**APPENDIX 1**

# Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2025/2026

## 1. Executive Summary

This Annual Governance Statement provides a summary of the Council's assessment of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements during 2025/26 and sets out the actions being taken to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

### Overall conclusion

The Council concludes that its governance arrangements were **operating effectively during 2025/26** and that they are **fit for purpose** in supporting the delivery of the Council's objectives and its responsibilities for securing continuous improvement and best value in the use of its resources and delivery of services.

This conclusion is based on a comprehensive, evidence-based review drawing on internal and external assurance, including the annual opinion of the Head of Internal Audit, reports to members, statutory officer assurances and external audit findings. These sources provide **reasonable assurance** that governance arrangements are operating as intended.

The review has confirmed that the governance arrangements set out in the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance, including those underpinning the seven principles of good governance, were **in place and operating effectively in practice**.

### Key strengths

During 2025/26, the Council has continued to strengthen its governance arrangements. Key areas of effective governance include:

- Strengthened performance and financial governance, with the introduction of a refreshed Performance and Financial Management Policy, improving alignment between resources, priorities and delivery
- Clearer strategic planning and outcomes framework, through a refreshed Council Plan and the commencement of the development of directorate plans
- A systematic approach to continuous improvement, embedding improvement activity within core business processes rather than time-limited programmes
- Effective audit, scrutiny and assurance arrangements, including an enhanced Audit Committee work programme and the introduction of a formal review of its effectiveness
- A strong governance framework, underpinned by an up-to-date Local Code of Corporate Governance and an actively managed Constitution.

These developments demonstrate continued progress in strengthening governance and embedding a culture of accountability, transparency and continuous improvement.

### Areas for continued focus

While governance arrangements are operating effectively, the Council recognises the importance of ongoing development to ensure they remain robust and resilient in a changing environment.

The improvement actions identified in this Statement reflect the Council's commitment to continuous improvement, rather than significant weaknesses in governance arrangements. Key areas of focus for 2026/27 include:

- further embedding integrated performance, financial and risk management
- strengthening partnership and place-based governance arrangements
- enhancing member development and organisational capacity
- continuing to develop information governance, digital and data management arrangements, including the governance of emerging technologies.

### Governance outlook

The Council operates in a challenging and evolving environment, including ongoing financial pressures, increasing demand for services and wider changes in the local government landscape.

The Council has identified a number of key governance risks and priorities for the coming year, including:

- maintaining financial sustainability and strengthening medium-term financial resilience;
- embedding new performance and planning frameworks to support delivery of outcomes
- ensuring effective governance of partnerships and collaborative arrangements
- managing risks associated with data, digital transformation and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence.

The Council is confident that its governance arrangements provide a sound basis for addressing these challenges and will continue to evolve them to ensure they remain effective.

## 2. Scope of Responsibility and Governance Framework

<u>Scope of Responsibility</u>

Middlesbrough Council 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. In discharging this responsibility, the Council must put in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, the effective exercise of its functions and the management of risk.

Under the Local Government Act 1999, the Council has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Council is also required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to conduct, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and to prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) alongside its Statement of Accounts.

The purpose of this AGS is to provide an honest and transparent assessment of whether the Council's governance arrangements were fit for purpose during the year, based on a review of their effectiveness in practice, and to identify any actions required to strengthen governance going forward. The AGS also looks ahead, reflecting on whether the Council's governance arrangements are sufficiently resilient to address current and emerging challenges.

## Governance Framework

The Council's governance framework is underpinned by its Local Code of Corporate Governance (LCCG), which was reviewed, updated and adopted by Full Council in April 2026. The LCCG sets out how the Council applies the seven principles of good governance established in *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government* (CIPFA/SOLACE, 2016), together with the requirements of the 2025 addendum to that guidance.

The LCCG describes the culture, values, structures, processes and assurance mechanisms through which governance is delivered across the Council, including arrangements relating to ethical conduct, decision-making, risk management, performance management, financial management, audit, scrutiny and accountability. The detail of these arrangements is set out in the Code and supporting policies and procedures and is therefore not repeated in this Statement.

This AGS uses the Local Code of Corporate Governance as its primary benchmark. It assesses whether the arrangements described in the Code were operating effectively during the year and whether they supported the achievement of the Council's objectives and its responsibilities for best value.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for governance rests with those charged with governance, namely Full Council. Full Council sets the Council's Constitution and approves the policy framework, including the Council Plan and the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The Executive is responsible for discharging the Council's executive functions in accordance with the Constitution and for implementing policies and plans approved by Council.

The Audit Committee provides independent assurance to those charged with governance on the adequacy of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. It oversees the work of both internal and external audit and plays a key role in scrutinising financial and governance reporting, supporting transparency and public accountability.

Oversight and challenge of Executive decision-making is provided through the Overview and Scrutiny function, which supports effective accountability and constructive challenge.

The Council's statutory officers are the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), the Section 151 Officer (Corporate Director of Finance) and the Monitoring Officer (Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services). They have specific responsibilities for maintaining effective governance arrangements. Together with the wider Leadership Management Team, they are responsible for embedding the governance framework within day-to-day operations and ensuring that staff comply with the Council's policies, procedures and values.

Internal Audit provides independent and objective assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control arrangements.

External Audit provides independent assurance on the Council's financial statements and on whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money, in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice.

Relationship Between the AGS and the LCCG

The Local Code of Corporate Governance (LCCG) is the Council's standing statement of how good governance is designed and delivered. The Annual Governance Statement is the Council's annual assurance report on whether those arrangements are working effectively in practice.

The AGS does not seek to repeat descriptions of governance processes. Instead, it:

- assesses effectiveness against the seven governance principles;
- draws on a range of internal and external sources of assurance;
- identifies significant governance issues and areas for improvement; and
- sets out actions to strengthen governance where required.

Taken together, the LCCG and the AGS provide a coherent and transparent framework through which the Council demonstrates accountability, promotes continuous improvement and maintains public confidence in the way it governs its affairs.

## 3. The Local Code of Corporate Governance – How It Is Used

Middlesbrough Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance (LCCG) sets out how the Council applies the principles of good governance in practice. It describes the key arrangements, policies, systems and assurance mechanisms that together form the Council's governance framework and demonstrates alignment with the seven principles of good governance established by CIPFA and SOLACE.

The LCCG is a standing document and provides the baseline description of governance arrangements. It is supported by the Council's Constitution, strategies, policies, frameworks and procedures, which collectively embed governance requirements into the Council's culture and day to day operations. The LCCG is reviewed annually and updated where changes to the Council's operating environment, legislation or guidance require this.

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) does not restate the contents of the LCCG. It uses the Code as a reference point against which the Council undertakes its annual review of governance effectiveness. This ensures that the AGS focuses on whether governance arrangements are operating effectively in practice, rather than on whether they simply exist.

In preparing this Statement, the Council has assessed:

- whether the arrangements described in the LCCG were in place and operating effectively during the year
- whether those arrangements supported the delivery of the Council's objectives and its responsibilities for economy, efficiency and effectiveness
- whether there were any significant gaps, weaknesses or barriers that limited the effectiveness of governance arrangements
- whether governance arrangements remain sufficiently robust and resilient to address current and emerging challenges.

Where the AGS identifies that there are significant gaps in governance arrangements as set out in the LCCG and they are not operating as intended, these matters are explicitly reported in this AGS together with the actions being taken to address them. This approach reflects the Council's commitment to openness, self-assessment and continuous improvement. The AGS will also continue to capture wider corporate governance improvement actions planned in the coming year.

## 4. Annual Review of Governance – Methodology

The Council undertakes an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements to meet the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and to provide assurance to members, stakeholders and the public that governance arrangements are operating as intended.

### Sources of Assurance

The review drew on a wide range of assurance sources, including:

- reports and updates considered by the Audit Committee during 2025/26 as part of its approved work programme
- the Audit Committee's review of its own effectiveness, completed during 2025/26 and reported to Full Council for the first time
- reports to Executive, Overview and Scrutiny and Full Council on governance, performance, finance and risk
- The overall opinion of the Head of Internal Audit on the framework of governance, risk management and control operating at the Council is that it provides Reasonable Assurance

- Internal Audit reports (21 were issued in 2025/26. Of those 9 had substantial assurance, 9 had reasonable assurance, 2 had limited assurance and no opinion was given in 1)
- External Audit reports
- statutory officer assurances
- delivery of the Council's Continuous Improvement Plan
- outcomes from external challenge, peer reviews and inspection activity where relevant.

This approach ensured that the review reflected a range of perspectives and sources of evidence and was proportionate to the Council's scale, complexity and risk profile.

Audit Committee Oversight

During 2025/26, Audit Committee received and considered a comprehensive programme of reports across its full remit, enabling it to form a view on the adequacy of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements in line with its terms of reference that adhere to the CIPFA standard terms of reference. Reports considered included:

- corporate governance and compliance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance
- financial management, treasury management and budget monitoring
- risk management and strategic risks
- corporate governance assurance reports
- internal audit plans, progress and outcomes
- external audit findings and value for money commentary
- counter fraud and information governance
- Agreement of the Governance and Assurance Mapping Policy
- progress against improvement and assurance actions.

Delivery of the work programme provided the Committee with assurance that governance arrangements were subject to regular, structured scrutiny and challenge during the year.

In addition, the Audit Committee completed a formal review of its own effectiveness during 2025/26 for the first time. The review was led by an experienced former Section 151 Officer.  The review concluded that the Committee was operating effectively and in line with its terms of reference, with key findings including:

- it had improved clarity of focus on governance and assurance
- it had increased visibility and transparency of the Committee's work programme
- recommendations for areas for further development to strengthen effectiveness.

An action plan arising from the review was agreed by the Committee and is being progressed to support continued improvement.

The results of the annual review were considered by senior officers and the Audit Committee before being reflected in this AGS.

The conclusions set out in this Statement therefore represent a corporate assessment of governance effectiveness, informed by assurance, challenge and evidence.

## 5. Assessment of Effectiveness Against the Governance Principles

Overall Assessment

Based on the review undertaken and the sources of assurance set out in Section 4, the Council concludes that **its governance arrangements were operating effectively during 2025/26.**

The review has confirmed that the governance arrangements set out in the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance, including the core arrangements underpinning each of the seven principles of good governance, were in place and operating effectively in practice and supported the achievement of the Council's objectives and its responsibilities for economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

This conclusion is informed by a comprehensive and evidence-based assessment drawing on internal audit's annual opinion, external audit findings, reports to members, statutory officer assurances and wider sources of independent challenge and scrutiny. Taken together, these sources provide reasonable assurance that the Council's governance framework is fit for purpose.

The Council has continued to strengthen its governance arrangements during the year, particularly in relation to performance and financial management, and has embedded a clear and systematic approach to continuous improvement within its governance and assurance framework.

The improvement actions identified within this Statement reflect the Council's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and strengthening of governance arrangements, rather than significant weaknesses or failures in the operation of the governance framework.

Strengthening Performance and Financial Governance

During 2025/26, the Council took significant steps to strengthen its approach to performance and financial governance. This resulted in Executive approving a refreshed Performance and Financial Management Policy in April 2026. This concluded a review that reset the Council's approach and established the policy foundation for integrating performance and financial management and reporting. This reflects best practice and directly addressed a long-standing recommendation from the Council's former Independent Improvement Advisory Board, which had highlighted the need for clearer alignment between performance, finance and decision-making during the period when the Council was subject to a Best Value Notice.

The refreshed policy supports:

- clearer articulation of outcomes and priorities
- improved alignment between financial planning and performance management
- more consistent, transparent reporting to members and senior leaders.

Council Plan

In March 2026, Executive approved a refreshed Council Plan, which clarified the Council's outcomes. The Council then set out the activities required to deliver them, and identified the key performance indicators that will be used to measure progress. These are articulated in Directorate Service Plans that are being developed for 2026/7.

Completion of this work addressed a concern raised by the Council's external auditors, Forvis Mazars, in their Audit Completion Report for 2024/25. The auditors noted that, while significant progress had been made, further work was required to fully embed the Council Plan and strengthen the links between the Mayor's priorities, performance management and value for money arrangements.

The refreshed Council Plan, together with the new Performance and Financial Management Policy, provides a clearer and more coherent framework for demonstrating economy, efficiency and effectiveness and strengthens the Council's overall best value arrangements.

Transition to Continuous Improvement

During 2025/26, Executive also approved:

- a revised Programme and Project Management Policy
- the cessation of the Council's formal transformation programme.

This marked a deliberate transition towards a best-practice model of continuous improvement, embedding improvement activity across all aspects of the Council's business rather than delivering it through a time-limited programme.

During 2026/27, the Council is re-establishing Directorate Plans to demonstrate a clear and explicit link between the Council Plan, directorate activities and individual appraisal objectives. These plans will also capture statutory obligations, improving visibility and accountability for both members and stakeholders.  The Council has embedded the emerging Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) within its directorate planning and performance and financial management arrangements to ensure that it can demonstrate grip on the outcomes within the LOF.

In line with the Council's commitment to embedding continuous improvement within its governance frameworks, action has been taken to embed the remaining actions from the current plan within this AGS and, where relevant within Directorate Plans. Future continuous improvement activity requirements will be systematically considered, identified and implemented within both the integrated performance and financial management cycle being put in place during 2026/27 and the Governance and Assurance Mapping policy which was agreed by Audit Committee in April 2026.

<u>Financial Position and Ongoing Financial Risk</u>

The Council's financial position continued to improve during 2025/26; however, financial sustainability remains a key area of focus.

The final revenue outturn for 2025/26 was a slight overspend of £2.147m after the application of corporate contingencies and other central resources.

There continued to be significant budget pressures within both Children's and Adults Social Care, with overspends of £7.455m and £1.272m respectively.  There were also overspends within Environment, Communities and Culture and Education and Partnerships (£1.108m and £0.348m). While the overall budget outturn represents a more stable position than in previous years, the incidents of overspending reinforces the need for continued financial discipline, robust monitoring and early corrective action.

Whilst the level of usable unrestricted reserves increased from £21.654m to £25.529m at year-end, there remains a need to further increase reserves to target levels as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Council is committed to growing the reserves during the medium term which is reflected in budget strategy.  The Council is fully sighted on the potential impact of poor budget management and the effects that overspends on budgets would have on reserves.

The Council recognises that ongoing caution is required given continued demand pressures, inflationary impacts and uncertainty in the wider funding environment. Financial governance and medium-term financial planning therefore remain priority areas within the governance framework. Implementation of integrated financial and performance management arrangements during 2026/27 will support concerted action to identify pressures, their drivers and agreement of corrective actions.

Working with Tees Valley Combined Authority

The Council continues to work constructively with the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) while it remains subject to a Best Value Notice. The Council acknowledges the challenges this has created but also recognises the progress that has been made in strengthening governance and assurance arrangements within the Combined Authority. Middlesbrough Council remains committed to playing a positive and supportive role as a constituent authority and to contributing to the continued improvement of governance, transparency and decision-making at a regional level.

Effective partnership working with the Combined Authority remains important to the delivery of economic growth and regeneration outcomes for the borough, and the Council will continue to engage actively and constructively as improvement activity progresses.

Maintaining a Fit-for-Purpose Constitution

In May 2026, Full Council considered the annual review of the Constitution. The review concluded that the Constitution remains fit for purpose, with no major changes required.

The review demonstrated good practice in:

- actively managing the Constitution as a living document
- ensuring that governance arrangements remain current, accessible and understood.

The Council will continue to undertake annual constitutional reviews to ensure governance arrangements evolve in line with legislation, guidance and organisational change. The principle of annual reviews has been embedded within the Council's standing agenda for Annual Meetings of Full Council.

Ongoing strategic commitment to embedding the values and Nolan principles within the organisation

During 2025/26 the Council maintained its positive direction of travel on work to ensure its Values and the Nolan Principles are embedded within the organisation. It continued to deliver the People Strategy, which sets its strategic ambitions around staff engagement. Within its April 2026 report to Audit Committee, it reported extensively on the initiatives delivered and the impact of the strategy. Impacts included further reductions in sickness and reductions in turnover for the third year in a row. The number of staff who engaged with the latest staff survey also increased significantly.

## 6. Significant Governance Issues and Improvement Actions

The Council recognises that effective governance requires continual review and development. While governance arrangements were generally operating effectively during 2025/26, the annual review has identified a number of areas where further strengthening is required to ensure governance arrangements remain robust, proportionate and fit for the future. This review provides a practical opportunity for the Council to evidence the impact of its commitment to Continuous Improvement and as such the planned improvement actions set out for 2026/27 at the end of this statement are wider than the content in this document.

## 7. Progress Against Prior-Year Governance Actions

The table below sets out those actions which were identified in previous AGSs and their status:

| Issue | Action | Lead officer | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| (2023/24 AGS) The Council needs to ensure that as it transforms, it ensures that it has the right staff, in the right roles who are able to take the right decisions and actions to be able to deliver the best outcomes for our residents. | Development of a Workforce Plan to ensure staff at all levels have the skills and capabilities to be successful in their roles | Head of Human Resources | Initial commitment has been amended to put in place a more detailed set of plans for each directorate.<br><br>In January 2026 Leadership Management Team agreed a programme of actions to implement workforce plans for each department by March 2028. |
| (2023/24 AGS) As the public sector continues to manage service delivery within significant pressures, joined up partnership working across the system will be key to delivery of improved outcomes for residents. | Put in place a Strategic Partnerships Strategy. | Chief Executive | Reprofiled to August 2026 within the Continuous Improvement Plan to reflect the plan to develop this organically, alongside the emerging place strategy and then codify it formally. |
| Following successful delivery of actions to address serious weaknesses in the Council's corporate governance arrangements, the Council recognised the need to maintain momentum and establish a cycle of continuous improvement activity. In March 2025 Council was presented with the first version of the Continuous Improvement Plan. | Continue to implement the Continuous Improvement Plan, which includes actions that will strengthen the Council's corporate governance arrangements and commence reporting on progress against the plan on a quarterly basis to | Chief Executive | In line with the Council's commitment to embedding continuous improvement within its governance frameworks, action has been taken to embed the remaining actions from the current plan within this AGS and, where relevant within the Directorate Plans that will be put in place during 2026/27. Future continuous improvement activity requirements will be systematically considered, identified and implemented within the integrated performance and financial management cycle being put in place during 2026/27. |

| Issue | Action | Lead officer | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Board from July 2025 onwards. | | |
| The Council has an ongoing commitment within its Neighbourhood model to reset its approach to community engagement. As part of this, the Council will articulate its revised approach within a Community Engagement policy. | Community Engagement policy and approach to be developed | Head of Neighbourhoods | To be delivered by August 2026. Work is underway to deliver this within the Neighbourhoods model. |
| Liquidation and closure of the Middlesbrough Development Company has been more complex than originally anticipated, as a result, while the Council has addressed the key governance issues associated with use of the company, it still needs to complete the formal closure of the Company. | Ensure the Company is fully liquidated during 2025/26. | Deputy 151 Officer, Head of Corporate Finance | Reprofiled from October 2025 to February 2026. Further reprofiled to October 2026 to allow technical steps that need to be taken by Government as part of the standard process of liquidating a company. |

## 8. Governance Outlook and Emerging Risks

The Council recognises that effective governance requires not only assurance over past arrangements but also a clear understanding of the governance challenges and risks that may impact on its ability to deliver outcomes in the future. This section highlights the key strategic governance risks that are expected to shape the Council's operating environment over the medium term and the actions being taken to manage them.

This section does not duplicate the Council's strategic risk register. Instead, it focuses on those risks with a direct governance dimension that require continued oversight by members and senior leadership.

<u>Local Elections 2027</u>

The May 2027 local elections represent a significant governance milestone for the Council. There is potential for changes in political leadership, priorities and governance arrangements, which will require careful management to ensure continuity of good governance and service delivery.

Financial Sustainability and Budgetary Pressures

While the Council's financial position has stabilised in recent years, financial sustainability remains one of the most significant governance risks facing the organisation.

The Council will maintain a laser focus on the budget, supported by the introduction of an integrated performance and financial management approach. This will enable:

- earlier identification of emerging financial pressures
- improved understanding of the drivers of overspends
- use of predictive analytics to support forecasting and scenario planning
- more timely corrective action where performance or financial outcomes are not at the required level.

Financial governance, medium-term financial planning and disciplined budget management will therefore remain priority areas of focus.

Performance Management and Delivery of Outcomes

The Council has made significant progress in strengthening its performance and financial governance framework. The key challenge now is to ensure that these arrangements are fully embedded and consistently applied across the organisation. The re-establishment of Directorate service plans during 2026/27 will be a critical component of this.

Partnership and Place-Based Governance

Partnership working will continue to be central to the delivery of improved outcomes for residents. The Council recognises that partnership arrangements bring both opportunity and governance risk, particularly in relation to accountability, transparency and decision-making.

Workforce Capacity, Capability and Organisational Resilience

The Council's ability to deliver good governance and high-quality services is dependent on having a skilled, engaged and resilient workforce.

Investing in delivery of the People Strategy remains a key mechanism for mitigating governance risk.  The Council recognises that workforce resilience is a critical enabler of effective governance and sustainable improvement.

Information Governance, Data Quality, AI and Digital Risks

The increasing reliance on data, digital systems and technology presents both opportunity and risk from a governance perspective. Ongoing implementation of the Council's Information Strategy and Digital Strategy during 2026/27 will be essential to:

- maintaining compliance with information governance and data protection requirements
- ensuring the quality, accuracy and integrity of data used to support decision-making
- providing secure platforms that enable innovation and improved efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.

Effective governance of digital change, records management, cyber risk and data quality will therefore remain an important area of focus for members and senior officers. In addition, the rapidly evolving development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) creates both risks and opportunities that will need to be carefully balanced to ensure lawful use of emerging technologies while also exploiting opportunities to improve processes and outcomes, while reducing costs. The Council put in place an AI Policy during 2025/26 as a foundation step to ensure there is a controlled approach to this. The Policy forms part of the Information Governance Framework.

## 9. Conclusion and Approval

In summary, the Council has had a generally effective set of control measures in place during 2025/26, alongside a methodology in place to identify and deliver improvements where there have been weaknesses. It has taken steps to embed continuous improvement within its corporate planning and performance frameworks to ensure it has systems in place to continue to be able to effectively identify and address areas where improvements are required to improve outcomes and compliance.

**Mayor, Chris Cooke**
**Chief Executive, Erik Scollay**
**Section 151 Officer, Andrew Humble CPFA**

**Document will be formally signed by the above when it is finalised as part of the statement of accounts, following completion of the inspection period.**

## Corporate Governance Priorities for 2026/2027

The following table sets out the continuous improvement priorities for the Council in relation to governance for 2026/27 which were identified as part of the Council's assessment of the effectiveness of its corporate governance arrangements in 2025/26:

| Issue | Action | Lead officer | Target date |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Council is committed to working with partners more effectively to co-produce a vision for the town, alongside a strategy, underpinned by agreed principles which will govern how we will work together to deliver improved outcomes for our residents. | Develop and agree a place strategy for the town with partners that is co-produced with partners and key stakeholders. | Director of Regeneration and Housing | September 2026 |
| Following agreement of the revised Programme and Project Management Policy, action is needed to amend the underpinning framework to ensure it aligns with the new policy. | Complete a refresh of the Programme and Project Management Framework | PMO Manager | July 2026 |
| Audit Committee needs to deliver its agreed action plan to improve its effectiveness and embed an annual cycle of annual reviews of effectiveness and reporting to full Council. | Complete the next annual review of the Audit Committee and report the outcome of the review to Full Council | Audit Committee | October 2026 |
| Provision of an oversight cycle that allows for the consideration of finance, performance and risk issues within one setting will strengthen the Council's performance, financial and risk management and drive an improved focus on priorities and necessary corrective action to achieve them. | Implement integrated financial, performance and risk reporting from Quarter One 2026/27 | Section 151 Officer and the Head of Chief Executive's Department | September 2026 |
| The Council needs to ensure that its approach to Member Development needs continues to align with the needs of Members and that it effectively plans for the potential impact that the 2027 Local Elections will have on the composition and needs of the elected member cohort. The revised strategy needs to ensure a continuous training offer to ensure members are supported throughout the life of the administration. | Review and implement a revised Member Development Strategy, ready to launch for new and returning Members following the May 2027 local election. | Director of Legal and Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer) | May 2027 |
| The Council needs to ensure it has the capacity to be able to act on opportunities for continuous improvement that are identified within its integrated performance and financial management cycle. | Creation and population of the Continuous Improvement Team which was identified as a growth area and funded within the budget setting process | Head of the Chief Executive's Department | July 2026 |
| Members need to be enabled as customers to get the information they need, when they need it and to raise their constituency casework concerns with the Council and they need an effective | Implementation of additional resources within Environment, Communities and Culture to provide interim improvements to | Director of Environment, Communities and Culture | June 2026 |

| Issue | Action | Lead officer | Target date |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| system that gives them timely and effective responses to their queries. | management of constituency casework contacts.<br><br>Implementation of the Customer Charter and delivery of a Council wide training programme during 2026/27. | <br><br>Head of Customer, Resident and Business Support | <br><br>March 2027 |
| Information Governance improvements arising from the traffic commissioner report | Delivery of an improvement plan during 2026/27 to address outstanding issues | Head of Fleet Management | March 2027 |