

Update on Annual Governance Statement - Action Plan 2020-21

Key improvement area	Lead Officer	To be delivered by	Update
Ensure financial risk arising from the impact of COVID-19 are managed.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement	1 November 2020 1 March 2021	The financial impact of Covid-19 is monitored in parallel with our regular monthly financial reporting and monthly reports are submitted to MHCLG setting out the impact of Covid-19. The impact of Covid-19 is specifically addressed in our quarterly financial performance monitoring reports to members.
Poor management of contracts or financial resilience of contractors leads to significant contract failure disrupting services and creating extra liabilities. Potential impact on the capital programme because of the resilience of our contractors.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement	1 November 2020 1 March 2021	Contract management is recognised as a specific skillset. Contract managers receive training and are familiar with the Council's contract management toolkit. Financial variances on individual contracts are identified as part of the budget monitoring process and action taking accordingly. Supplier resilience is checked at the point of contract award and, where appropriate, during the course of contract delivery.
Exit of EU on unfavourable terms results in adverse short-term Brexit impacts	Director of Finance and Business Improvement	1 November 2020	Officers with emergency planning responsibilities are now meeting regularly to plan for any short-term impacts from EU transition on 31/12/20. The Council is part of

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Capacity to deliver the investment and regeneration programme – (link to Corporate Risk Register).	Director of Regeneration and Place	1 March 2022	<p>Within the Council's 5-year capital programme, around £60m has been allocated for investment in housing and regeneration type projects. The Regeneration & Economic Development service area has been refocussed to lead on this work. The team has taken on additional staffing resources to assist in delivery, as well as undertaken a number of specialist training programmes, and is now well supported by a trusted pool of specialist external consultancy firms too, providing the likes of Employers Agent and Architects services. There is an acceptable order book of potential suitable projects to deliver, but the challenge is that of taking these to contract stage with the required financial outputs. For example there is viability pressure on these schemes, and so staff have to work more intensively to overcome these as well as seek to secure additional subsidy sources too. Perhaps this is the case in particular with the Council's return to investment in affordable housing, where returns are proving challenging, and this issue will be explored in more detail in the Council's next capital</p>

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			programme, either in terms of reviewing hurdle rates or the particular tenures offered.
Property Maintenance, Health and Safety Compliance.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement	1 March 2021	Compliance with all legal requirements is monitored and reported regularly to CLT. Where the Council is not directly responsible (eg responsibility lies with our tenants) we nevertheless follow up with tenants to ensure that they are compliant.
Ensuring we are resilient and continue to build relationships with partners.	Chief Executive	1 March 2021	Policy and Resources commissioned a report for Communities, Housing and Environment Committee looking at community resilience and how the Council can build on the activity during the Pandemic. The report recommends a new community compact with the voluntary and community sector and refreshing the Parish Charter to recognise the roles played by these bodies in an emergency. A new monthly newsletter for Parish Councils is in place and three joint webinars with the Maidstone branch of Kent Association of Local Councils will be held in 2020-21 to which all parish councillors will be invited.

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Declaration of Interests.	Monitoring Officer	1 November 2020	Action remains outstanding to standardise the officer gifts & hospitality registers currently maintained separately by each directorate. This involves the support of the digital team who have had to prioritise work on the pandemic to create all the digital processes required.
Promoting decision making on Garden Communities ensuring information is publicly available and accessible and the role of the council as developer versus the role as the planning authority is clear.	Chief Executive	1 March 2021	<p>The Council continues to apply the public interest test to reports and information regarding the Garden Community Proposal. Regular update reports on the progress of the Garden Community are received by the Policy and Resources Committee. The Council continues to separate the roles of planning authority and developer with the appointment of a separate director to oversee the planning service and Local Plan Review, allowing the Director of Regeneration and Place to oversee the development of the Garden Community Proposal separately.</p> <p>Political decision making is also separated with the Policy and Resources Committee take responsibility for the Council's role as promoter of this proposition and the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee for</p>

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			consideration of the Garden Settlement in options for the spatial development strategy 2022-2037