecasting process which will help transform the role and value of finance as well as the quality and reliability of budget.
- The operation of the finance system was an issue reported under the last review. There is still work to be done to improve the system, referred to below as an area for 2023. What is evident though is the change in thinking and re-setting the approach to developing the implementation and operation of the Oracle Fusion system. There has been a move away from the adapt culture to one of adopt which will reduce the impact of customisation (which can be problematic and costly) and hopefully once introduced will deliver the improvement necessary.

Key development areas of focus for 2023

New to this review was the delayed interim external audit for 2020-21. This was critical of Sandwell's governance arrangements. Had it been available to the previous CIPFA review, it is likely that the scoring on the relevant sections of the Five Star model would have been lower. However, we have also taken into consideration the seriousness with which the Authority is engaging with this matter, noted in the peer review follow-up and as such the score reflect the Councils approach. To improve processes further, we would suggest that Sandwell should focus on the following issues:

- **Oracle Fusion:** only part of the answer. The widespread expectation is that the much-delayed Oracle Fusion implementation will improve budgeting, financial information and facilitate financial self-help. It might. But ERP projects are littered with failures. To succeed, the Oracle Fusion initiative will require a comprehensive training and development programme. It should also be accompanied by redoubled efforts to streamline unwieldy processes. It is a misconception that new ERP systems remove defective processes. It is noted above that the Council's approach is now to adopt (using the system as it is designed) as opposed to adapting (which is customising) and will help improve the operation and value of the system. This will help eliminate the need for numerous over engineered processes, especially in transactions.
- **Cross-authority alignment on risk.** Weak or ineffective financial management can create an entirely understandable culture of being risk averse and control culture in central finance. This can however reinforce service dependency on finance, potentially stifling innovation and adoption of self service and ownership. It can also generate cumbersome processes, filled with restrictions and permissions, which create as many problems as they solve. As the reforms continue – for example in procurement – the relationship between the finance function's risk tolerance and the risk appetite needed to achieve reform across the business will need to be examined and balanced.
- **Culture.** We mentioned earlier that additional training would be needed to ensure that budget-holders were equipped to respond to Sandwell's financial management reforms. We believe this training should be extended to service-delivery level. It should be accompanied by robust engagement and two-way communication with all Sandwell staff on reform priorities and the relationship between financial prudence and service delivery. In CIPFA's experience, many of the best innovations in service and efficiency come from staff at the frontline. But equally, a relentless focus on efficiency is only achieved when all staff understand the relationship between financial management and service delivery. It is perhaps unsurprising that the overarching priority for the Council now is 'customer journey'. Some interviewees have spoken of a tendency at the Sandwell frontline to respond to service demands, even from councillors or the community, with the excuse that there is no money. It is important that the initiative mentioned above (about discussion on priorities with the Cabinet) on how things can be done differently to free resources, how joining up between similar service areas might extend the competence individual service units, or what might be achieved through pragmatic timetabling should continue to develop. The Council can benefit from the thinking from its excellent frontline staff. To secure it will require extensive engagement, development and training.

2.4 Stakeholders

The section below shows a scoring comparison between the 2021 and 2022 reviews along with a commentary on our findings. Scoring for leadership was as follows.

Delivering Accountability		2021	2021	2022	2022
S1	The organisation provides external stakeholders with evidence of the integrity of its financial conduct and performance and demonstrates fiscal discipline including compliance with statutory/legal/regulatory obligations.	**	2.00	***	2.25
Overall		**		***	

Supporting Performance		2021	2021	2022	2022
S2	The organisation demonstrates that it achieves value for money in the use of its resources.	***	2.25	***	2.25
Overall		***		***	

Enabling Transformation		2021	2021	2022	2022
S3	The organisation is responsive to its operating environment, seeking and responding to customer and stakeholder service and spending priorities that impact on its financial management.	****	3.00	****	3.00
Overall		****		****	

Key areas of Improvement since the last review

We have ended up with an identical set of scores here. We received some new evidence in our fieldwork this time concerning historical issues in community engagement processes, which might have adversely affected the previous score in S3. However, these were comfortably outweighed by the positive intent we encountered, such as the Council's emphasis on customer journey, as well as new innovations, such as the budget consultation.


Key development areas of focus for 2023

There are a few areas for Sandwell to focus on to improve the service it achieves for stakeholders. They include:

- **Satisfying external reviewers.** The Council's ability to provide information in a timely and satisfactory manner to external auditors is clearly a work in progress and one that will develop as part of the improvement plan.
- **Real-time information.** CIPFA reviewers have often found it a useful thought experiment to ask officers how swiftly they could answer detailed thematic

questions similar to those that are routine for government departments accountable to parliament: for example, 'how much money do we spend per day on measures to help eradicate anti-social behaviour in ward X' etc. Imagining service spend in such thematic and micro terms is a very useful guide to considering the effectiveness of systems, processes and the budgetary culture. While we have no doubt that Sandwell officers could find such information – which would be hugely beneficial to service planning – it would take some effort and as such would be subject to priorities and susceptible to human error. As a consequence, developing both access and presentation of data and information will support challenge, scrutiny and therefore planning and decision.

- **Budget survey.** This is a sensible and positive initiative. To maximise its impact, Sandwell Council should provide a detailed, honest and thoughtful response. Survey findings should be cross-referenced with political priorities and budget assumptions. They should also be compared on the one hand to the perspectives of community groups and activists, who can often exert significant influence on services without always being fully representative, and on the other to actual patterns of complaints and casework, which sometimes give a contrasting picture of residents' day-to-day priorities to that found in a survey.
- **Customer journey.** The achievement of efficiency is linked to transparency about service process. A single complaint about a defective streetlamp, sent to officers, the CEO's office, ward councillors, portfolio holders, MPs, even to the Ombudsman, can create a nightmare of repetitive, nugatory work. If the complainant knows however from searching service information on the Council's website that the lamp is scheduled to be fixed in a week's time, they are likely to withhold their complaints until at least after that point. Sandwell is moving in the right direction on community engagement and transparency. But there are real benefits to be derived from going further.



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Financial Management Improvement Plan
March 2023

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Financial Management Improvement Plan March 2023							
Recommendation description	Planned Activity	Proposed owner	Timescale	Date Completed	Comments	Location in Improvement Plan	CP/ PMF /Finance BP
Structure, Skills and Competencies							
Develop a clear consistent role for Finance and Budget Holders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply KPI's for Finance Team from April 2023 and review effectiveness 	Assistant Director – Finance	April 2023	KPI's developed in Sept 2022 – carry forward to apply from April		IP CO.D2.O Embedding Finance Business Partner role (already embedded in IP)	Corporate Plan O13
Review, assess, and revise where appropriate the competency framework principle considering the skills and capability necessary for the authority now and in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop core finance competencies to support Budget Holder Role Profiles Repeat Budget Holder Survey 	Director of Finance Senior HR Business Partner Head of Finance Business Partnering	July 2023 September 2023	New Repeat action		IP CO.D2.3 Embedding Finance Business Partner Role: Workforce Development Plan	Corporate Plan O13
Develop the finance skills and capabilities within services to ensure Budget Holders can meet the expectations of them as set out in the role profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive Finance and Governance training programme to be undertaken tailored to those with different levels of financial responsibility 	Director of Finance	Programme to be delivered by October 2023	Outstanding – carry forward with revised date		IP OC.G1.3 Delivery of 'Governance Training and Development Programme'	Corporate Plan O10

<p>Establish what skills gaps there are in the Finance Team and the broader finance environments across the authority. Following this produce and deliver a plan of awareness and training for both staff and elected members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete C Co Finance Skills Review • Complete skills gap analysis across the Finance Management service • Workforce Development Programme implemented to address gaps identified from the above 	<p>Director of Finance</p>	<p>June 2023</p>	<p>Outstanding – carry forward</p>		<p>IP CO.D2.3 Embedding Finance Business Partner Role: Workforce Development Plan</p>	<p>Corporate Plan O13</p>
<p>Systems</p>							
<p>Ensure that any new asset management system delivers the required information on control to manage assets from both a service perspective and a financial reporting strands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System implementation underway – to be completed by October 2023 • Journal testing is being undertaken to ensure that outcomes are accurate and as expected. • The system will be run along with spreadsheets for the first closedown process to provide further assurance. • Data matching and cleansing between Fixed Asset Register and asset system is ongoing. 	<p>Head of Technical Finance</p>	<p>October 2023</p>	<p>In progress</p>		<p>PC.F1.3 Implementation of Phase 2 Tech Forge</p>	<p>Corporate Plan O27</p>
<p>Implementation of Oracle Fusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve Project Milestones to ensure implementation by April 2024 • Ensure thorough Learning and Development Programme embedded 	<p>Director of Finance</p>	<p>Go Live April 2024 Ongoing from April 2023 to Go</p>	<p>In progress</p>		<p>CO.A1.O Implement Oracle Fusion</p>	<p>Corporate Plan O15</p>

	through implementation so Finance Team and Budget Holders are prepared for business process changes		Live in April 2024				
Processes							
Continue the programme of end to end process reviews in key business areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete existing business process reviews Director of Finance to work with the Finance Team to identify further processes to review and reduce transactional activity which are likely to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly close-down 	Director of Finance Assistant Director – Finance	June 2023 October 2023	In progress		CO.D3.0 Reduction of financial transactional activity	Corporate Plan O18
Implement the recommendations from the Transactional Finance Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete review of internal recharges Complete review of Debt Recovery and implement processes for a single view of debt Develop Business Case for Transactional Finance Unit 	Director of Finance	April 2023 June 2023 May 2023	In progress		CO.D3.5 (review of internal recharges) CO.D3. (implement processes for a single view of debt) Proposed new action within IP at CO.D3.6 'development of business case for Transactional Finance unit'	Finance Directorate Business Plan
Resolve issues relating to the completion and sign off of final accounts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional resource in place to deliver 2021/22 and 2022/23 Statement of Accounts 	Assistant Director - Finance	Completed	Carry forward – update actions		CO.D4.0 Resolve issues relating to the completion and sign off of final accounts	Corporate Plan O11

- Develop and implement an Action Plan to address 2020/21 errors and weakness
- Identify training needs for the Finance Team and Service areas
- Lessons learned session in collaboration with External Auditor
- Budget Holder training being carried out to include year-end procedures such as accruals and receipting of orders
- Asset management steering groups in place to assist in communication between Asset Management Team, Finance and GT

April 2023

May 2023

TBC

January 2024

In place and ongoing

Review Budget Monitoring processes and reporting

- Review approach to budget profiling and forecasting and identify quick wins ahead of Fusion implementation
- Consider integrating Revenue, Capital and Performance reporting

Head of Finance

Director of Finance and Service Improvement Lead

May 2023

July 2023

Complete

Carry forward

CO.C2.0
Budget monitoring assurance action

Added to IP CO.C1.9
Consider integrating

Corporate Plan O11

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Capital Monitoring processes and reporting Review Capital Business Case template and process for approval 	Finance Business Partner – Capital and Planning Interim Financial Strategy Manager	July 2023 June 2023	New New		revenue, capital and performance reporting	
Review Treasury Management processes and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain a 12 month rolling cash flow Review Investment Strategy and counterparty options 	Interim Financial Strategy Manager Assistant Finance Business Partner – Treasury	April 2023 and ongoing	New			Finance Directorate B/Plan
Planning and Decision Making							
Develop the use of comparative data, benchmarking and demand management techniques in both budget setting and budget monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External benchmarking to be incorporated into Performance Management Framework Continue to use national and regional benchmarking data to inform budget setting process and identification of savings opportunities Undertake benchmarking exercise for support services with nearest neighbour group 	Director of Finance and Leadership Team Director of Finance Assistant Director – Finance Head of Finance Business Partnering Director of Finance	October 2023 Ongoing September 2023 August 2023 June 2023	Carried forward Carried forward – ongoing Carried forward New New		CO.C2.6 Embed financial benchmarking in budget planning	Corporate Plan O11

- Embed Cost Recovery Model for Fees and Charges as part of annual budget setting process
- Review Statutory and Discretionary spend as part of priority setting session with Cabinet

Review and improve engagement and communication within the Finance Team

- Regular workshops to be arranged during the budget setting process to communicate strategies and plans
- Business Partners to attend Budget Leadership Team to discuss issues relating to their areas

Assistant Director – Finance

Ongoing

New

Director of Finance

Ongoing

New

Finance Directorate Business Plan

Fundamental review of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy

- Implement new Medium-Term Financial Planning processes and templates
- Develop robust Project Governance around Transformation Savings Programme
- Undertake budget prioritisation exercise with Cabinet and align spend to Corporate Plan priorities

Interim Financial Strategy Manager

May 2023

New – partially complete
New

Director of Finance

April 2023

New

Director of Finance

June 2023

Interim Financial Strategy Manager

July 2023

New

Director of Finance

September 2023

Further review

SD.D1.0 Fundamental review of the MTFP and Capital Strategy

Corporate Plan O12

- Further strengthen links between Revenue and Capital Planning and extend time horizon for Capital Programme
- Review MTFS prior to 2024/25 budget setting process

Consider a review of external engagement with stakeholders and the process to feedback

- Public Consultation to be carried out as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan review and budget process for 2024/25
- Consultation with Community Groups

Director of Finance Service Lead – Improvement

October 2023

Carried forward for 24/25 budget process

SD.E2 Incorporate public consultation results into PMF

Corporate Plan O5

Closed actions

Develop a clear consistent role for finance and budget holders.

- Restructure of the Financial Services section to be completed to provide a greater focus on business partnering
- Carry out Budget Holder and Finance Team surveys to get a baseline position and understand expectations of the Financial

Director of Finance

Launch in March 2022, complete by end of June.

Completed

New Finance restructure approved by Cabinet 1st June. Internal filling of vacancies

Finance Improvement Manager

June 2022

Completed

	<p>Services section, and how well those expectations are being met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and approve role profiles for finance business partners and budget holders • Develop KPI's and standards for the Financial Services section 	<p>Finance Improvement Manager / Leadership Team</p> <p>Head of Finance</p>	<p>May 2022</p> <p>August 2022</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed – to be applied from 2023/24</p>	<p>and allocation of staff to roles completed 14th July. New Structure implemented with effect from 1st August</p>
<p>Review arrangements and practices that can ensure that it attracts high calibre staff and that these are retained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure of the Financial Services section to be completed to provide a greater focus on business partnering • AAT/CIPFA Trainee programme to be incorporated as part of the restructure process 	<p>Director of Finance</p>	<p>Launch in March 2022, complete by end of June</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
<p>Review and revise the structure and arrangements where appropriate for the delivery of business partnering across the authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure of the Financial Services section to be completed to provide a greater focus on business partnering 	<p>Director of Finance</p>	<p>End of March 2022</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
<p>Consider a programme of end to end process reviews in key business areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Process Re-engineering resources approved as part of 2022/23 budget • Review of internal recharges to be undertaken by June 2022 	<p>Director of Finance Head of Finance</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>June 2022</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>	

<p>Review Budget Monitoring processes and reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review format and content of Leadership Team and Cabinet budget monitoring reports 	<p>Head of Finance</p>	<p>April 2022</p>	<p>Complete</p>	
<p>That financial governance and decision-making arrangements are reviewed and strengthened from both a political and officer perspective.</p>	<p>Constitution to be fundamentally reviewed, including the Scheme of Delegation and Financial Procedure Rules. Training Programme on governance and decision making to be carried out following this</p>	<p>Director of Law and Governance And Director or Finance</p>	<p>May 2022 July 2022</p>	<p>Complete</p>	

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						Apr-23				Change Control
To be completed by action owner										
Change Number	Theme	Action reference	Action Title	Owner	Date Raised	Type of Change	If date change is required		Change/ Impact of change (incl. any dependencies)/ Reason for change	
							Change date from	Change date to		
253	Strategic Decision	SD.A5.3	New action: Complete Full Business Ca	Director-Finance	28/03/2023	Add - New Sub Actions			new action added	
254	Strategic Decision	SD.A5.4	New action: Recruit Commercial Project Of	Director-Finance	28/03/2023	Add - New Sub Actions			New action added	
255	Organisational Culture	OC.A1.0	Establish the desired organisational culture	Chief executive	28/04/2023	Closure of Main Action			closure of main action- sub actions complete	
256	Organisational Culture	OC.A2.4	New action: Mandatory staff appraisal for 2023 with objective setting linked to Corporate Plan and Directorate Plans	Chief executive	28/04/2023	Add - New Sub Actions			new action added	
257	Organisational Culture	OC.A2.5	New action: Mandatory staff appraisal for 2023 with objective setting linked to Corporate Plan and Directorate Plans	Chief executive	28/04/2023	Add - New Sub Actions			New action added	
258	Organisational Culture	OC.B2.5	New action: Senior Leadership Development Programme Scope, Content and Budget Agreed	Chief executive	28/04/2023	Add - New Sub Actions			new action added	
259	Organisational Culture	OC. B3.0	Officer Learning and Development	Chief executive	28/04/2023	Closure of Main Action			closure of main action- sub actions complete	
260	Organisational Culture	OC.D4.0	Induction training for Leader and Cabinet Members on appropriate processes relating to the employment of Chief Officers, and in particular Statutory Officers	Director-Law & Governance	28/04/2023	Closure of Main Action			closure of main action- sub actions complete	
261	Organisational Culture	OC.G1.3	Delivery of Corporate Governance Development Programme	Director-Law & Governance	28/04/2023	Change to action description			Governance Training and Development Plan'. Actions within: Governance Training and Development plan in place and Governance Training and Development plan delivered	
262	Corporate Oversight	CO.B3.1	Develop a Continuous Improvement framework	Chief executive	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Jun-23	Oct-23	Framework development has been delayed due to re-prioritisation of resources on LUP development.	
263	Corporate Oversight	CO.C1.9	New action: Consider integrating revenue, Capital and Performance reporting	Director-Finance	28/04/2023	Add - New Sub Actions			new action added	
264	Corporate Oversight	CO.D2.3	Workforce development plan implemented for financial services section	Director-Finance	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Mar-23	Jul-23	C.co now commissioned	
265	Corporate Oversight	CO.D3.6	New action: Implement recommended processes for a single view of debt	Director-Finance	28/04/2023	Add - New Sub Actions			new action added	
266	Corporate Oversight	CO.D3.4	Programme of end to end process reviews	Director-Finance	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Mar-23	May-23	Reviews on track to complete by the end of March 2023 with the exception of Business Support which has a completion date of May 2023.	

267	Corporate Oversight	CO.D3.7	New action: Develop Business case for Transactional Finance Unit	Director-Finance	28/04/2023	Add - New Sub Actions			new action added
268	Corporate Oversight	CO.E1.3	Corporate Transformation PMO establishe	Director-Finance	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	late 22	Sep-23	Review underway with Local Partnerships to inform establishment of Corporate PMO but this won't be completed until June. Review will conclude in June with implemetation completed iN Sept 23
269	Corporate Oversight	CO.E1.4	Programme and Project Management System Implementation	Director-Finance	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Mar-23	Jul-23	Revised project plan in place linked to Local Partnerships PMO review.
270	Corporate Oversight	CO.E1.5	Corporate Transformation Board operational -ToR finalised -Membership confirmed -Board dates in place	Director-Finance	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Mar-23	Jun-23	CTB is being reviewed in line with PMO Review being undertaken by Local Partnerships
271	Strategic Decision	SD.A1.3	Regeneration Pipeline: Agreement to procure a Strategic Delivery Partner	Director-Regeneration & Growth	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Mar-23	Jul-23	Report (to procure a strategic delivery partner) planned to go to Cabinet in June/July .
272	Strategic Decision	SD.A4.4	New actions: Action Plan to address gap analysis in strategy to be completed	Director-Finance	28/04/2023	Add - New Sub Actions			new action added
273	Strategic Decision	SD.B1.13	Refresh Equalities Commission Board Renew terms of reference	Director-Law & Governance	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Apr-23	Jun-23	Report to Executive being prepared for the start of the Municipal Year for approval to the terms of reference.
274	Strategic Decision	SD.F1.0	Customer Journey Strategy	Director-Regeneration & Growth	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Aug-23	Oct-23	Draft Strategy to be completed by September with final version ready for October 2023.
275	Procurement & Commercial	PC.C1.1	Options Appraisal (corporate performance)	Chief executive	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Mar-23	Aug-23	New timescale to be confirmed by next monitoring period- delays due to capacity issues. Corporate performance manager in place now.
276	Procurement & Commercial	PC.D1.4	Lion farm: Implement approved way forward	Director-Regeneration & Growth	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Mar-23	May-23	Expert shifted timescale
277	Procurement & Commercial	PC.F1.1	Implementation of Phase 2 Tech Forge	Director-Regeneration & Growth	28/04/2023	Change to action description			Implementation of Phase 2 Tech Forge: Integration of Data in to the system
278	Procurement & Commercial	PC.F1.3	New action: Implementation of Phase 2 Tech Forge: Configuration and organisation of data	Director-Regeneration & Growth	28/04/2023	Add - New Sub Actions			new action added
279	Partnership & Relationships	PR.D1.3	Consultation on VCS Draft Strategy	Leadership team	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Apr-23	TBC	
280	Partnership & Relationships	PR.D1.4	Approval of VCS Strategy	Leadership team	28/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Jul-23	Autumn 23	A more fundamental look a the relationship with the VCS is being taken. An annual report is being prepared that will focus on investment and impact. A Cabinet session is planned for June/July with the strategy due for approval in Autumn.
281	Partnership & Relationships	PR.A1.3	KPI's (along with accompanying tolernaces) implemened in Q2	Director-Children & Education	28/04/2023	Add - New Sub Actions			new action added

282	Procurement & Commercial	PC.A4.2	Recovery plan implemented	Director-Borough Economy	28/04/23	Change of Delivery Lead(s)	Mar-23	Ongoing delivery	Whilst we've an agreed improvement plan with Serco, it will inevitably become iterative requiring updating as work progresses, performance monitored and circumstances change
283	Organisational Culture	OC.A2.1	Workforce Strategy approved	Chief executive	05/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	May-23	Jul-23	
284	Organisational Culture	OC.A2.3	Roll out of One Team framework	Chief executive	05/04/2023	Change to action description			"Project Plan for launch of One Team Framework and alignment to people management practices"
285	Procurement & Commercial	PC.B3.2	Mobilise project team and establish project governance	Director-Children & Education	05/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Apr-23	Jun-23	change of start date for Commencement of Procurement for SEND 3
286	Procurement & Commercial	PC.B3.3	Commence Procurement	Director-Children & Education	05/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Spring 23 Sept 23	June 23 Apr 25	Procurement of SEND 3 2ill start in June 23 with a view to new contracts starting in April 25
287	Procurement & Commercial	PC.E1.5	Arrangement in place for future delivery of leis	Director-Borough Economy	05/04/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	May-23	Jul-23	Agreed (subject to Board and Cabinet Member approval) an extension to the termination notice to allow for finalisation of Deed of Variation. Will extend the current Management and Funding Agreement to the point of the handover of the Sandwell Aquatics Centre 13 July.
288	Corporate Oversight	CO.C1.4	Review Corporate KPIs for organisational health to reflect workforce strategy	Chief executive	05/10/2023	Change to delivery timescales (actions and milestones)	Jun-23	Mar-24	There are significant capacity issues in HR services due primarily to the demands of Oracle Fusion.
289	Procurement & Commercial	PC.D1.0	Lion farm: Implement approved way for	Director-Regeneration & Growth	05/11/2023	Closure of Main Action			The expert determination milestone has been reached- council is working on next steps-move to BAU

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Improvement Plan Risk Register

April 2023



1. Best start in life for children and young people



2. People live well and age well



3. Strong resilient communities




4. Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods






5. A strong and inclusive economy






6. A connected and accessible Sandwell



Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (Jan 23)	Current Risk Score (April 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
IP1	<p>Improvement Plan objectives and member / officer engagement in those objectives</p> <p>If programme objectives are not clearly defined to ensure they are within scope, deliverable, understood and agreed then the programme will proceed with no clear direction and may become unmanageable and/or scope creep may take place.</p>	6 (Green)	6 (Green)	3 (Green)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement as part of the development of the Improvement Plan - sharing themes and workstreams with staff and members • Communications Plan implemented for governance review, CPC and Statutory Notice • Communications Approach set out in Draft Improvement Plan • Objectives for each Theme within the Improvement Plan identified • Set of key messages for stakeholders in place and issued to all Directors • Council approval of Improvement Plan • All Member briefing held (incl. newly elected Members) • Regular informal reporting to Cabinet in place on IP progress • Regular Staff communications on progress of Improvement Plan • Reporting approach to ARAC and B&CSM agreed, with quarterly reporting in place. <p>Further Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Plan ongoing delivery including all staff briefings including key messages around Improvement Plan • Staff and member engagement through Organisational Culture change programme • Embed Improvement Plan Actions into Corporate Plan and Business Plans to provide assurance of sustainable improvement


Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (Jan 23)	Current Risk Score (April 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
IP2	<p>Programme management arrangements</p> <p>If appropriate programme management arrangements are not put in place then there is a risk that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project will not be delivered to scope The required improvements will not be made within the necessary timescales The government may lose confidence in the council's ability to improve and intervention may be extended The borough's residents may lose confidence in the council ability to deliver effective services Inefficient use of limited resources Continued reputational damage 	8 (Amber)	4 (Green)	4 (green)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement Plan approved by Council 07/06/22 PMO capacity being provided by existing experienced resources within Service Improvement Processes around risk management, progress monitoring and change control in place and established Risk register in place and reported to Leadership Team monthly and Cabinet and ARAC quarterly Establishment of PMO Teams Site for collation of programme documents and evidence Exception reporting format confirmed via highlight report standard template Regular work programming discussion to manage additional demands upon the PMO
IP3	<p>Allocation of sufficient resources to project management and project delivery/ maintaining Business as Usual while delivering the Improvement plan</p> <p>If sufficient resources (capacity and capability) and where</p>	8 (Amber)	8 (Amber)	4 (green)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of Reference for internal Improvement Plan Review Meeting updated to reflect government intervention, single Improvement Plan and assurance framework PMO support being provided by existing experienced resources within Service Improvement Resource gaps / pressures associated with actions within the Improvement Plan have been identified


Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (Jan 23)	Current Risk Score (April 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
	<p>necessary additional resources are not allocated to the management and delivery of the improvement plan then this may result in officer fatigue, loss of motivation and the programme will fail to deliver all of its objectives.</p>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council on 07/06/22 approved Use of Improvement & Capacity Reserve and 2021/22 underspend allocated to Improvement Plan actions • Resource issues and risks associated with the Improvement Plan reviewed monthly by Leadership Team and Register maintained <p>Further Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LT work on prioritisation to conclude to ensure that the improvement priorities are clear and resources are available to manage risk of officer fatigue and loss of motivation. • Local Partnerships Review of PMO and establishment of resourced Corporate PMO • National Graduate Development Scheme - placements to be focused on IP priorities • Embed Improvement Plan Actions into Corporate Plan and Business Plans to provide assurance of sustainable improvement
IP4	<p>Project and risk governance assurance arrangements</p> <p>If a robust assurance framework is not put in place to in respect of project assurance, including detailing roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders (eg Cabinet, Scrutiny, ARAC, partners, IB, etc) then the council may be unable to effectively monitor and evidence the improvement required.</p>	6 Green	6 Green	3 (green)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of additional capacity to support delivery and implementation of key projects taken place in Asset Management, Finance, Service Improvement and Legal Services • Terms of Reference for Improvement Plan Review Meeting in place • Governance approach included within Council report 07/06/22 • Risk identification has taken place • Agreement for Grant Thornton, LGA and CIPFA to review progress regularly • Improvement Plan Risk Register in place • Terms of Reference for internal Improvement Plan Review Meeting updated to reflect government intervention, single Improvement Plan and assurance framework including role of Scrutiny and Audit Committees. • Roles of Cabinet, Scrutiny and Audit agreed with Chairs • Quarterly reports to Cabinet, Audit and Scrutiny presented in September 2022, November/December and March 2023.


Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (Jan 23)	Current Risk Score (April 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny consideration of culture theme progress in Dec 22 Consideration of external review reports by Scrutiny and Audit Update to Improvement Plan to reflect findings from GT and LGA follow-up reviews <p>Further Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly Reports to Scrutiny, Audit and Cabinet (next reports in June 2023) Scrutiny regular review on Culture Theme progress Update to Improvement Plan to reflect findings from CIPA follow-up review Agreement for ongoing external assurance activity
IP5	<p>Communication Strategy</p> <p>If a robust communications strategy is not put in place detailing how, when and what information is shared with the various internal and external stakeholders, then not everyone will be aware of their respective roles and responsibilities for delivering the improvement plan and effective service delivery. In addition, the DLUHC may lose confidence in the council's ability to improve resulting in extended/ additional intervention.</p>	8 (Amber)	8 (Amber)	4 (green)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review visits from GT, LGA and CIPFA held Autumn 2022. Reports received and presented to Cabinet in January and March 2023. Communications Approach set out in Improvement Plan approved by Council 07/06/22 Key messages document for stakeholders in place Regular PMO/Communications meetings to ensure key messages are embedded within internal and external communications Communication with stakeholders to share details of transition between KBD and SL. <p>Further Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with stakeholders to share details of Improvement Plan Recruitment to vacancy within comms structure

Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (Jan 23)	Current Risk Score (April 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
IP6	<p>Investment and Financial Resources</p> <p>If sufficient/ additional financial resources are not made available, and the IP is expected to be delivered from existing budgets then the IP may not be delivered within the necessary timescales or to scope.</p>	8 (Amber)	8 (Amber)	8 (Amber)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular comms with stakeholders taking place as per comms plan including incorporation in all staff briefings Resource gaps / pressures associated with actions within the Improvement Plan identified Council on 07/06/22 approved use of Improvement & Capacity Reserve and 2021/22 underspend allocated to Improvement Plan actions Resource issues and risks associated with the Improvement Plan reviewed monthly by Leadership Team Regular monitoring of improvement plan is in place and key milestones are being delivered <p>Further Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review resource allocation to deliver the Improvement Plan and determine if there are any gaps Identify additional resources or reprioritise activity following identification of resource gaps Graduate recruitment to focus on IP priority projects
IP7	<p>Risk Closed - Moved to Strategic risk Register (risk 70)</p> <p>Organisational Culture</p> <p>If the organisational culture does not change including improvement of member and officer relationships and political relationships, then this will impact the delivery of the IP objectives and the timescales within which delivery is achieved and may result in extended government intervention.</p>	8 (Amber)	8 (Amber)	4 (green)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific theme in place within Improvement Plan Corporate Governance Theme timescales revised to allow for additional engagement activity around Corporate Governance changes Regular meetings in place between senior members and officers to develop positive working relationships and information sharing LGA training on officer/member relationships delivered in September 2022. External consultant engaged to support development of desired values and behaviours, providing independent facilitation Employee Engagement Survey results disseminated and discussed at DMTs and team meetings - action plans developed and monitored at LT.

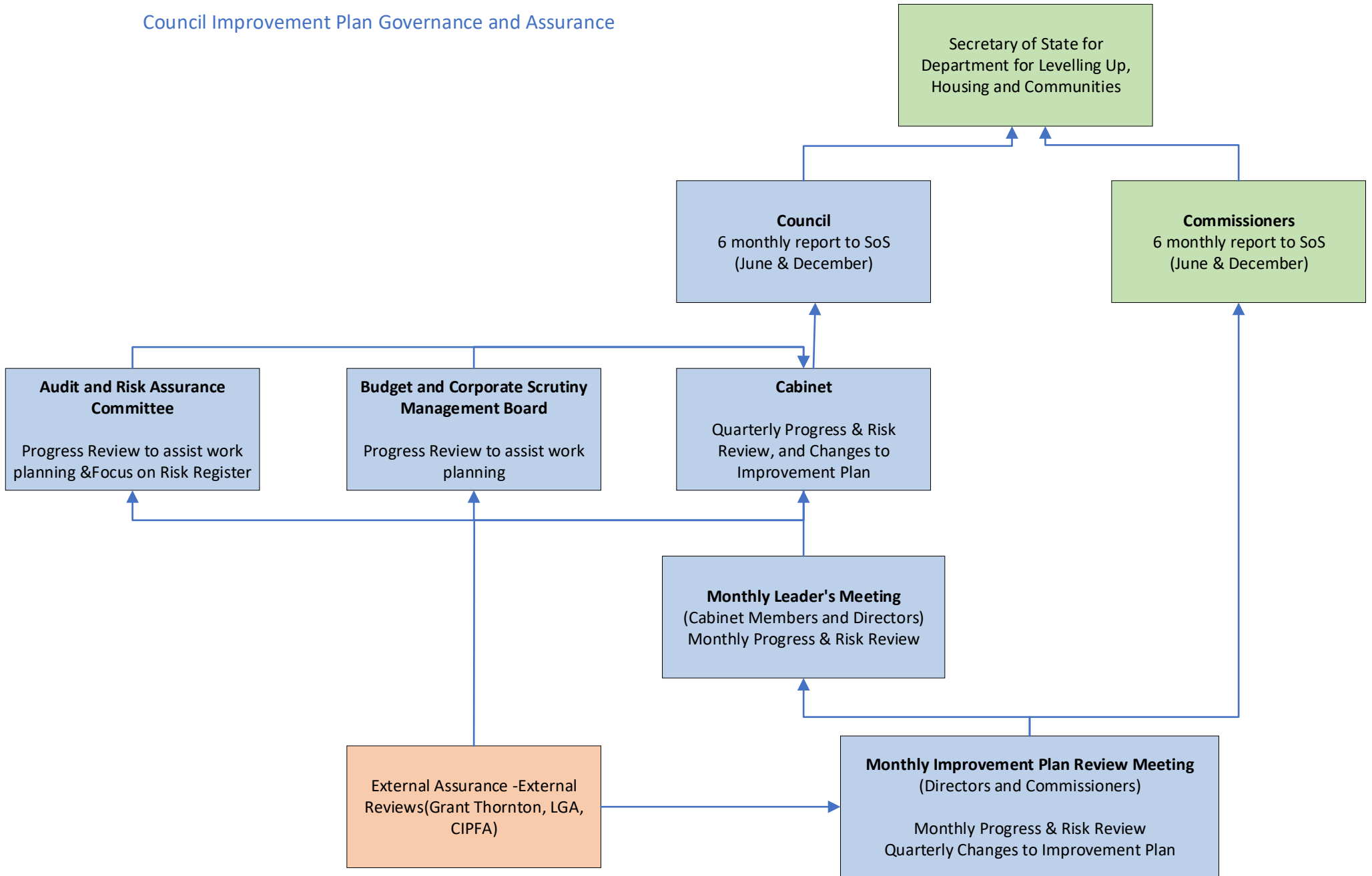
Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (Jan 23)	Current Risk Score (April 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Reviews providing assurance that organisational culture change has started to change Actions agreed for organisational culture theme following outcome of staff listening groups
IP8	<p>Risk Closed- Target score achieved and overall resource issues covered in risk IP3</p> <p>Impact of Covid 19 on the Project Resources</p> <p>If there is a continued impact of Covid 19 on resource availability, then this will impact the programme delivery plan.</p>	6 (Green)	6 (Green)	3 (green)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PMO resourcing in place from within Service Improvement Resource gaps / pressures associated with actions within the Improvement Plan are being identified Regular monitoring of improvement plan is in place and key milestones are being delivered
IP10	<p>Performance Management Framework (PMF) and Data Quality</p> <p>If a robust PMF is not put in place and appropriate quality data captured then the council will be unable to effectively monitor and evidence improvement, delivery of the</p>	8 (Amber)	8 (Amber)	8 (amber)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Management Framework approved in April 2022 Evidence of success outlined within each of the Improvement Plan themes focusing on outcomes for each theme Improvement Plan Monitoring approach approved by Council and regular monitoring in place

Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (Jan 23)	Current Risk Score (April 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
	Improvement Plan and delivery of the Corporate Plan resulting in a failure to achieve the Council's objectives.					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources approved by Council to address staffing resources required to sustain PMF 2022/23 Quarterly Corporate Performance Report presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny (Q1 Sept/Oct 22, Q2 Dec 22/Jan 23) Residents Survey and Budget Consultation exercise conducted in Summer 2022 to feed into PMF and 2023/24 service and financial planning Process in place for monthly and quarterly monitoring at corporate level Corporate approach to consultation and engagement with residents, including regular residents survey agreed by Leadership Team. Member Officer Survey conducted to provide a temperature check on the relationship <p>Further Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence collation to be produced to support IP Recruitment to additional corporate performance team posts Development of customer experience metrics as part of Customer Journey Transformation Programme and refresh of corporate plan Performance Management System options appraisal and procurement to provide capability for performance management Repeat of Member Officer Relationship Survey to provide a temperature check on the relationship Improvement Plan activity embedded in Corporate Plan and Business Plans Refreshed KPIs included in Corporate Plan refresh and streamlined reporting to Leadership Team (from Q1 report)
IP11	<p>Continued focus and resources allocated to historic issues</p> <p>If the council does not focus on the Improvement plan and corporate plan priorities and continues to focus and allocate</p>	4 (Green)	4 (Green)	4 (green)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assurance from LGA CPC Follow up Review around development of PMF Improvement Plan contains activity to be concluded, and lessons learnt embedding from historic issues

Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (Jan 23)	Current Risk Score (April 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
	resources on historic issues, then this will impact the timely delivery of both the Improvement Plan and Corporate Plan.					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet and Leadership Team approach to historic issues • Regular monitoring of improvement plan is in place • Progress on GT recommendations specifically related to the proper functioning of Scrutiny and Audit Committees. • Lessons learnt captured in relation to SEND transport <p>Further Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons learnt framework to be introduced as part of continuous improvement plan. Lessons learnt to be collated relating to historic issues and shared across organisation • Leader to confirm executive's position in relation to a further review in relation to Wragge/Cox - due to ARAC in June 2023
IP12	<p>Risk approach and progress monitoring (optimism bias):</p> <p>If the approach taken to risk scoring and/or progress monitoring against the delivery plans is unrealistic (e.g. being overly optimistic around progress and timescales or likelihood and severity of a risk) then there will be a failure to appropriately manage the programme and a loss of confidence in its delivery.</p>	6 (Green)	6 (Green)	6 (Green)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Thornton follow up review of progress against historical issues • Corporate risk scoring definitions applied • Definition in place for progress monitoring Red/Amber/Green progress monitoring for Improvement Plan • Roles of Scrutiny and Audit confirmed • Reports to Scrutiny and Audit Committees presented in September 2022 • PMO reviewed use of RAG ratings for consistency and to ensure that progress monitoring is presenting a realistic view and reflecting risk associated with actions as well as progress against plans (September 2022). <p>Further Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Reviews and Commissioners' views

Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (Jan 23)	Current Risk Score (April 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
IP13	<p>Constitutional Changes</p> <p>If key governance changes (agreed during 2022) are not embedded throughout the organisation and put into practice, then opportunities will be missed, progress will be limited, and there may be non-compliance with council processes.</p>	9 (Amber)	9 (Amber)	6 (Green)		<p>Current and Ongoing Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GT, LGA, and CIPFA follow up reviews provide assurance • Alignment of workstream with organisational culture theme through Officer participation in Culture Working Group • Revised set of guidance and templates in place to support the changes made around key decisions • First round of training delivered to budget holders and procurement card holders in relation to spend thresholds and procurements processes. • New Scrutiny Handbook launched • New EIA guidance issued for decision-making • Sub-delegation schemes developed with Directors • Member Development Plan Refreshed • Decision-making arrangements (forward plan, report sign off etc.) reviewed. <p>Further Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Review Phase 2 project plan in place to embed the constitutional changes (Corporate Governance Development Programme) • Implement Phase 2 of Mod.Gov • Implement a programme of learning for Officers around effective-decision making • Development of local KPIs to monitor performance in relation to decision-making e.g. timeliness of report submissions, publication of reports, use of exemptions, forward plan notice given on time. • MDP Delivery • Monitoring of local KPIs (once introduced)

Council Improvement Plan Governance and Assurance



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Report to Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

5 June 2023

Subject:	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Resolution - Update
Director:	Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer Surjit Tour
Contact Officer:	Surjit Tour

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board notes the response from the Leader of the Council in relation to the Committee's resolution of 17 March 2022 (Minute No. 23/22 – Appendix 1 to this report).

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee resolved that the Leader of the Council responds to its request as set out in its resolution of 17 March 2022. The Committee is invited to note the response received.

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Committee at its meeting on 17 March 2022 resolved that:

“The Committee received an update on the implementation of the resolutions made at its meetings held on 18 March 2021 (reconvened on 18 May 2021) (Minute No 21/21 refers) and 24 June 2021 (Minute No 25/21 refers).



In respect of resolution (3) of Minute No. 25/21 (of 24 June 2021) the Director Law and Governance reported that it had not been possible to agree a suitable date with the Chair for the additional meeting to take place.

The Committee received an update on the matter.

Resolved that, in reference to Minute No. 21/21(3) of the meeting held on 18 March 2021, (reconvened on 18 May 2021), the Committee feels that it has come to an impasse with officers in relation to this matter, which is preventing further progress; and therefore recommends that the Executive commissions an external review into the matters raised in relation to alleged racism and whether it is appropriate for the Council to issue an apology to the individuals concerned.”

- 4.2 The wider subject matter relating to this report has been considered at length previously by this Committee. A specific point was raised by the Committee as detailed within the resolution resulting in the Committee resolving to request that the Leader of the Council considers commissioning an external review.
- 4.3 The Leader of the Council has considered the request and responded to the Chairperson of the Committee on 27 March 2023 (see Appendix 2).
- 4.3 The Committee is asked to consider and note the response of the Leader of the Council.

5 Implications

Resources:	There are no such implications arising
Legal and Governance:	The council is required to conduct itself lawfully at all times. The response before the Committee provides an important clarification and outlines the approach the council has and is taking with regards to its EDI Agenda.



Risk:	The council is exposed to risk of reputational harm and potential litigation should it fail to discharge its obligations fully and properly.
Equality:	The council must ensure that it complies with its equality duty and Equality Act at all times.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no such implications arising
Social Value:	There are no such implications arising
Climate Change:	There are no such implications arising
Corporate Parenting:	There are no such implications arising

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Committee resolution of 17 March 2022 (Minute No. 23/22)

Appendix 2 - Response from the Leader of the Council dated 27 March 2023

7. Background Papers

N/a



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Minute of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Thursday 17 March 2022 at 5.00 pm
at Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House

Minute No. 23/22

Update on Implementation of Previous Recommendations

The Committee received an update on the implementation of the resolutions made at its meetings held on 18 March 2021 (reconvened on 18 May 2021) (Minute No 21/21 refers) and 24 June 2021 (Minute No 25/21 refers).

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Cllr Liam Preece
Chair of Audit and Risk
Assurance Committee

By Email

My Ref:
Your Ref:
Please ask
for:
Telephone
No:
Email:

Date: 27 March 2023

Dear Cllr Preece,

**Re: Audit and Risk Assurance resolution
Minute 23/22**

I write with reference to the resolution of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee made on 17 March 2022 (detailed at Appendix 1 to this letter).

I would like to pass on my thanks to the Committee for considering the report into historical issues. I fully support the stance taken by the Committee that we must take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of racism (or indeed any of the other protected characteristic).

As Leader, I fully appreciate the importance of the Council understanding, demonstrating and embedding its equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda. It is for this reason that I have retained the EDI Agenda within my own Cabinet Portfolio.

With regards to this specific issue, I have received a briefing and understand that the names of the employees were actually raised following an internal audit line of enquiry going back to 2014. The Council's Chief Internal Auditor has explained that the employees were identified through other legitimate lines of enquiry being undertaken by the Counter Fraud Team (which related to other matters under consideration) rather than anything to do with the employees' race, colour, ethnicity, culture or religion. This clarification was made clear to the Committee last year.

It is regretted that this information was not available when the Committee initially considered the 'Cox report'; however, this matter does demonstrate the need to ensure matters are fully and properly examined to avoid incorrect conclusions being reached particularly when an emotive issue, such as racism, is being cited.

To ensure all issues and matters were addressed, a referral was made by the Council to the Solicitors Regulatory Authority in relation to Mark Greenburgh's inappropriate comments, as required by the Committee (a referral had already been made to the SRA with regards a comment made by Mr Greenburgh).

A referral was also made to the ICO with regards to the details of the employees being shared with (the then) Wragges law firm who were commissioned to undertake an investigation into a range of issues on behalf of the Council. The ICO concluded that there was no data breach by the Council in sharing those details with Wragges.

Notwithstanding, the clarification now provided with regards to this matter, the Council has accepted, through reviews conducted by both Grant Thornton and the Local Government Association, the need for it to learn the lessons from the past and improve its culture, governance, practises and procedures. That work started nearly two years ago, and important improvements have been achieved during this time.

Key to the council's improvement is the its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Agenda. Over the last decade or so, the Council's focus on EDI changed from a centralised approach to a more localised one where directorates took a greater lead on managing and implementing the EDI Agenda. This approach sought to empower directorates to drive the EDI Agenda themselves and address specific issues and needs within each directorate.

Since becoming Leader, I decided that a stronger centralised corporate approach was needed that still worked closely with all directorates, but enabled a more robust grip to be taken to ensuring the EDI Agenda was focused, driven and ultimately embedded across the council, as well as promoted in our communities, and by our partners and stakeholders.

I acknowledge that the Council has made mistakes in the past on a range of issues and matters. These have been set out clearly in the recent reviews undertaken by both Grant Thornton and the Local Government Association. Equally, I also acknowledge the efforts, commitment and positive steps taken to date to address those identified shortcomings. Grant Thornton also made it very clear that the council needed to move forward and not dwell on the past which hindered its ability to deliver for Sandwell residents.

You will of course be aware from the follow up reviews of both Grant Thornton and the LGA, that the Council has over the recent past made considerable improvements with regards to its governance arrangements, member/officer relations, and a wide range of working arrangements and practises. These improvements have enabled the Council to focus on and deliver real improvements to the residents of Sandwell. The Council's Improvement Agenda remains a priority and I am determined to ensure that we address every action identified within the Improvement Plan.

An important aspect of improvement is delivering our Culture Change programme. This agenda will involve a deep dive into the Council's culture and will be a vehicle to challenge unhealthy and poor cultures and practises. It will candidly examine failings of the past (without dwelling on them), afford opportunity to all members, staff and other stakeholders to redefine and reset our cultural values and beliefs. Critical to this will be our EDI Agenda and ensuring we embed EDI from top to bottom within the Council. I recognise that the Council will need to demonstrate this through actions and not just words, and show that it has learned lessons from the past and that it is committed to a future where all residents, communities, staff, members and other stakeholders feel and experience fairness, equally opportunity and compassion in all that the Council does.

To this end, the Council established the Equality Commission, established a new Equalities Team, recently approved a new Equality Policy and is reviewing its Equality Objective, adopted the LGA Equality Framework to develop and implement a new EDI Strategy that will set out the Council's roadmap to delivering excellence in EDI over the next 5 years, worked with Staff Networks to give them a greater, meaningful voice, updated guidance on EIAs to ensure decisions are made with a good understanding of EDI implications, and supported and promoted numerous EDI events and initiatives to raise EDI awareness and celebrate our rich and diverse workforce and communities.

I think the above is important context to the specific matter the Committee referred to me.

Finally, I would like to thank the Committee for considering this matter and helping to ensure the council embeds improvement so that we can better serve the residents of Sandwell.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kerrie Carmichael".

Cllr Kerrie Carmichael
Leader of the Council

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Page 131
The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive:-

	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
1	Joint Equipment Stores additional warehouse/storage solution Contact Officer: Louise Butler Director: Rashpal Bishop - Director of Adult Social Care	Cabinet Member - Health and Adult Social Care (Cllr Hartwell)	Public	May 2023		Report Risk Register Equality Impact Assessment		No



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
2	<p>Young People’s Version of the Corporate Plan</p> <p>Contact Officer: Sarah Sprung</p> <p>Director: Michael Jarrett, Director of Children and Education</p>	<p>Cabinet – Children, Young People & Education (Cllr Hackett)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>7 June 2023</p>		<p>Young People’s Version of the Corporate Plan</p>	<p>The Plan has been co-produced with SHAPE and Care Leavers, as part of this process there has been extensive consultation with C&YP across the borough</p>	<p>Yes</p>



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
3	<p>Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy and Policy on Adaptations for Disabled Tenants in Council Housing</p> <p>Contact Officer: Manny Sehmbi</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing</p>	<p>Cabinet – Housing and Built Environment (Cllr Rollins)</p>		<p>7 June 2023</p>		<p>Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy</p> <p>Policy on Adaptations for Disabled Tenants (HRA Property)</p>		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
4	<p>Proposed changes to the delivery of the Adult Social Care Community Alarms Service</p> <p>Contact Officer: Louise Butler</p> <p>Director: Rashpal Bishop - Director of Adult Social Care</p>	<p>Cabinet - Health and Adult Social Care (Cllr Hartwell)</p>	Public	21 June 2023		<p>Report</p> <p>Call Statistics</p> <p>Current & Proposed Structure</p> <p>Timeline</p> <p>Current Rota & Proposed Rota</p> <p>Equality Impact Assessment</p>	Staff and union consultation	No



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
5	Community Hubs Contact Officer: Director of Business Strategy	Cabinet - Public Health and Communities (Cllr Khatun)		June 2023				
6	Parking Charges Policy Contact Officer: Robin Weare Director – Alice Davey, Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet – Environment & Highways (Cllr Millard)		21 June 2023				



ONE COUNCIL
ONE TEAM

	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
7	<p>Enforcement of Moving Traffic Contraventions</p> <p>Contact Officer: Robin Weare</p> <p>Director – Alice Davey, Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet – Environment & Highways (Cllr Millard)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>21 June 2023</p>				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
8	<p>Award of Contract for use of Enforcement Agents</p> <p>Contact Officer: Carl Jones</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance</p>	<p>Cabinet – Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)</p>		<p>21 June 2023</p>				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
9	2022/23 Financial Outturn Contact Officer: Rebecca Maher Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance	Cabinet - Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)	Public	June	Post 14/09/23	Appendices	None Required	No



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
10	Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028 Contact Officer: Louis Bebb Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing	Cabinet – Housing & Built Environment (Cllr Rollins)		21 June 2023	SNAC 24 November 2022	Housing Strategy 2023 – 2028		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
11	Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1 Funding Contact Officer: Gillian Douglas Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing	Cabinet – Housing & Built Environment (Cllr Rollins)		June 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
12	Asset Transfer of Hurst Road and Charlemont Community Centres Contact Officer: Nick Garratt / Manny Sehmbi Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing	Cabinet – Housing & Built Environment (Cllr Rollins)		21 June 2023	N/A	-Community Centre Asset Transfer Report -Equality Impact Assessment -Quality Assurance Document		



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	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
13	Levelling Up Partnership Contact Officer: Tammy Stokes Director of Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern	Cabinet – Leader of the Council (Cllr Carmichael)	Public	June/July 2023	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandwell Levelling Up Partnership evidence base and proposed interventions. 	DLUHC conducting stakeholder engagement as part of evidence base formation and intervention development	Around announcement of a partnership with DLUHC



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
14	Green Spaces Strategy: 22/23 Annual Report Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet – Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)		21 June 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
15	<p>Green Spaces Annual Programme of Works 23/24</p> <p>Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet – Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)</p>		<p>21 June 2023</p>				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
16	Feasibility of establishing a Council owned Housing company Contact Officer: Alan Martin Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth	Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)		21 June 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
17	<p>Rolfe Street Masterplan – Results of consultation and approval</p> <p>Contact Officer: Kate Harris</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern - Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>		21 June 2023		<p>Report</p> <p>Revised Rolfe Street Masterplan</p> <p>Consultation Report</p>		



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	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
18	<p>City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Projects - Consolidated Approvals</p> <p>Contact Officer: Andy Miller/Robin Weare</p> <p>Director Regeneration & Growth – Tony McGovern</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>		21 June 2023				



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	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
19	<p>Regeneration Pipeline and Towns Fund Update</p> <p>Contact Officer: Rina Rahim</p> <p>Director: Director Regeneration & Growth – Tony McGovern</p>	<p>Cabinet – Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>21 June 2023</p>		<p>Progress update report</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>n/a</p>



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
20	<p>Wednesbury Conservation Area – Approval to consult the public on Area Appraisal and Management Plan</p> <p>Contact Officer: Mark Stretton</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern – Director Regeneration & Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>		21 June 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
21	<p>Information Governance – Retention Schedule</p> <p>Contact Officer: Vanessa Mahersmith</p> <p>Director – Surjit Tour, Director of Law and Governance</p>	<p>Cabinet – Leader of the Council (Clr Carmichael)</p>		12 July 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
22	COVID Grant Proposals Contact Officer: Rebecca Maher Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance	Cabinet – Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)	Public	July	None	None	None	No



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
23	<p>Events Governance and Safety Advisory Group Terms of Reference</p> <p>Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)</p>		<p>July 2023</p>				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
24	Future Provision of Leisure Services Contact Officer: Ben Percival Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)		July 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
25	Wildlife Management Policy Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)		July 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
26	<p>Fishing Policy</p> <p>Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)</p>		July 2023				



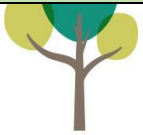
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
27	Animal Welfare Policy – Forge Mill Farm Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)		July 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
28	<p>Heat Networks – Outline Business Case and next steps</p> <p>Contact Officer: Mark Taylor</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern - Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>		<p>July 2023</p>		<p>Report</p>		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
29	<p>Procurement of a Strategic Delivery Partner for the Regeneration Pipeline</p> <p>Contact Officer: Tony McGovern</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>		<p>July 2023</p>				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
30	<p>Planning Validation Checklist</p> <p>Contact Officer: Alison Bishop</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet – Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>12 July 2023</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Appendix 1 Consultation responses</p> <p>Appendix 2 Planning Validation Checklist</p>	<p>Publicised on the web site and email consultations sent out to Consultee and agents who submit planning applications</p>	<p>No as will be publicised on the web site</p>



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
31	Highway Infrastructure Funding Plan for 2024/25 Contact Officer: Robin Weare Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet - Environment & Highways (Cllr Millard)		September 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
32	<p>Q1 Budget Monitoring 2023/24</p> <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Maher</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance</p>	<p>Cabinet – Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)</p>	Public	September	Post 05/10/23	Appendices	None Required	No



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
33	Professional Services Contract PSP4 Contact Officer: Robin Weare Director: Alice Davey - Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet – Environment and Highways (Cllr Millard)	No	August	No	Report	None	No



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
34	<p>Information Governance Framework Review</p> <p>Contact Officer: Vanessa Mahersmith</p> <p>Director – Surjit Tour, Director of Law and Governance</p>	<p>Cabinet – Leader of the Council (Clr Carmichael)</p>		September 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
35	<p>Safer Green Spaces Strategy</p> <p>Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)</p>		<p>September 2023</p>				



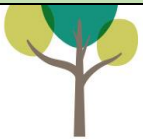
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
36	Allotments Review and Strategy Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)		September 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
37	<p>Sandwell Valley Master Plan and 10 Year Business Plan</p> <p>Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)</p>		<p>September 2023</p>				



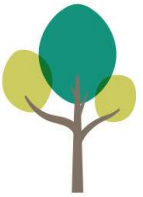
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
38	<p>Project Costs for the Re-Location of the Indoor Market in West Bromwich</p> <p>Contact Officer: Tony McGovern</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet – Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda) Regeneration and WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>		September 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
39	<p>Playing Pitch Strategy</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gemma Ryan / Ben Percival</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)</p>		<p>September 2023</p>	<p>SNAC</p>			



Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
<p>40</p> <p>Feasibility Reports – WMCA – cultural facilities & Cultural Development Fund</p> <p>Contact Officer: Dawn Winter</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)</p>		<p>September 2023</p>				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
41	<p>Haden Hill Rebuild</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gemma Ryan / Ben Percival</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet – Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)</p>		<p>September 2023</p>				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
42	Highway Winter Maintenance Plan Contact Officer: Robin Weare Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet – Environment & Highways (Cllr Millard)		October 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
43	Household Waste Collection Review Contact Officer: Ben Percival Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet - Environment & Highways (Cllr Millard)		October 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
44	Framework Contract for Street Lighting – Goods Contact Officer: Robin Weare Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet - Environment & Highways (Cllr Millard)		October 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
45	<p>Mowing Review and Rewilding Strategy</p> <p>Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)</p>		<p>October 2023</p>				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
46	Events – 5 Year Strategy Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)		October 2023				



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47	Highway Strategic Road Safety Plan 2023-2028 Contact Officer: Robin Weare Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet - Environment & Highways (Cllr Millard)		November 2023				



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered	Wider consultation activity?	Comms required?
48	Cultural Compact & Cultural Prospectus Contact Officer: Dawn Winter Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)		November 2023				



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49	Q2 Budget Monitoring 2023/24 Contact Officer: Rebecca Maher Director: Simone Hines	Cabinet – Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)	Public	December	Post - 04/01/24	Appendices	None	No
50	Heritage Strategy Contact Officer: Dawn Winter Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet – Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)		December 2023				



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51	Archives Centre Contact Officer: Dawn Winter Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet – Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)		January 2024				
52	Q3 Budget Monitoring 2023/24 Contact Officer: Rebecca Maher Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance	Cabinet – Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)	Public	February	Post TBC	Appendices	None	No



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53	<p>Bid to Arts Council England – Libraries Improvement Fund Round 3 (depending on amount)</p> <p>Contact Officer: Dawn Winter</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet - Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)</p>		<p>February 2024</p>				



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54	Funding for Heritage – Oak House Contact Officer: Dawn Winter Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet – Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda)		March 2024				



Annual Programme Reminder (these items are not added automatically)

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Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
Review of Fees and Charges		January		
Determination of Admission Priorities for Sandwell's Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools		January/February		
Schools Funding		December/January		
Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring		February		
Council Finances		February		
Financial Regulations		February		
Business Plans		February		
Highways Asset Management Plan		March		
Local Transport Settlement		March		
Revenues and Benefits Policy framework 2022/23		March		
Schools Capital Programme		April to June		
Financial Outturn		May		



Page 183	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
	Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules		July		
	Review of Fees and Charges Sandwell Residential Education Services Centre Charges		May – July		
	Childcare Sufficiency Report		July - September		
	Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring		August		
	Model Schools Pay Policy		October/ November		
	Winter Service Operational Plan		October/November		
	Road Safety Plan		November		
	Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring		November		
	Council Tax Base Calculation		December		
	Business Rates Retention Estimates		December		
	Council Tax Reduction Scheme		December		



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