

AGS Action Plan 2022-2023

Core CIPFA Governance Principle	Overall assessment	What's working well	Where we can improve
<p>A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following election to office in May each year, the Council has a full induction and training programme, including the Members Code of Conduct. Dependent on the roles allocated to councillors additional tailored training is provided. The Council's Monitoring Officer, together with Democratic Services, have joint overall responsibility for councillors' induction and support services for councillors. • Councillors are required to declare interests. This and their attendance record and declarations at meetings are recorded on their individual page on the Council's website. Councillors receive an annual reminder from Democratic Services about the need to review and update their register of interests and that it is a legal requirement to declare and register all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council continues to build resilience to provide further assurance over its ability to deliver services within available funding and build a track record of managing within tight financial constraints. <p>(s151 Officer) Update Sept 2023: This is an ongoing action and subsequently can be marked as complete. The Council has completed the last two financial years with a small surplus and now has a contingency (before underlying reserves) of £921k for the current financial year. 2022/2023 completed with a £111k underspend. Delivery of the savings target is strong, with 97% on track for delivery in 2023/2024 and 94% delivery of the savings plan in 2022/23.</p> <p>Democratic Services and Finance Services are working together to streamline the process for after the May 2024 elections Nothing outstanding at this stage and therefore action complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing Policy to be revised and updated in September 2023. The

		<p>disclosable pecuniary interests - under the Localism Act 2011, failure to register any disclosable interests within 28 days is potentially a criminal offence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members makes specific reference to the need to adhere to seven principles of public life (the Nolan principles). In April 2021 Full Council adopted the New Local Government Association (LGA) Model Code following consideration of the LGA version by the Council's Standards Committee in March 2021. • Our Constitution, including Contract Standing Orders were reviewed and updated during the financial year to ensure they remained legislatively compliant and reflect the organisation's operating arrangements. Changes were approved by Council at its meeting in April 2022. • All formal meetings of the Council, ie committees, require declarations of interest from councillors of those committees as a standing item and meetings are minuted/recorded. There is also a councillor complaint form which is overseen and administered by the Council's Monitoring Officer function. • All managers with financial budget responsibilities have been provided with a financial business partner to enable them to discharge their responsibility and ensure 	<p>Monitoring Officer has a duty to write a report if the authority or any of its committees propose action that would be unlawful or amount to maladministration.</p> <p>Update Nov 23: The Policy was reviewed and presented to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 28th November 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy to be reviewed and updated in April 2023. This will reflect best practice guidance such as national Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Strategy. (Head of Legal). <p>Update Sept 2023: The policy and strategy were reviewed and presented to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 26th September 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-slavery requirements are built within the commissioning, procurement and contract management process. Our standard contract terms include clauses that specify the supplier's contractual obligation concerning Modern Slavery. The Council publishes a statement setting out the actions that are being undertaken to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to its business and actively ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in its own business and supply chains. On a voluntary basis, the Council should sign
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		<p>that all expenditure is evidenced, validated and justified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management and coordination of multiple grants and funding streams in order to provide the required local outbreak management response during the COVID-19 pandemic. • Updated annually Contract Standing Orders and a Procurement Board meets monthly which approves the appropriate procurement route for all significant expenditure. • Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy • The Council has appropriate whistle blowing policies and procedures in place which are reviewed annually and updated where required. Staff are aware of the Whistleblowing policy through the Council's intranet. • Staff continue to participate in Check-ins with their line managers focused on health and wellbeing, as well as broader performance themes. 	<p>off a Modern Slavery Statement and complete the task in July 2023.</p> <p>Update Sept 2023: Being looked into as part of the Safeguarding Team's review. Anticipated completion by Jan/Feb 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are required to have regular team meetings, and one to ones with line managers and these are in addition to an annual performance setting discussion that inform key priorities and outcomes for the year (appraisals). Appraisals are to be introduced in April 2023 <p>Update Sept 2023: This work has been completed.</p> <p>The Council is committed to maintaining good ethical governance, and its Local Code of Governance reflects the Seven Principles of Public Life in local government. To help enhance this process officers have started to review its local Code and promote any changes. This will continue into 2022/2023.</p> <p>Update Sept 2023: The Code was extensively reviewed and presented to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 28th November 2023.</p>
B. Ensuring openness and		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council meetings and committees are routinely held in public unless there are good reasons for not doing so on the grounds of confidentiality/disclosure of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 2 reports to be made available to all councillors on the Mod Gov extranet. There may be some exceptions to this, at the discretion of the Monitoring Officer.

<p>comprehensive stakeholder engagement</p>		<p>exempt information which are provided for in statutory provisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council meetings and committees are open to participation and available to view online. A calendar of dates of all upcoming Council and all committee meetings is available on the Council website. • Regular staff briefings from the Chief Executive to all council employees on Council issues and the senior management team's (EMT) response to them. • The Council has a designated Officer as IT Security Officer. This is now incorporated in the role of the IT & Project Delivery Manager. • The Council has a number of ways it makes residents and businesses aware of initiatives, projects and services. • The Council has Staff Forum meetings which involves staff representatives from several services in the Council meeting on a quarterly basis with the Chief Executive and other members of EMT. 	<p>Update Sept 2023: this has been actioned and is complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions relating to Part 2 items to be set out in the public minutes and reported to Full Council. On the rare occasions when this is not appropriate, councillors will be advised how to access the relevant decisions via the Mod Gov extranet. <p>Update Sept 2023: This has been actioned and is complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a designated officer as IT Security Officer. <p>Update Sept 2023: This is now complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMT members to ensure relevant pages in their service areas are maintained and update on the Council's website. <p>Update Sept 2023: this has been communicated and is now part of business as usual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Councillors are aware of any urgent decisions being taken by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Constitution. In particular, it is proposed that this be added to ModGov page. <p>Update Nov 2023: This has now been included.</p>
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<p>C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Plan sets out strategic priorities and an overall strategic direction to 2024 and demonstrates how the Council will use its resources to deliver these. • Since its launch in January 2015, Wellbeing Prescription has steadily expanded and is now offered to patients registered to all 18 East Surrey ICP GP surgeries, including all Tandridge GP surgeries. It provides a forum in which key leaders from the local health and care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population. • On the 13 February 2020 Full Council resolved to declare a climate emergency. An Action Plan is our roadmap to delivering greater sustainability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is underway to develop a new Corporate Plan for 2024-2028. (Head of Policy and Communications) Update Sept 2023: Work started on the plan in March 2023 with consultation with Councillors, senior officers and managers. <p>Update: Consultation took place with external stakeholders in June 2023. Next steps are to agree the draft plan with Councillors before going out to wider consultation. it is a long process which will be complete after the elections in 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has not adopted a Local Plan. Delays relating to Covid-19 and clarity from government about housing numbers has meant little progress has been made on the strategic approach of the plan. The Planning Policy Working Group has been set up and meets regularly to discuss the options available. <p>Update: Waiting to hear back from the Inspector. Expected Jan/ Feb 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on the Climate Change action plan has been limited due to lack of resources in this area. As part of the restructure for the Policy and Communications Team a new post has been created with the aim of progressing some of this work. <p>Update: This work is ongoing and has been carried forward to the 2023/24 Action Plan.</p>

<p>D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Medium Term Financial Strategy details how we have planned all our resources, both financial and staffing to deliver against our priorities. Our performance framework has been developed to strengthen performance and the achievement of key objectives and outcomes. Performance is regularly and publicly reported through committee meetings. • The decision-making process is objective and there is rigorous analysis of options and associated risks. To support this, there is a corporate and operational risk register. • The Monitoring and S151 Officers are consulted on all decision-making reports and they are able to provide their professional opinion on the matter being reported and actions / decisions to be taken. • The Council's Forward Plans set out clearly the forthcoming business that will be taken to the relevant committees and by key officers. This includes dates of meetings. The Council conforms to all legislation and best practice in publishing plans in advance of meetings etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has faced significant financial challenges (increased costs, significantly reduced income and challenging savings targets) throughout 2021/2022. While the outturn position was underspent for 2021/2022, and contingencies carried over for 2022/2023, Covid-19 these challenges will continue to have an impact on the Council's finances over the next three years and will be critical to the medium-term financial planning (s151 Officer). <p>Update Sept 2023: Annual budgets, MTFs and Housing Business Plan continue to be considered by Committees in January and Council in February each year, as required by statute. No reliance has been placed on general reserves for 2021/2022, 2022/2023 or 2023/24 and none is anticipated for 2024/2025. Contingencies have been grown. DLUHC wrote to the Council on 12 September 2023 refusing a request to use capital receipts to support the general fund: "The department recognises and commends the Council's efforts to grip and manage its budget pressures, and the successful steps taken to deliver the transformation and savings programme in 2022/2023 and in 2023/2024."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance indicators and the risk registers are being reviewed as part of service planning.
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<p>E. Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has adopted specific codes of conduct for councillors involved in planning or licensing decision-making and these councillors receive additional training in these areas as a pre-condition of their participation. • There is an induction programme in place for new staff, which is a combination of e-learning and face-to-face activities. Key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the nine mandatory training for new recruits is high whereas officers who are required to update their training is low, although it has been improving over the last 12 months. EMT to monitor compliance with the process and address areas of non-compliance with their own staff.

		<p>information and policies are highlighted to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's approach to leadership engagement has also been strengthened through the further embedding of the Senior Leadership Group and the Executive Leadership Team. These two groups had new terms of reference in 2022 and have changed their names to Extended Management Team and Management Team. Both meet regularly and work to a structured plan. • The Council's transformation programme called Future Tandridge Programme, which is led by Chief Executive, is focussed on ensuring the Council is more agile, leaner, and strategic to achieve the best outcomes with limited resources. 	<p>Update Sept 2023: This is ongoing work and is part of business as usual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to improve the staff induction programme is planned for 2023, along with training for the leadership team and other managers. <p>Update Sept 2023: This is in the HR service plan for 2023/2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Corporate Business Continuity Plan should be updated annually to ensure that it continues to meet the Council's needs. It needs to be fully endorsed and actively promoted by EMT. Each EMT member should regularly update their own service area business continuity plans, review them and check if their arrangements are still fit for purpose, up to date. This review is overdue. Also all Members of EMT need to be trained and exercised, on an annual basis to ensure they are fully aware of how to implement the plan. The first test is scheduled for EMT on 28 March 2023 <p>Update Sept 2023: Work in this regard is currently underway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per the recommendation response from the 2022 internal audit, business continuity plans and processes will be reviewed as the FTP emerges. The new structure will identify responsibilities in the newly defined
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			<p>service areas and therefore new Service Area Business Continuity Plans will be developed post transformation. During this interim period however, existing plans will still need to be kept up to date and exercised.</p> <p>Update Sept 2023: Policy and Communications Business Continuity Plan has been updated. Building Control Continuity Plan updated</p>
<p>F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council adopted a new Risk Management Strategy in July 2021, which was part of a risk management assessment led by Internal Audit. Improvements to the strategy and internal processes have been implemented ahead of its annual review in July 2022. • A transformation of our Planning (development management) service has been completed, and the team now has adequate resourcing in place. • Most tenants are paying their rents in accordance with agreed payment schedules. • It was agreed by the Investment Sub-Committee that no further investment property acquisitions that are purely to generate net yield were to be purchased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's approach to risk and maintenance of risk registers is under review. <p>Update (Sept 2023): There will be ongoing review of performance indicators and risk registers. Risk audit has a number of actions which once complete will strengthen the Council's approach to and management of risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our annual audit opinion, as provided by Internal Audit, is 'Limited'. However the majority of the improvements identified in the 2021-2022 audit year have been completed. Hence the AMBER traffic light rating. (s151 Officer) <p>Update Sept 2023: For 2022/2023, the annual audit opinion remains limited however demonstrable progress has been made - see extract from the 2022/2023 Internal Audit Annual Report: Comment</p>

- A Debt Recovery Policy, aimed at improving the administration of income due to the Council, was approved by Strategy and Resources in February 2022. The objective was to maximise the recovery of income and minimise the amount of aged debt that needs to be written-off, improving the Council's cashflow and total income raised.

from Chief Internal Auditor: *"It is positive to note that whilst our annual assurance opinion on the Council's framework of governance, risk and control over the last three years has been limited the direction of travel has demonstrably improved which is evident in the assurance outcomes at an individual audit assignment level. This positive trajectory has continued from outcomes of our 2022-23 work."*

- The Tandridge Finance Transformation Programme is complete and was reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 5 July 2022 with key improvements delivered in the structure and resourcing of finance, engagement with budget holders, training and proper scrutiny of budget development. A continuing improvement programme for Finance is under way and will report back to Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

Update Sept 2023: This was marked as complete previously so should no longer be on the action plan. Follow up reports were taken to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee, and the Strategy & Resources Committee, in June 2023 setting out progress since.

- Covid-19 has placed even greater financial pressure on local authorities during 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. The volatility and significant financial, fiscal and economic risk makes forecasting and planning difficult. Financial resilience and

			<p>sustainability are significant risks for the future. A refresh of the MTFS occurs annually, which includes a review of all reserves. The budget for the Housing Revenue Account and its 30 year business plan is considered annually at the Housing Committee, supported by independent Housing Finance experts.</p> <p>Update Sept 2023: Annual budgets, MTFS and Housing Business Plan continue to be considered by Committees in January and Council in February each year, as required by statute. No reliance has been placed on general reserves for 2021/2022, 2022/2023 or 2023/2024 and none is anticipated for 2024/2025. Contingencies have been grown. DLUHC wrote to the Council on 12 September 2023 refusing a request to use capital receipts to support the general fund: <i>"The department recognises and commends the Council's efforts to grip and manage its budget pressures, and the successful steps taken to deliver the transformation and savings programme in 2022/2023 and in 2023/2024."</i></p>
<p>G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a published constitution setting out how decisions are taken and how the public can get involved in decision making, including access to information and petitions. The Constitution was last agreed by Full Council in December 2022. • The Council seeks to write and communicate reports and other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to effectively assess service level risk and ensure this is considered within the wider corporate risk framework, a broader programme of risk management training in 2023-2024 will be delivered. This programme will specifically address those officers outside EMT.

		<p>information for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council webcasts its Council and committee meetings to ensure maximum transparency. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the Council introduced virtual meetings and continues to webcast all Council and committee meetings. • The Council website is used to publish news and information to ensure transparency of its actions. • The Council's Constitution sets out the terms of reference of all committees to ensure information is presented to the committees. Access to Information rules set out how the Council maintains good public access to information and reports. • The Council established its Code of Corporate Governance and it was presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in 22 March 2022. 	<p>Update Sept 2023: Training will be provided as part of the risk management audit actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each service area to regularly review their service area data and retention. In particular, to ensure a reduction in the number of e-mails stored as unstructured data in outlook accounts. <p>Update Sept 2023: Record Management and Retention Policy approved. Project underway with IT regarding deletion of e-mails.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the handling of freedom of information requests. This is being looked into and it is anticipated that the exercise will be completed in April 2023. <p>Update Sept 2023: Work is ongoing to improve and enhance additional measures put in place since Jan 2023.</p>
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