STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR 2023-24

1 Scope of Responsibility

1.1 Stafford Borough Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

1.3 The Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. This statement explains how the Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, regulation 6(1)(b), which require all relevant authorities to prepare an annual governance statement.

2 The Purpose of the Governance Framework

2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.

2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

2.3 The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Governance Statement.

3   The Governance Framework

3.1   The Council has adopted a local Code of Governance, which can be found on the Council's website. The Code is comprised of 6 key principles:

1. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

2. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

3. Defining the vision and outcomes for the local area and determining the actions necessary to achieve the intended outcomes.

4. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

5. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

6. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

4   Review of effectiveness

4.1   The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is led by the Head of Transformation and Assurance who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the Code of Governance. The review is informed by the work of Members, the senior officers within the Council and also by comments made by the External Auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates. The process that has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework is set out below.

4.2   **The Authority -** the Deputy Chief Executive - Resources, the Head of Transformation and Assurance and the Monitoring Officer, on behalf of the Council, undertake periodic reviews of the Council's governance arrangements on an ongoing basis. Work to support this includes a self-assessment review against the Code of Governance, reviews of the Constitution and key policies, processes and practices throughout the year.

Last year's self-assessment identified a number of concerns with the effective operation and compliance with key components of the Council's governance framework. A programme of work was set out covering 2023/24 to 2024/25. Whilst some progress has been made in addressing these issues, further work is still required. These issues and a number of others were identified by the External Auditors in their VFM report for 2021/22 and 2022/23. This is covered in more detail in 4.10.

4.3 **The Executive** - the Cabinet monitors the effectiveness of the governance framework through the consideration of regular performance, financial and strategic risk management reports. Individual Cabinet members receive regular feedback from senior officers on the delivery of services and the achievement of objectives and targets. Issues of strategic and corporate importance are referred to the Cabinet.

4.4 **Overview and Scrutiny Committees** - the Council has 3 Scrutiny Committees. The Scrutiny Committees review decisions made by Cabinet and areas of concern. They can "call-in" a decision that has been made by the Cabinet when they consider the decision is not in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The Scrutiny Committees:

(i) determine their own work programme at the beginning of each year and this includes the provision of updates, briefings and reviews of services/activities; and

(ii) consider regular performance management information from senior management.

4.5 **The Audit and Accounts Committee -** is responsible for overseeing the Council's governance arrangements. The Committee monitors the effectiveness of risk management, reviews corporate governance issues, the work of Internal Audit and the anti fraud and corruption arrangements throughout the year. The Audit and Accounts Committee receives quarterly reports on:

• the work of internal audit in reviewing the systems and processes to ensure that they are adequate; and

• updates on the management of the Council's strategic risks. A strategic risk register is in place, which identifies and evaluates the risks faced by the Council in delivering its objectives. Work is ongoing to review and address these risks and update the risk register accordingly.

4.6 **The Standards Committee** - is responsible for the ethical framework of the Council. The Committee works closely with the Monitoring Officer in dealing with complaints about Members conduct and promoting high standards of conduct.

4.7 **Internal Audit** - is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements, including the system of internal control, and reporting on its adequacy. Internal Audit is a key source of assurance for the Annual Governance Statement and operates in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Internal Audit reviews the internal control system following an audit plan based on an assessment of the potential risks for the various systems and procedures. The work on the Audit Plan for 2023-24 has been used to provide an independent view on the adequacy of the governance framework.

In the annual report to the Audit and Accounts Committee, the Chief Internal Auditor has independently assessed the Council's internal control environment and given a "**limited assurance**" opinion that the Council's governance arrangements were operating adequately and there were no instances where any breakdown of control resulted in a material discrepancy.

Where deficiencies in internal control were identified during reviews, assurance was provided that these had been or would be resolved in an appropriate manner. Such cases will continue to be followed-up as part of the routine operation of the Internal Audit function.

The Chief Internal Auditor has highlighted a number of recurring issues in the Annual Audit Report, relating to non-compliance with and or awareness of key components of the Council's governance arrangements. These issues align with the findings of the self-assessment of the Governance Framework and the External Auditors VFM report.

4.8 **Risk Management -** during 2023-24 the Audit and Accounts Committee received regular progress reports regarding the management of strategic risks. The strategic risks facing the Council were reviewed as at 1 April 2024 and there are currently two red risks for inclusion as significant governance issues:

- Finance Risk - the funding available to the Council from central Government resulting from potential changes to Business Rates, New Homes Bonus etc. will not be known until the autumn at the earliest. This together with increases in inflation and interest rates makes accurate budget planning difficult, resulting in a risk of over commitment of financial resources or inappropriate use of reserves.

- Meeting the Homelessness Statutory Duty - demand on the Homelessness Service is at the highest level recorded with an increase in presentations of over 100% between 2021/22 and 2023/24. Most are approaching the service having been served notice from their private rented accommodation, or, having been asked to leave their home by friends or family. The ability to place households in settled accommodation is increasingly challenging with delivery of affordable housing lower than previous years and the private rented sector being largely unaffordable for those on benefits. There is an increasing number of people approaching the service with many complex needs. The Council is incurring significant temporary accommodation costs and may fail to deliver its statutory duty, in particular relating to families in B&B for less than 6 weeks.

4.9 **Assurance from the Statutory Officers** - assurances have been sought, through discussions with the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), the Monitoring Officer (Head of Law and Administration) and the s151 Officer (Deputy Chief Executive - Resources) with regard to their responsibilities for governance.

- The Head of Paid Service has overall responsibility for the organisation, appointment and management of staff.

- The Chief Financial Officer (s151 Officer) has overall responsibility for the financial management of the Council. Throughout the year the s151 Officer ensures that the financial position of the Council is monitored, that consideration is given to financial implications when taking decisions and with the support of internal audit that financial processes are complied with.

- The Monitoring Officer has overall responsibility for:

  1. reporting on matters they believe are, or are likely to be, illegal or amount to maladministration;

  2. matters relating to the conduct of Members and officers; and

  3. the operation of the Council's constitution.

The Statutory Officers have identified the following as significant governance issues:

- the ongoing capacity issues in the Finance Team and with the IT system;

- project management arrangements for Town Centre transformation work; and

- the backlog of planning applications, the overspend which was incurred during 2023-24 in reducing the backlog and the lack of transformation work to improve this situation in future years.

4.10 **External Audit / Other Review Agencies -** the External Auditors issued their VFM report for 2021/22 and 2022/23 in January 2024. The report raised five significant concerns about the Council's value for money arrangements resulting in one statutory recommendation and four key recommendations being made.

As a result of the External Auditor's report, a comprehensive improvement plan was produced and approved by the Council in February 2024. Progress in delivery of the improvement plan is being monitored by the Audit & Accounts Committee and the Cabinet.

4.11 **Leadership Team** - in addition to the Statutory Officers assurances, the members of Leadership Team have been consulted on the draft annual governance statement and the significant governance issues that should be included within it.

The Leadership Team has identified the following as significant governance issues:

- delivery of the improvement plan in response to the External Auditors VFM report (see 4.10);
- capacity to deliver the above and other operational and corporate priorities; and
- the delivery of shared services transformation.

5 **Opinion on the Governance Framework**

5.1 The review of the effectiveness of the governance framework shows that there are a number of significant concerns and as such only **limited assurance** can be given that the framework is operating adequately in practice.

5.2 The weaknesses in the governance framework are outlined in section 6.

5.3 The Audit and Accounts Committee will have responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the actions needed to improve the Council's governance framework.

6 **Significant Governance Issues**

6.1 The Council's key governance issues are outlined below. As the majority of these issues have already been identified and included in the Improvement Plan arising from the VFM review, a separate action plan has not been produced. Any additional issues identified below have been added to the existing improvement plan or are being monitored through the Strategic Risk Register. The updated Improvement Plan is attached at Appendix 2.

Ref	Issue	Improvement Plan X-Ref
1.	**Governance Framework** Review and updating of key elements of the Governance Framework, to include:	
	• Review of the Code of Governance.	9.1
	• Values and Operating Principles;	6.1
	• Scheme of Delegations;	9.5 (new)
	• Procurement Regulations;	8.1
	• Financial Regulations;	1.15
	• IT Strategy;	3.8
	• IT Security Policy & Cyber Security	3.1
	• Risk Management Policy and Strategy;	7.1
	• Workforce Development Framework;	6.4
	• Project Management Toolkit;	5.4
	• Performance Reporting Framework;	5.1
	• Contracts Register;	8.3
	• Confidential Reporting Framework and Fraud Policy	4.2
	• Employees Code of Conduct	6.1

Ref	Issue	Improvement Plan X-Ref
2.	**Financial Risk** The funding available to the Council from central Government resulting from potential changes to Business Rates, New Homes Bonus etc. will not be known until the autumn at the earliest. This together with fluctations in inflation and interest rates makes accurate budget planning difficult, resulting in a risk of over commitment of financial resources or inappropriate use of reserves.	Being actioned and monitored via the Strategic Risk Register
3.	**Meeting Homelessness Statutory Duty** Demand on the Homelessness Service is at the highest level recorded with an increase in presentations of over 100% between 2021/22 and 2023/24. Most are approaching the service having been served notice from their private rented accommodation, or, having been asked to leave their home by friends or family. The ability to place households in settled accommodation is increasingly challenging with delivery of affordable housing lower than previous years and the private rented sector being largely unaffordable for those on benefits. There is an increasing number of people approaching the service with many complex needs. The Council is incurring significant temporary accommodation costs and may fail to deliver its statutory duty, in particular relating to families in B&B for less than 6 weeks.	Being actioned and monitored via the Strategic Risk Register
4.	**Finance Team and System** The Finance Team are continuing to experience capacity issues, partly due to vacancies and partly due to the additional work created by successful funding bids which generate projects, primarily the town centre transformation schemes. This has impacted on the closure of the accounts. Problems also continue with the finance system, which needs further development work and training of users.	1.1 and 1.2 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5
5.	**Project Management of Town Centre Transformation Work** The Council has ambitious plans and projects to deliver transformation work in Stafford Town Centre and the surrounding area. However, project planning is not yet sufficiently robust or co-ordinated to ensure the successful delivery of the schemes or effective management of slippage. This is being hampered by a lack of capacity in various teams supporting the delivery of the projects.	9.6 (new)

Ref	Issue	Improvement Plan X-Ref
6.	**Development Management** - Backlog of Planning Applications and Budget Overspend There is a significant the backlog of planning applications. Whilst the backlog has reduced from 946 to 442, this has only been achieved through the use of additional staffing and consultants and has incurred a budget overspend. There has been a lack of transformation work to improve this situation in future years.	9.7 (new)
7.	**Officer Capacity** Resources continue to be stretched between the delivery of essential services, key projects and the introduction of new services/responsibilities upon the Council. Difficulties in recruitment are exacerbating the situation.	2.1
8.	**Shared Services Transformation** The Shared Leadership Team has now been in place for just over 12 months. The service manager restructure has been completed and comes into effect on 1 June 2024. This will allow work to commence on the development of the transformation programme, which will take 2-3 years to implement.	2.1

Signed:

Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee   Date

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Leader of the Council   Date

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Chief Executive   Date

on behalf of Stafford Borough Council

SBC Improvement Plan

Ref	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
1	**Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1)**		
1.1	Restructure of the Finance Team and creation of additional capacity	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 1 - 2024/25
1.2	Commence recruitment to new Finance team structure	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer and Deputy S151 Officer	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
1.3	Lesson learnt exercise to be undertaken of implementation of the finance system	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
1.4	Implementation of remaining module of the finance system, ongoing development and maximising use of system functionality	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 4 - 2024/25
1.5	Training of managers in budget management and use of the new finance system.	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
1.6	Follow-on zero-based budgeting session with managers to continue work started as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 3 - 2024/25
1.7	Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 to 2026/27 drafted and approved by Cabinet and Council. Modelling, assumptions and risk assessment included as part of the budget report. MTFS includes assessment of likely future government funding.	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Completed

Ref	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
1.8	Capital Strategy to be updated in accordance with the revised Prudential Code.	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Completed
1.9	Bring treasury strategy and its reporting to members up to date	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Completed
1.10	Regular performance monitoring to be re-established with budget managers and Leadership Team.	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 1 - 2024/25
1.11	Performance reporting for Cabinet and Scrutiny to be developed. This will be done alongside the review and development of performance and risk reporting.	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 4 - 2024/25
1.12	Reporting on the delivery of savings to be established and discussed at Strategic Leadership Team meetings. Where appropriate, project plans will be developed to support the delivery of significant/complex savings.	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 1 - 2024/25
1.13	Produce draft financial statements in line with statutory requirements and working with external auditors to deliver audits effectively. (Decision to be made on outstanding audits as there is a consultation taking place as to how to clear the backlog of audits nationally at present)	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	This is to be discussed with Azets as to approach
1.14	Draft accounts published up to 2023/24	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 4 - 2023/24
1.15	Review of Financial Regulations	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Quarter 2 - 2024/25

Ref	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
1.16	Training for managers on Financial Regulations	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
2	**Corporate Service Transformation and Efficiency Programme (Key Recommendation 1)**		
2.1	Process to be established for developing a service transformation and efficiency programme. Initial steps for both: • a discussion with the Cabinet to review priorities and key projects; • engagement with Heads of Service and Service Managers to review current service levels for statutory and discretionary services (to include high level benchmarking) - this will be a pre-cursor to bringing the services together and establish the baseline for service transformation (this will build on the initial work done on SLAs). • Range of options for efficiency savings and transformation Transformation: • Transformation options to be assessed and added to transformation programme for prioritisation. Will need to consider any investment required to deliver savings/service improvements; resourcing to deliver the changes, etc	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 3 - 2024/25

Ref	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
	• Project Manager and Project support officer to be recruited to support delivery of transformation programme, funding allocated in budget 2024/25 to fund posts; • Training of managers and key officers in transformation techniques		
2.2	Consultation to take place with stakeholders as part of development of new corporate plan and priorities.	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and Head of Transformation and Assurance	To be done for new Corporate Plan (s) and any savings exercises going forwards
2.3	Consultation and engagement to be embedded into the planning for the delivery of key projects where appropriate to ensure schemes meet community needs eg regeneration projects, redevelopment of play areas	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 3 - 2024/25
2.4	Align the MTFS to the corporate priorities in the Council's Business Plan including the costed climate change actions	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and Head of Transformation and Assurance	Completed as part of budget setting 2024/25 to be revisited Quarter 2 2024/25
3	**IT (Key Recommendation 2)**		
3.1	Update IT security policy and adopt a cyber security policy	Head of Transformation and Assurance and Chief Technology Officer	Quarter 1 - 2024/25

Ref	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
3.2	Develop assurance reporting for IT eg report on outcome of annual health check / penetration testing to Leadership Team and Audit Committee	Head of Transformation and Assurance and Chief Technology Officer	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
3.3	Implement outstanding recommendation from Cyber and Network Security Audit - staff to complete cyber training	Chief Technology Officer and Information Manager	Quarter 4 - 2023/24
3.4	Provide refresher training to ensure compliance with process for 3rd party data transfers and completion of privacy impact assessments	Chief Technology Officer and Information Manager	Quarter 1 - 2024/25
3.5	Review of what we include in procurements re ICT controls and information governance	Head of Transformation and Assurance, Chief Technology Officer, Head of Law and Governance and Information Manager	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
3.6	Finalise the change management strategy	Chief Technology Officer	Quarter 4 - 2023/24 (currently in draft to be presented to Leadership team in February)
3.7	Finalise Information Governance Framework	Head of Law and Governance	Quarter 4 - 2023/24 (Currently in draft)
3.8	Complete the IT strategy	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)	Quarter 1 - 2024/25

Ref	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
4	**Fraud (Key Recommendation 3)**		
4.1	Review Anti - Fraud and Bribery Policy	Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager	Quarter 3 - 2024/25
4.2	Review of Confidential Reporting Policy	Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager	Quarter 3 - 2024/25
4.3	Assess compliance against Cipfa 2014 Code for Fraud and develop an action plan as necessary	Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager	Quarter 3 - 2024/25
4.4	Assess fraud risks and include in risk registers as appropriate	Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager and Leadership Team	Quarter 4 - 2024/25
4.5	Review the information we report on fraud work (including data matching) to the Audit Committee.	Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager	2025/26
5	**Performance Management (Key Recommendation 4)**		
5.1	Develop and adopt a performance management framework to establish golden thread from Corporate Plan to service plans through to employee reviews. Framework to include protocols for ensuring data quality	Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 4 - 2024/25
5.2	Review our performance report style - delivery plans and KPIs. To consider the development of performance outcome measures	Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 4 - 2024/25

Ref	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
5.3	Performance reporting for waste and leisure: • review of KPIs for monitoring and reporting on performance; • establish internal validation process of contract performance; and • review information reported to Cabinet / Scrutiny	Head of Transformation and Assurance, Head of Operations and Head of Wellbeing	Quarter 4 - 2024/25
5.4	Establish a Corporate Project Management Methodology. Provide templates, guidelines, and training for key officers (LT, Service Managers and key Principal Officers/Team Leaders).	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer and Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
5.5	Establish corporate project resources to support transformation work (funding allocated in 2024/25 budget)	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer and Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
5.6	Review of all projects, the current governance arrangements and establish project reporting to Leadership Team	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and Deputy Chief Executive (Place)	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
6	**HR related issues (Improvement Recommendations 1 and 3)**		
6.1	Establish our culture, values and type of organisation we want to be. This work will inform the following actions	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer and Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 1 2024/25

Ref	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
6.2	Complete review of hybrid working. This will inform the development of the workforce strategy and the review of the Code of Conduct as well as support the development of an asset strategy	Head of Transformation and Assurance and HR Manager	Quarter 1 2024/25
6.3	Develop a hybrid working policy and review other related policies and processes.	Head of Transformation and Assurance and HR Manager	Quarter 3 2024/25
6.4	Development of a workforce strategy that links to long term transformation / shared services	Head of Transformation and Assurance and HR Manager	2025/26
6.5	Review and update the Employee Code of Conduct	Head of Transformation and Assurance and Head of Law and Governance	Quarter 3 2024/25
7	**Risk Management (Improvement Recommendation 2)**		
7.1	Review of risk management policy and framework - includes review of format of the Strategic Risk Register (SRR)	Head of Transformation and Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager	Quarter 4 - 2023/24 (currently in draft to be presented to leadership team in February 2024)
7.2	Review of guidelines on risk implications for committee reports	Head of Transformation and Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager	Quarter 4 - 2023/24

Ref	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
7.3	Training for Leadership Team, managers, team leaders/principal officers on risk management	Head of Transformation and Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager	Quarter 1 - 2024/25
7.4	Develop risk registers for each Directorate and ICT	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources), Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
7.5	Establish escalation process between other risk registers and the SRR eg services, projects	Head of Transformation and Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
7.6	Review of risks in annual budget report to be consistent with corporate process	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer	Completed
8	**Procurement and Contract Management (Improvement Recommendation 5)**		
8.1	Review and update the Procurement Regulations	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources), Head of Transformation and Assurance and Head of Law and Governance	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
8.2	The key elements of the procurement strategy will be built into the procurement regulations rather than as a stand-alone document.	Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 2 - 2024/25

Ref	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
8.3	Update the contracts register and ensure it is compliant with transparency requirements	Head of Transformation and Assurance and Leadership Team	Quarter 4 - 2023/24 (this will be the first draft to be revisited Quarter 3 2024/25)
8.4	Work with managers and the County's Procurement Team to develop a procurements pipeline	Head of Transformation and Assurance and Leadership Team	Quarter 3 - 2024/25
8.5	Provide training for managers on procurement and contract management	Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
8.6	Process to be established for publication of key data on the Council's website to meet transparency requirements re spend data, contracts register	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 3 - 2024/25
9	**Other Related Actions**		
9.1	Review of Code of Governance	Head of Transformation and Assurance	Quarter 4 - 2024/25
9.2	Development of Assurance Model	Head of Transformation and Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager	2025/26
9.3	Review of Audit Reporting to Leadership Team and escalation protocols	Head of Transformation and Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager	Quarter 4 2023/24 (Coming to leadership team February 2024)

Ref	Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
9.4	Establish an inventory of key policies and a programme of periodic reviews	Leadership Team	Quarter 3 - 2024/25
9.5 New AGS 23/24	Review of Scheme of Delegations as part of shared services transformation.	Monitoring Officer and Leadership Team	Quarter 3 - 2024/25
9.6 New AGS 23/24	Review of project management arrangements and project planning for the delivery of the town centre schemes.	Head of Economic Development and Planning	Quarter 2 - 2024/25
9.7 New AGS 23/24	Preparation of a transformation plan for Development Management to further reduce the backlog of planning applications and to manage this within the approved budget.	Head of Economic Development and Planning	Quarter 2 - 2024/25