

Draft Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 - Action Plan for 2025/26: Quarter 2 Update

Key:

Green – Completed

Amber – In Progress

Issue No.	Issue Identified	Source of Evidence	Summary of Action Proposed	Responsible Officer	Progress Update up to 30 th September 2025
1	<u>Financial Sustainability</u> Identify all the significant financial pressures that are relevant to the Council's short and medium-term plans and build these into them	MTFP Budget planning Savings plans Financial stability / sustainability	In July 2025 the Council will begin work on the 2026/27 budget and MTFP, this will involve short and medium-term plans to close its budget gap by generating savings and efficiencies and not relying on reserves which is unsustainable. The preparation of plans will include taking decisions regarding future years before the 2026/27 budget setting Council. Also, the Council will maintain its focus on in-year budget monitoring.	Director of Resources	The Council is currently working up its budget for 2026/27 and updating its MTFP. Based on initial analysis of the proposed Fair Funding Review 2.0 (FFR 2) it is likely to have an adverse impact on the Council's MTFP. The final FFR 2 outcome won't be known until December 2025. In light of this the Council is seeking saving/efficiency proposals from service areas as part of their budget proposals. All proposals will be reported to Budget Working Group meetings which commenced in June and will continue throughout the year.
2	<u>Governance – Capacity</u> Capacity in the Financial Services Team affecting the Council's ability to produce its draft accounts before the statutory deadline.	Management Assurance Statements Statutory deadlines met	The Council is currently working on producing the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts, which will be published by the statutory deadline. The Council added an extra post into the finance team to increase capacity,	Director of Resources	The Council produced the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts by the statutory deadline. The vacant post within finance has been recruited to, with the new employee due to commence in November 2025.

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			however to-date it has not been possible to recruit to this post, which is placing significant pressure on the existing team members.		
3	<u>Governance – Barriers to Change</u> The new governance and decision-making processes are not fully understood by Members. As a result, there have been instances of Members of the Executive speaking against decisions made by the Executive at Full Council meetings.	Member Training Attendance Schedules Ongoing mandatory development programme in place Removal of legacy arrangements	The Council has engaged the Local Government Association to work with Members to identify any barriers to completing the change from a Committee system to the Leader and Executive model successfully.	Director of Resources	The Council has revised its Constitution to further clarify the decision-making processes. The LGA engagement piece is not now going ahead as it is felt there is no longer an issue.
4	<u>Governance – Joint Ventures (JV)</u> There is evidence of failures to manage the relationships between the Council and the JV companies effectively and of conflicts of interest, arising between Members roles as directors of the companies which are significant and create risks of negative impacts on the Council's interests in the companies as a shareholder, and on the reputation of the Council as a whole.	Independent Report Improved governance arrangements in place Legal agreements in place Council officer roles clarified	An independent legal advisor has undertaken a review of the relationships and governance of its JV companies. Following the independent report the Council is to introduce new Governance procedures in Summer 2025.	Director of Resources	In August 2025 the Executive received a report on the revised governance procedures for JV companies, this included JV board members declaring an interest at council meetings and taking no part in any debate on JV issues and the Executive carrying out the shareholder function.
5	<u>Governance – Information Governance</u> Fundamental weaknesses were identified in the Council's Information Governance processes as a result of an	MIAA Recommendations Follow-up and Tracker. Improved Information Governance	The Council will deliver the recommendations in line with the management responses agreed and submitted to MIAA which have been captured in the final report.	Head of Legal & Democratic Services	The Council has engaged MIAA to help in developing the IAR and ROPA and officers are working on updating other relevant policies. These should be

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	Internal Audit Review (Limited Assurance).	Arrangements in place, such as: ➤ Up-to-date Record of Processing Activity (ROPA), Information Asset Register (IAR) and data flow maps in place with supporting policies and procedures. ➤ Assigned and trained Information Asset Owners (IAO) and Information Asset Administrators (IAA). ➤ To consider dedicated, experienced IG resource. ➤ Training needs analysis and training plan in place.			finalised by the end of December 2025. Also, an Information Governance training session / workshop was delivered by MIAA on 22nd April 2025, with a focus on the requirements to develop and maintain an effective IAR and ROPA. MIAA have now met all service managers in order to populate the two registers. Their draft registers are awaited in November, following which IAOs and IAAs will be trained. Job Evaluation for the new post of Information Governance Officer will take place on 5th November. Training needs analysis will be carried out by the new appointee.
6	<u>Governance – Planning Process</u> The arrangements for determining planning applications were inconsistent.	Independent Report Improved arrangements in place	The Council has commissioned a focussed independent legal report on the consistency, costs and efficiency of its planning process and the potential future impacts of continuing the current arrangements. The	Director of Resources	The Council has received the draft report from Anthony Collins and officers are considering the recommendations.

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			report is due to be finalised in Summer 2025 and will be reported to Council in due course.		
7	<u>Complaints - management and monitoring arrangements</u>	Reports to CMT Cohort of identified Complaints Co-ordinators Performance Clinics Presentations KPI Information Performance Update Reports to the Executive	Review and consider if the existing system is the best way to collate and monitor complaints handling and trends analysis and replace or update as required. Weekly reports to be issued to CMT detailing all complaints received and outstanding for resolution. Lead Complaints Co-Ordinator to be identified. Dedicated officers to be identified in each service to answer and manage responses to Complaints. Quarterly report to be included in the Council's quarterly Performance Clinics – this will be a snapshot for each service with narrative provided on issues identified, lessons learned and actions taken. Improved commentary and analysis to be provided to	Head of Legal & Democratic Services	The new process is in place, however, there have been issues with the automated Jadu complaints reporting system which are currently being resolved. Therefore, part of the process is currently being picked up manually. Following the performance clinic a target of 95% has been introduced for complaints to be resolved within 15 working days of receipt.

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			support the performance on the Councils KPI '% of formal complaints handled within timescales' (DIR 1). KPI target to be re-instated.		
8	Programme and Project Management arrangements It has been identified that there is no formal corporate approach to Programme and Project Management across the organisation resulting in a lack of consistency, clarity and effective processes being in place.	Improved programme and project management practices in place	The Council has established a working group to develop and implement a standard suite of programme and project management documentation. An Internal Audit Review of our arrangements has also been scheduled for 2025/26.	Head of Policy & Commissioning	A set of templates have been drafted and the process for Programme and Project Management delivery was presented to EMT on the 7 th August. Once sign off has been approved the templates will be made available on the intranet. Training will also be provided where required.