

# **London Borough of Havering Annual Governance Statement 2020/21**

# **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21**

This statement, from the Leader and Chief Executive, provides reasonable assurance to all stakeholders, that within the London Borough of Havering, processes and systems have been established which ensure that decisions are properly made and scrutinised, and that public money is being spent economically and effectively to ensure maximum benefit to everyone who is served by the Borough.

The Annual Governance Statement is co-ordinated within the Assurance Service and the production and progress of the statement is monitored by the officer Governance and Assurance Board.

## **Scope of responsibility**

The London Borough of Havering is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The London Borough of Havering 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.

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

The London Borough of Havering is committed to operating in a manner which is consistent with the seven principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition. This statement outlines how the London Borough of Havering has complied with these principles and also meets the requirements of regulations 6(1) (a) and (b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

## **The purpose of the governance framework**

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 the community. 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, cost effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of the 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 London Borough of Havering's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework, available on the Havering website and provided in the link below, has been in place at the London Borough of Havering for the year ended 31 March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

<https://www.havering.gov.uk/codeofgovernance>

## Review of governance effectiveness

Outlined below are the arrangements in place to review the effectiveness of the governance framework and the sources of information and assurance on which this statement is based.

## Constitution

The Monitoring Officer keeps the Constitution under continual review, having delegated powers to make amendments arising from organisational changes and legal requirements and to correct errors. Other amendments are recommended by the Governance Committee for decision by Full Council.

## Governance and Assurance Board

The London Borough of Havering has an established officer Governance and Assurance Board, that meets at least every six weeks, with standing membership including:

- Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 officer
- Deputy Director Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer)
- Head of Assurance
- Deputy 151 Officer
- Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development (oneSource)
- Director of Technical Services
- Assistant Director Transformation
- Director of Procurement
- Head of Programme Management Office
- Head of Joint Commissioning Unit
- Head of ICT Governance

The terms of reference for the Board (reviewed annually) provide the option to extend membership to meet demands and will regularly invite additional key officers to attend, to address or report on existing and/or emerging governance issues. This Board is charged with monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance arrangements throughout the year, overseeing the production of the Annual Governance Statement, monitoring progress against significant issues raised as part of this and reviewing arrangements for Risk Management, including the Corporate Risk Register.

The Board reviews the AGS significant issues as a standing item at each meeting and provides an update to Audit Committee on the progress of these issues at least once during the year. Emerging governance issues are also considered during the regular review of governance arrangements that takes place at each meeting.

## Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) consists of the Chief Executive, six Directors with responsibility for Regeneration, Neighbourhoods, Housing, Children's Services, Adult Services & Health, Public Health and the Chief Operating Officer which incorporates the role of Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer).

The Executive Director of oneSource is responsible for the delivery of the shared services between the Council and London Borough of Newham. During the pandemic starting March 2020 and presently ongoing, the Executive Director of oneSource function has been represented by two of the portfolio Directors from the Executive Director's management team. They have focused on representing oneSource within Havering and providing support for the Council during the response to the pandemic. The shared services between Havering and London Borough of Newham are continuing. London Borough of Bexley chose to withdraw from the shared service relationship during 2020.

The Chief Executive initiated a Gold/Silver/Bronze governance approach to dealing with the pandemic from March 2020 and this is ongoing. A number of Bronze groups were established to manage the Council's response. To the present date, the Director of Public Health holds the Silver command position. The Directors have all been essential to the Gold/Silver/Bronze governance by chairing the majority of the Bronze groups.

## Governance Committee

The Council's Governance Committee, attended by the Leader of the Council and other Group Leaders, is charged with overseeing the organisation's governance arrangements including the review of the Constitution and the Code of Conduct for Members.

## Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is responsible for monitoring the adequacy and effectiveness of internal audit, the risk management environment, fraud and corruption arrangements and the provision of the external audit service. They receive regular reports in line with this remit and agree the annual audit plan, draft Annual Governance Statement and revisions to related policies. This monitoring is integral in the process to compile a robust Annual Governance Statement, which is approved by the Audit Committee. Significant governance issues are escalated to the Governance Committee by the Chair of the Audit Committee as required. Approval of the annual Statement of Accounts also falls under the remit of the Audit Committee.

## Adjudication and Review Committee

The Adjudication and Review Committee is made up of ten Councillors. The committee provides Members for panels to consider complaints against councillors and also to make up 'Member review' panels (which is the default panel for considering complaints made by members of the public at Stage Three of the Corporate Complaints procedure through a paper exercise). Should a Member Review Panel consider that a complaint warranted a formal hearing it would adjourn and reconvene to hear the matter with the parties present. The Adjudication and Review Committee is also responsible for overseeing and confirming the appointment of 'Independent Persons' and the Independent School Appeal panels which are convened to review permanent pupil exclusions.

## Overview and Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny function reviews and challenges decisions made by the Executive and other bodies, e.g. National Health Service organisations and the Police to assist in the development of policy.

An overarching Board undertakes all call-in functions and acts as a vehicle by which the effectiveness of scrutiny is monitored and where work undertaken by themed sub-committees is co-ordinated to avoid duplication and to ensure that areas of priority are being pursued.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board and its sub-committees have the opportunity to consider performance information within their area of responsibility using monthly Members packs and other relevant performance data.

Each year Overview and Scrutiny is tasked with identifying areas of the Council's work that it wishes to consider in detail, for which purpose task groups comprised of members of the Board and its sub-committees are set up to research the issue with the assistance of officers and sometimes external bodies and report their findings and recommendations.

In pursuit of transparent governance, the Overview & Scrutiny Board, at its meeting in October 2020, agreed to establish a Topic Group to review the impact of the COVID pandemic and the Council's emergency planning response to it.

The focus for this Topic Group concerned the Council's emergency planning arrangements and the operation of its Command Structure. It therefore concentrated on the following key areas:

1. Review the Council's influenza-pandemic plan and develop an understanding of the Council's Command structure. Challenge and review planning assumptions contained within the plan (was the response proportionate to the risk);
2. Understand and explore the relationship between the Command structure and the Borough Resilience Forum;
  - a. With reference to the Community Resilience Development Framework, was there sufficient support for individuals identified at being of greatest risk? How are we doing it and what worked well/not so well (lessons learnt)
  - b. Promotion of the pandemic plans/Command responses into Member organisations from the business and voluntary sector. How was it communicated and were there any areas for improvement?
  - c. Was the Resilience Plan tested pre-Covid? If so, what were the improvements gleaned from it?
3. Communication roles between Command, the Resilience Forum and elected Members. How the council communicated government guidance on responding to the pandemic and impacts on service provision.

## Local Pension Board

The role of the Local Pension Board is to assist Havering as the Administering Authority to ensure compliance with the LGPS regulations and any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the LGPS.

This established Board holds quarterly meetings and an annual general meeting. Matters that are discussed at the meeting are shared with the Pensions Committee through the sharing of minutes and submission of an annual report. Pensions Committee meeting held on 21 January 2021 noted the Local Pension Board Annual report which detailed activities undertaken during 2019/20 and included an action plan for the forthcoming year.

All meetings of the Local Pension Board held during the COVID-19 period of working restrictions took place in a “virtual” format.

The Pension Fund’s Governance Compliance statement also incorporates the Local Pension Board which reports the extent of compliance against a set of principles. This document is reviewed annually and if necessary any changes are submitted to the Pensions Committee for approval. No changes were required for the reporting period to November 2020.

## Internal Audit (Assurance Services)

Internal Audit is an independent assurance function that measures, evaluates and reports upon the effectiveness of the controls in place to manage risk. In doing so Internal Audit supports the Chief Finance Officer in their statutory role as Section 151 Officer. Annually the Head of Internal Audit Opinion and annual report provides assurance to officers and Members regarding the system of internal control; this assurance has also been considered in the production of this statement.

Due to the Covid-19 emergency response, the priorities and risk profile of the Council changed significantly during 2020/21. Internal Audit adapted their work to provide assurance on the emergency response projects and changing risk environment. This was reflected in the plan presented to Audit Committee in July 2020.

From the work undertaken during the 2020/21 year, reasonable assurance can be provided that there is generally a sound system of internal control across the Council. Further information on this opinion can be found in the Head of Assurance Annual report, presented to Audit Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

## Risk Management

The strategic risks to the achievement of the Authority’s objectives are captured within a corporate risk register which is overseen by the Governance and Assurance Board and progress reported to the Audit Committee. Work has continued during 2020/21 to review Directorate risk registers and the Governance and Assurance Board has overseen the process to ensure that the corporate risk register reflects the risks facing the Council.

The risk management strategy and supporting policies are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant to the Council’s systems and procedures, and will be approved by the Audit Committee biannually.

The number of risks the Council has faced during 2020/21 increased, and in some cases escalated as a result of Covid-19. These risks have been managed during the year, and continue to be addressed through the Bronze, Silver and Gold Command Structures put in place through our business continuity and emergency planning procedures.

## External Inspectors

The Council is subject to review and appraisal by a number of external bodies; results of such reviews are considered within the performance management framework. The work of the Council's External Auditor, currently Ernst and Young (EY) is reported to the Audit Committee. The Committee received a copy of the Audit Letter issued by Ernst & Young following completion of the 2019/20 audit. They issued unqualified opinions on the Council's and Pension Fund's financial statements along with the unqualified assessment of the Council's value for money. The Audit Results Report was issued on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and the certificate of completion had been issued on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021.

## Information Commissioner's Office

The Council must comply with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and Data Protection Act 2018. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has taken no enforcement action for non-compliance. No fines were imposed because of weak controls. We continue to improve and learn lessons from mistakes to protect the data that we use.

## Local Ombudsman

The Council comes within the jurisdiction of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

LGSCO closed their service to new complainants at the beginning of the initial Covid-19 lockdown, to enable councils the opportunity to deal with more urgent matters arising from the pandemic. With resources being re-directed to essential services, the decision was taken by the authority to suspend the corporate complaint procedure; the service resumed again in June 2020.

In 2020/21, the Ombudsman found 12 cases of maladministration against the Council. Three cases were "maladministration & injustice without penalty" and nine cases were "maladministration & injustice with penalty".

## LGA Corporate Challenge Peer Review

The Council had its LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Review in February 2019. The review made eleven key Improvement recommendations, these together with an associated high level action plan, owned by the Senior Leadership Team were agreed by Cabinet in July 2019 and the September Overview and Scrutiny Board. These were reported six-monthly through the Member Theme Board route (February 2020), and Overview and Scrutiny September March 2020. At that point the position was substantial progress had been made, with only one recommendation not due.

Since the Pandemic and subsequent lockdown the Council like others, has been in the agreed Pandemic Response Emergency Planning structure and not performing the usual business as usual operations. This has impacted on the finalisation and further reporting against the Action Plan.

## Impact of COVID-19

The pandemic impacted on governance across the Council from March 2020 and throughout 2020/21. Broadly, this included:

- Impact on business as usual delivery of services;
- Opportunities from new ways of working especially remotely
- New areas of activity implemented as part of the national response (including the implementation of new policy/procedure);
- Provision of emergency assistance;
- Funding and logistical consequences of delivering the local government response;
- Changes to Council meetings and decision making arrangements;
- New collaborative arrangements;
- Funding and cash flow challenges;
- Payment of business grants to local business on behalf of government
- Assessment of the longer term disruption and consequences arising from the pandemic eg. existing projects and programmes put on hold;
- New priorities and objectives introduced; and
- New risks identified/existing risks escalated.

As a result the decision was made in April 2020 to include an additional significant governance issue to provide an action plan to review lessons learned from our response.

The Council instigated its Covid-19 emergency arrangements in March 2020 and has continued to operate them throughout 2020/21 and continuing into 2021/22. The emergency arrangements included a series of Bronze groups that took responsibility for key aspects of the emergency response, e.g. support to residents who were deemed Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV), excess deaths management, schools management, communications and deployment of resources. Over time new Bronze activity was added, e.g. test and trace, local testing. These Bronze groups reported into the Silver group and the Gold group.

A detailed risk management mechanism was built into the Bronze group reporting and Internal Audit assisted with setting this up so that all Bronze group risk registers fed into a corporate Covid-19 risk register and the Corporate Risk Register. The Covid-19 risks and the Corporate Risk Register were reported through to the Audit Committee.

In the first few weeks of 2020/21, Internal Audit supported the Covid -19 response by sitting alongside the introduction of the new services being implemented to support residents who were deemed to be Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. Advice was provided in real time to ensure the systems being implemented were effective and that risk was being properly controlled.

The Council's Governance and Assurance Board monitored the development of the Covid-19 risk management system and risk registers throughout the year.

New Covid-19 related services have continued to be added within the Council at the government's request. These are monitored initially through Bronze groups and later mainstreamed into business as usual.

A range of different grant streams have emerged and have needed to be managed, e.g. Contain Outbreak Management Fund, a large number of different business grants schemes (both mandatory and discretionary), funding for support to the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and funding for Covid Marshals. The Corporate Finance Team have had to set up new monitoring regimes to ensure that the funding has been applied to qualifying expenditure and that funding allocations have not been exceeded.

A Recovery Bronze group has met at various points across the year and has overseen:

- Council service re-opening plans for the summer of 2020 and the spring of 2021 following the easing of lockdowns.
- Identification of challenges for the Council emerging post-Covid 19 such as local economic recovery, health inequalities and the management of the Council's financial sustainability given the expenditure pressures posed by the pandemic.

The Recovery Bronze group will continue to meet regularly as the country emerges from the pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic remains one of the Council's most significant risks into 2021/22 and will continue to be monitored by the Governance and Assurance Board for at least the next twelve months.

## **Progress of significant governance issues raised in the 2020/21 AGS**

The issues identified in the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement have been monitored by management and the Governance and Assurance Board throughout the year with review periodically to challenge actions and progress by both the Senior Leadership Team and the Audit Committee.

### **1. EU Exit; Preparations and Impact**

Progress during 2020/21:

- Established a Corporate EU Exit Group, reporting weekly to SLT
- Active participation in Borough, London and National related groups, e.g. London Resilience
- Completion of the London Resilience Risk Register for Havering
- Review of Borough Emergency Plan and arrangements against National standards
- Training of Local Authority GOLD Officers
- Updated BCPs
- Testing of Borough Emergency Plan
- Attendance at national events
- Implemented weekly PI monitoring
- Weekly returns to London Councils made
- Weekly telephone conference with London Resilience/London Council Groups
- Sign-posting of National Guidance (Community and Staff)
- Monitor and consider the implications of the Post Brexit EU Trade Deal for Havering.
- Formally review the Corporate Risk Register in light of the Post Brexit EU Trade Deal.
- Horizon Scan the potential issues and review preparations being taken by other Boroughs using service contacts.
- Continue to review key Risk Mitigations resulting from the Post Brexit EU Trade Deal.
- Support for LAC EU settlement status.
- Continue to review actions at the EU exit group and require Departments to review their readiness for service consequences arising from the Post Brexit EU Trade Deal.
- There is an extension of six months for the UK and EU to reach an agreement concerning the processing of personal data.

The Governance & Assurance Board consider that sufficient action has taken place during 2020/21 to close this significant issue.

2. **Embedding the Governance Culture and Framework within the organisation:** Further work needs to be undertaken to develop a comprehensive, auditable and objective assurance process to give reassurance that the Governance framework is understood and embedded within the organisation. Particular emphasis should be given to ensuring that any change in the governance framework is known and addressed and that new personnel are equipped with the correct knowledge and understanding.

Progress during 2020/21:

- Risk management work incorporated into audit plan and allocation for emerging risk as required.
- Internal Audit review of Governance and Decision Making during 2019/20 provided input into areas of weakness and concern under review by relevant service areas.
- Highlighting of key governance changes.
- The induction process was reviewed in 2019. Managers are responsible for the local induction of their staff; all new starters should attend a half-day Corporate Welcome event and are required to complete a range of e-learning courses.
- Development of co-ordinated and monitored training programme. The introduction of the Transformation Programme and development of the People and Organisational Transformation Strategy has meant that we are looking at this from a broader perspective and activity is being aligned to support this.
- New personnel are equipped with the correct knowledge and understanding by:
  - Mandatory Induction for Managers (virtual).
  - Mandatory Corporate Welcome event (virtual).
- The induction checklist has been revised, it is now clearer and more concise. Individual induction remains the responsibility of the line manager.
- A mandatory training matrix is in place; it describes what courses should be completed according to roles, activities and responsibilities. Agency/contingent workers are included for the first time. The matrix clarifies when courses should be repeated.
- Mandatory e-learning courses are embedded in Fusion providing the ability to monitor and prompt colleagues when renewals and repeats are due.
- On boarding in Fusion is now in place. This will direct people to key policies and procedures, mandatory e-learning and the induction checklist.
- Governance and decision making as a rolling programme of work in the Audit Plan.

Whilst progress has been made in each of the other areas identified during 2020/21, all were considered to have remained significant enough to be carried forward into the action plan for 2021/22.

## Significant governance issues 2020/21 (to be addressed in 2021/22)

<p><b>1. Delivery of a balanced budget:</b> The Council was able to set a balance budget for the 2019/20 financial year. As set out in the report to Council at the start of the year there continues to be pressure over the medium term to the Council due to increased service demand and demographic pressures while available resources are reducing. As outlined in the budget setting report for 20/21 approved in February 2020, uncertainty around many aspects of the future funding model for Local Government remains a challenge in the medium term. However over and above all this sits the COVID19 pandemic and the emergency response which was initiated nationally in March 2020 and continued through the entire financial year. This has brought an unprecedented challenge to local government generally and has led to a reconsideration of the MTFs that was agreed and the corporate approach to recovery.</p>
<p><b>Actions taken during 2020/21</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly reports provided to the Senior Leadership Team outlining anticipated outturn for the financial year, assisting in the identification of medium term financial pressures and opportunities.</li> <li>• Regular update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and overarching financial position provided to Cabinet throughout the year.</li> <li>• Continued delivery of the transformation and modernisation programme with theme board focus on core business and transformation delivery. Transition to Oracle Fusion has been an ongoing project during 2020/21. Go live with the Fusion system was delayed by a short while because of COVID issues but went live in September 2020.</li> <li>• Detailed monitoring of the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on the financial standing of the organisation and the MTFs included as part of the corporate monthly monitoring process, and compliance with the MHCLG reporting requirements on expenditure, loss of income and impact on savings proposals was achieved.</li> <li>• Close monitoring of the revenue and capital plans and scrutiny of the balances and reserves of the council is included in the monitoring reporting, including the potential impact on the collection fund and forecast for year-end position.</li> <li>• Regular reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Board on the COVID19 response and the sustainability of the MTFs has taken place including the position in reserves, taking in to account the impact on the base assumptions.</li> <li>• Delivery of the corporate recovery programme which contains the main strands of the Council's approach to successful recovery to the new normal. Recovery Officer Group meets to manage and monitor the recovery planning.</li> <li>• A balanced position for the 21/22 budget and a revised MTFs was presented to cabinet in February 2021 and Council in March 2021.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Planned actions for 2021/22</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledgement of ongoing issues with embedding Fusion – work will continue on developing confidence of service users in deployment of product. The Fusion Improvement Board will monitor the ongoing progress.</li> <li>• Continue to monitor the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the financial standing of the organisation and the MTFs which is reviewed as part of the corporate monthly monitoring process.</li> <li>• Continued focus on the delivery of the corporate recovery programme and close monitoring of the revenue and capital plans.</li> <li>• Senior Leadership continue to monitor the MTFs and the recovery plan to ensure the sustainability of the Council's finances.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lead Officer: Jane West, Chief Operating Officer</b></p>

<b>2. COVID-19: Impact and recovery</b>
<b>Actions taken during 2020/21</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented the Havering Multi-agency Pandemic Plan</li> <li>• Managed the response in accordance with the Major Emergency Plan and Strategic Coordination Group direction commonly referred to as the Gold, Silver, Bronze framework.</li> <li>• Minimised the impact on, and provide support to, the community and businesses</li> <li>• Maintained and restored essential services, working to the Corporate Business Continuity Plan.</li> <li>• Provided information to the community and businesses to aid self-help, working to Central Government guidance</li> <li>• Established an Outbreak Control Service and Covid Marshals to ensure Covid restrictions were widely adhered to across the borough</li> <li>• Distributed grants to businesses on behalf of central government</li> <li>• Provided financial assistance, mainly to families, through the local Havering Helps scheme and central government grant e.g. Winter Pressures grant</li> <li>• Protected the health, safety and welfare of staff, including reducing risk to staff by maximising working from home.</li> <li>• Relieved suffering and provided humanitarian assistance through a range of initiatives including setting up the COVID line, food, medicine and PPE distribution and mobilising Voluntary and Community Sector support.</li> </ul>
<b>Planned actions for 2021/22</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating recovery and the return to the new normality through a Council and Service Recovery Plans</li> <li>• Continue to monitor the pandemic, legislation changes and the impacts on the borough through the Gold, Silver, Bronze framework</li> <li>• Overseeing Outbreak Management Plans including monitoring Track and Trace.</li> <li>• To take an evidence-based and proactive approach in identifying any action(s) necessary to highlight or reduce specific risks of the impact of coronavirus faced by any group, community or individual likely to be disproportionately affected.</li> <li>• To continue to support NHS services (e.g. vaccination), Care Homes and Home Care Resilience.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Officer: Jane West, Chief Operating Officer</b>

<b>3. Cyber Security:</b> Chief Information Officer (CIO) has raised concerns about the increased likelihood of Cyber security breaches given the almost exclusive focus of public sector organisations on COVID-19 response.
<b>Actions taken during 2020/21</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised awareness concerning cyber security.</li> <li>• All staff trained in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).</li> <li>• Develop tools to help identify vulnerabilities.</li> <li>• Obtained funding for the development of cyber security online training.</li> </ul>
<b>Planned actions for 2021/22</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and consider cyber security implications.</li> <li>• Develop our response to cyber security attacks.</li> <li>• Raise awareness and train staff in cyber security.</li> <li>• Refresher training for all staff in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).</li> <li>• Prepare monthly reports for the Senior Leadership Team.</li> <li>• Test and rehearse our response to cyber security attacks.</li> <li>• Review and update our Disaster Recovery plan.</li> <li>• Review and update our governance and policies.</li> <li>• Planned desktop exercise involving SLT to test our response to a cyber-security attack that impacts the network and access to systems and data.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Officer: Ian Gibbs, Head of IT Governance and Security</b>

<b>4. Joint Venture Governance:</b> Circumstances that have arisen at other councils have highlighted the importance of monitoring the sustainability of significant regeneration programmes.
<b>Actions taken during 2020/21</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint venture boards are regularly held.</li> <li>• Regeneration group was established to manage and monitor the progress of the joint venture schemes.</li> <li>• Programme dashboards are produced including progress of key deliverables and future milestones, key risks and issues.</li> <li>• Business plans refreshed and reported to cabinet and implications included in MTFS.</li> </ul>
<b>Planned actions for 2021/22</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The regeneration schemes and the progress of the joint ventures will be part of the capital programme reporting to theme board.</li> <li>• The pipeline schemes for the JVs and Mercury Land Holdings are reviewed at the officer board.</li> <li>• A review of the financial viability of the joint ventures given the economic challenges following COVID to monitor programme sensitivities.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Officer: Jane West, Chief Operating Officer</b>

<b>5. Contract Register</b>
<b>Actions taken during 2020/21</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Director of Procurement has initiated a programme of procurement improvement.</li> <li>• We now have a dedicated resource focussing on the Contact Register</li> <li>• We have asked all Directors to provide their contract information</li> <li>• Contract Register update will form Gateway 3 of a new Gateway process</li> <li>• We have developed a Power BI dashboard available to all Directors to enable self-service</li> <li>• All Procurement Managers are asked to work with their counterparts in the services to review and correct the register data</li> <li>• We are reviewing/ renewing the contract standing orders</li> <li>• We are drafting a new procurement intranet site, all guidance and templates are being reviewed /refreshed</li> <li>• All waiver requests (relating to contract extension) are refused if no contract is registered to improve compliance</li> </ul>
<b>Planned actions for 2021/22</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval for new CPR's</li> <li>• Launch new guidance, documents and templates</li> <li>• Initiate training, videos, drop in sessions etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Officer: Rose Younger</b>

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

#### Conclusion

To the best of our knowledge, the governance arrangements, as defined above, have been effectively operating during the year. We did not find any matters that needed addressing during our review other than those that were previously identified and on which action has been taken to address.

#### Signed:



Leader of the Council  
Date 30/07/2021



Chief Executive  
Date 30/07/2021