

Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 – Action Plan UPDATE

Action	Timescale	Lead	Progress update	Date completed
<p>Children' s Services – arrangements for care leavers:</p> <p>1) follow through on the improvements suggested by Ofsted Inspectors</p> <p>2) follow a cycle of improvement, reviewing and testing our practice and oversight to ensure that the Service is making progress and creating actions to address our priority areas</p> <p>3) the Improvement Board, under the Independent Chairmanship of John Coughlan, CBE, to continue its remit to challenge the pace and quality of progress, in terms of both actions and their impact</p>	<p>1) September 2023</p> <p>2) Monthly</p> <p>3) Quarterly</p>	<p>Corporate Director of Children's Services</p>	<p>a) In Buckinghamshire, the annual conversations were held on 30 June 2023 and 23 October 2023.</p> <p>b) In 2023, 236 case files audits were completed of which 70% were judged to be good or better. This compares favourably to 2021 (point of last judgement inspection) when less than 50% were rated good or better.</p> <p>Joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) in January 2024 re: multi-agency identification of risk and need across the local partnership; primarily around the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. Outcome letter expected 14 March; inspectors said, 'service knew itself well' and the self-assessment accepted in full.</p> <p>c) The Improvement Board is no longer in place. Transformational activity to streamline its model of delivery across Early Help and Social Care - service changes to be implemented April 2024.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>Children's Services – actions to implement the 'Written Statement of Actions' (SEND): Embedding the actions/practices agreed with inspectors (in the Written Statement of Actions, WSoA) for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities</p>	<p>1) Monthly reporting to WSoA Group 2) weekly updates to SEND Improvement Board</p>	<p>Corporate Director of Children's Services</p>	<p>1) WSOA submitted and approved by Ofsted and CQC. Progress been made in a number of areas; the following challenges are hindering the pace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long waits for diagnoses and therapy • Increase in Education, Health and Care Plans and related pressures • Shortage of Educational Psychologists <p>2) The DfE Delivering Better Value Programme is to support local areas re SEND system. Finalising a bid for £1m for one year to strengthen early intervention. Likely to become workstreams re: new SEND strategy going to Cabinet later in 2024</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>Statement of Accounts:</p> <p>1) Achieve manifest progress to achieving duly signed-off Statements of Account for the years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020/21 • 2021/22 <p>2) Make in-year progress for the preparation of the accounts for 2022/23</p> <p>3) Written reports to each scheduled meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee during 2023/24 to update on progress</p> <p>4) Lessons learned report to be considered by the Audit & Governance Committee at the conclusion of the 2020/21 accounts</p>	<p>1) April 2024</p> <p>2) December 2024</p> <p>3) Ongoing</p> <p>4) Post April 2024</p>	<p>Chief Finance Officer</p>	<p>Update given to 27 Nov 2023 and January 2024 A&G Committees</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Business Assurance:</p> <p>1) Developing the new Business Continuity Management (BCM) Framework including the Cyber Resilience Framework</p> <p>2) Refresh the Corporate Business Continuity Plan (BCP)</p>	<p>1) September 2023</p> <p>2) September 2023</p>	<p>Chief Internal Auditor</p>	<p>Both points actioned and the responsibility for BCM has now moved to Vince Grey, Head of Resilience</p>	<p>Completed Nov 2023</p>

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Shareholder Committee: Review the operation of the Council's governance arrangements for the Shareholder Committee, including:- 1) Refreshed training for all members of the Committee and the Council's appointed directors 2) Identify a pool of potential directors – with training 3) Review business plans of each company/joint venture 4) Review the risk management arrangements for the companies 5) Review the effectiveness of the Guidance on Conflicts of Interest 6) Continue to learn from best practice	1) September 2023 2) October 2023 3) Company per meeting 4) June 2024 5) January 2024 6) October 2023	Director - Major Projects, Monitoring Officer	1) Some training held Sept 2023 2) Achieved 3) Buckinghamshire Advantage in Oct 2023 4) On-track 5) Now March 2024 6) Self-Assessment in Oct 2023 and progress to be reviewed at each meeting	1) partially completed 2) Completed Sept 2023 3) Ongoing 4) On track 5) On track 6) Completed Oct 23

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<p>Electoral review - implementation + governance implications: To assess the governance implications arising from the outcome of the Electoral Review: Establish a project plan for reviewing the implications/options Indicative areas to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Governance: sustainable meeting structure 2) Community Board: scope/shape 3) Cllr Development/Support: needs 4) Communications: change/scope 5) Constitution: likely changes 6) Members Allowances: review plan 7) Scheme of Delegation: additional delegations needed 	<p>December 2023 - April 2024</p>	<p>Director of Legal & Democratic Services</p>	<p>Senior Officer Corporate Governance & Assurance Board - included this activity in terms of reference</p> <p>Mechanism in place. Joint Constitution Task and Finish Group appointed by Audit & Governance and Standards & General Purposes Committees- Jan 24</p> <p>Task and Finish Group first meeting on 12 March 2024.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

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<p>Community Governance Reviews:</p> <p>1) Proactively agree decision-making routes for assessing and adopting Community Governance Reviews</p> <p>2) Establish project timeframes for Reviews</p> <p>3) Publish relevant terms of reference for each Review</p> <p>4) Undertake effective communication and consultation with affected communities and local councillors</p>	<p>1) July 2023</p> <p>2) December 2023</p> <p>3) February 2024</p> <p>4) February - April 2024</p>	<p>Director of Legal & Democratic Services</p>	<p>1) Completed August 2023</p> <p>2) Completed January 2024</p> <p>3)Completed February 2024</p> <p>4) In hand – Feb-April 2024</p>	<p>1) August 2023</p> <p>2) January 2024</p> <p>3) February 2024</p> <p>4) In hand – Feb-April 2024</p>
<p>Local Code of Governance:</p> <p>1) Adopt and publish a Local Code of Corporate Governance; and</p> <p>2) Use the Local Code as an integral springboard for preparing the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement.</p>	<p>1) July - September 2023</p> <p>2) Jan - March 2024</p>	<p>Director of Legal & Democratic Services</p>	<p>1) Code adopted Sep and published Oct 2023</p> <p>2) Planned for March-April 2024</p>	<p>1) Completed Sep/Oct 2023</p> <p>3) Taking place</p>
<p>Audit & Governance Committee:</p> <p>A) The Committee’s work programme to include scheduled annual reviews of key governance areas, including:</p> <p>1) Shareholder Committee - governance arrangements</p> <p>2) Regulation of Investigatory Powers</p>	<p>1) November 2023</p>	<p>Director of Legal & Democratic Services</p>	<p>1) Now March 2024 - following Internal Audit.</p>	<p>A) Completed Annual Reports scheduled in the A&G</p>

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<p>Act (RIPA) usage – the implementation of the Council’s RIPA policy</p> <p>3) Lessons learned from other authorities – implications for governance of best practice reviews.</p> <p>4) Review the inclusion of record-keeping and document retention in relation to Contract Procedure Rules Waivers & Breaches</p> <p>5) Annual Governance Statement reviewed updated and published in timely manner;</p> <p>6) Consider the links between risks and the need for mandatory officer training in certain areas; and</p> <p>7) A review of governance arrangements for achieving an overview of write-offs</p> <p>B) Agree a position on the involvement of an ‘Independent Member’ of the Committee.</p>	<p>2) November 2023</p> <p>3) March 2024</p> <p>4) March 2024</p> <p>5) Once agreed</p> <p>6) March 2024</p> <p>7) March 2024</p> <p>B March 2024</p>		<p>2) A&G Cttee reviewed Nov 2023</p> <p>3) May 2024</p> <p>4) March 2024</p> <p>5) Published October 2023</p> <p>6) March 2024 - not started</p> <p>7) March 2024 - not started</p> <p>March 2024 - Approach to be discussed initially with Chief Internal Auditor and Chairman of Committee</p>	<p>Committee workplan</p> <p>B) In hand</p>

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Major Change projects: Further develop the culture and practice of good governance at the heart of our Major Projects, and the integral role of the Risk Management Group.	March 2024	Service Improvement Board	Under review	By end of April 2024
Community Boards: Finalise a further review of Community Boards arrangements and effectiveness, potentially including spending, under the oversight of the Communities & Localism Select Committee	Communities & Localism Select Committee work programme	Director Partnerships and Communities	The review of Community Boards is in hand and currently being led by the Cabinet Member for Communities. Once recommendations from the review have been developed these will be shared with the Communities and Localism Select Committee.	By end of June 2024

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Support for elected members: 1) Review compliance with service responsibilities to keep local councillors to informed of issues affecting their ward 2) Improvements to achieve sustainable, joined-up communications to councillors on issues affecting the council 3) Review services' responsiveness to councillor queries for information, and assess options for improving the capture and culture of councillor feedback on local issues 4) Review of the scope of mandatory training	1) March 2024 2) March 2024 3) March 2024 4) March 2024	Director of Legal & Democratic Services	March-April 2024 with involvement from Communications Team, Member Development Working Group; and new Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Ongoing

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<p>Transparency of member groups: Increase the transparency for members of groups/bodies set up by the Cabinet, Council and Committees:-</p> <p>1) Publicise and maintain on the Intranet a list of current bodies (e.g. sub-committees, task and finish groups, member-officer working groups, informal cross-party working groups, select committee review groups) to which members are appointed</p> <p>2) Give an indication of their purpose, membership, longevity and their parent body</p>	<p>1) December 2023</p> <p>2) December 2023</p>	<p>Director of Legal & Democratic Services</p>	<p>1) and 2) Completed: new member's intranet page created and maintained (updated and amended) by Democratic Services</p>	<p>Feb 2024</p>
<p>Election planning - General Election: Continue reviewing plans and resources in readiness for any General Election which may take place in 2024.</p>	<p>Monthly</p>	<p>Returning Officer</p>	<p>Returning Officer meetings with Elections Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>