

# Public Document Pack

## Notice of Meeting

### Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Councillors Chris Moriarty (Chair), Mark Howard (Vice-Chair), David Buckley, Maureen Hunt, Helen Price, Gary Reeves, Julian Sharpe, Julian Tisi and Mark Wilson

Monday 29 January 2024 7.00 pm

Council Chamber - Town Hall - Maidenhead & on [RBWM YouTube](#)

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### Agenda

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3	<b>Minutes</b> To consider and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 <sup>th</sup> December 2023.	5 - 16
4	<b>Quarterly Assurance Report</b>  The purpose of this report is to provide the Quarterly Assurance Report focused on the latest available position in relation to performance indicators and the corporate risk register. Audit and Workforce insights are also included. The Quarterly Assurance Report is a mechanism to support good governance and reflects performance (Q2 23/24 or where latest information is available until October 2023) and risk for RBWM.  Panel Members are invited to consider whether there may be areas that would benefit from further scrutiny and analysis, as part of the Panel's forward work programme.	17 - 62
5	<b>2023/24 Month 8 Budget Monitoring Report</b>  This report details the forecast outturn against budget for the 2023/24 financial year. It includes the revenue and capital budgets along with the financial reserve position at year end.  The report will be considered by Cabinet on 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 and the Panel are provided with an opportunity to further scrutinise the current financial position of the council.	63 - 82
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By attending this meeting, participants are consenting to the audio & visual recording being permitted and acknowledge that this shall remain accessible in the public domain permanently.

Please contact Mark Beeley, [Mark.Beeley@RBWM.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Beeley@RBWM.gov.uk), with any special requests that you may have when attending this meeting.

Published: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024



## MEMBERS' GUIDE TO DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

### Disclosure at Meetings

If a Member has not disclosed an interest in their Register of Interests, they **must make** the declaration of interest at the beginning of the meeting, or as soon as they are aware that they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or Other Registerable Interest. If a Member has already disclosed the interest in their Register of Interests they are still required to disclose this in the meeting if it relates to the matter being discussed.

Any Member with concerns about the nature of their interest should consult the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

### Non-participation in case of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your DPIS (summary below, further details set out in Table 1 of the Members' Code of Conduct) you must disclose the interest, **not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room** unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted by the Monitoring Officer in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a DPI.

Where you have a DPI on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet Member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

*DPIS (relating to the Member or their partner) include:*

- *Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.*
- *Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses*
- *Any contract under which goods and services are to be provided/works to be executed which has not been fully discharged.*
- *Any beneficial interest in land within the area of the council.*
- *Any licence to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.*
- *Any tenancy where the landlord is the council, and the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest in the securities of.*
- *Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:*
  - a) that body has a place of business or land in the area of the council, and*
  - b) either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or (ii) the total nominal value of the shares of any one class belonging to the relevant person exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.*

Any Member who is unsure if their interest falls within any of the above legal definitions should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

### Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (summary below and as set out in Table 2 of the Members Code of Conduct), you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.** If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

### Other Registerable Interests:

- a) any unpaid directorships
  - b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
  - c) any body
    - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
    - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
    - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

### Disclosure of Non- Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a DPI) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, or a body included under Other Registerable Interests in Table 2 you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting** but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer) you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a friend, relative, close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or well-being of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out in Table 2 (as set out above and in the Members' code of Conduct)

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied.

Where a matter (referred to in the paragraph above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

**You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting** but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

### Other declarations

Members may wish to declare at the beginning of the meeting any other information they feel should be in the public domain in relation to an item on the agenda; such Member statements will be included in the minutes for transparency.

# Agenda Item 3

## CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Tuesday 19 December 2023

Present: Councillors Chris Moriarty (Chair), Mark Howard (Vice-Chair), David Buckley, Maureen Hunt, Helen Price, Gary Reeves, Genevieve Gosling, Julian Tisi and Mark Wilson

Also in attendance: Councillor Lynne Jones

Officers: Mark Beeley, Stephen Evans, Andrew Durrant and Kevin McDaniel

Officers in attendance virtually: Elizabeth Griffiths and Lin Ferguson

### Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sharpe, Councillor Gosling was attending the meeting as a substitute.

It was noted that the Executive Director of Resources was unwell but would join the meeting virtually.

### Declarations of Interest

Councillor Price declared a personal interest as she was a member of Maidenhead Golf Club.

### Minutes

Councillor Price was concerned that the Panel had not held an offline meeting to discuss the work programme. She was unsure that items suggested at the beginning of the year had been scoped and would be brought forward for the Panel to consider.

Councillor Howard said that he had initially scoped some topics but needed to clarify if they were appropriate for consideration by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Reeves felt that previous agendas had been full and the Panel had held some constructive discussions at meetings but it would be good to explore items for the New Year.

Councillor Wilson said that the work programme was filling up, he was not sure whether a separate offline meeting was needed.

Councillor Hunt added that she had brought Pickins Piece to the attention of the Chair and this had been considered in November, Panel Members should suggest items to the Chair if they were interested in it coming to a Panel meeting.

The Chair said that the work programme was on the agenda but would not be discussed at the meeting due to the time taken to scrutinise the budget. He understood the point made by Councillor Price and he could explore the best way for the Panel to discuss the work programme.

**AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.**

## 2024/25 Draft Budget

The Chair introduced the report and suggested an approach to the meeting on how the Panel scrutinised the budget. The People Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel had considered their areas of the budget and these comments had been summarised for the Panel to read.

Stephen Evans, Chief Executive, said that the draft budget had been considered by Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> December and this was now out for consultation until 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024. Responses to the consultation would be considered before Cabinet put forward a final budget for approval by Full Council. A huge amount of work had gone into the budget but there was still a significant risk and things like inflation and demand were outside of the council's control. Budget management and delivery of the proposals now needed to happen particularly considering the weak financial resilience of the council. There was a current projected overspend of about £7 million and this would lead to a reduced level of reserves going into next year, which could leave RBWM with some of the lowest reserves of any unitary local authority.

Councillor Price wanted to understand how robust the Medium Term Financial Plan was. Assumptions had been made about the national situation, she asked where these assumptions had come from and been evidenced. Councillor Price suggested that impacts which were anticipated to affect the council were added into the budget monitoring reports. If things were more positive than predicted, she asked what the priority would be.

Stephen Evans said that the Medium Term Financial Plan was a rolling 5 year plan and was updated annually for each budget. If a material change was to occur, the finance team could consider how to include this on the monthly reports considered by Cabinet. National sources were used for assumptions and this was updated each year. Stephen Evans believed that the first priority should be to build up the reserves.

Councillor J Tisi noted the assumptions that had been made, particularly pay inflation which had been estimated at 3%. He asked how lenient some of the assumptions were.

Elizabeth Griffiths, Executive Director of Resources, explained that pay inflation was set on a pay deal which was why it was 3% for next year. The Medium Term Financial Plan was a draft and the team were working through some of the assumptions for future years. Forecasts could lose integrity if considered too far in advance. The assumptions made were reasonable at the current point in time and considering the local government settlement which had recently been confirmed, the assumptions made had been relatively accurate.

Councillor J Tisi said that there was some commentary in the report on the level of debt, which was currently around £200 million. He asked how much it would cost for this debt to be refinanced going forward.

Elizabeth Griffiths said that the team had considered the cash flow on a week by week basis and considered when borrowing would be needed and what the interest rate would be for the proposed timeline.

Stephen Evans added that there was very little material change in the local government settlement which had been received. Reducing the level of debt was another area of priority which should be focused on.

Councillor Wilson asked what the three most significant internal risks to the council were.

Stephen Evans responded by saying that the council's financial position was the biggest risk as this had an impact on delivery across all service areas. Social care, both adult and children's, as the cost of placements could be significant. There were risks to public sector partners, for example NHS Frimley. Recruitment and retention at the council was a corporate

risk, there were limitations particularly with competitive salaries compared to other local authorities in the area. Terms and conditions and holiday entitlement were areas that were being explored to stay competitive.

Councillor Reeves asked how successful the spending control panel had been so far.

Stephen Evans felt the panel had been successful in starting to change the culture of the organisation and there being stronger consideration of spending across the council.

Andrew Durrant, Executive Director of Place, said a good example was planning recruitment. Following some vacancies, a review had been completed of the planning team structure to consider where there were gaps and where recruitment was needed.

Councillor Reeves noted that there was a significant pay inflation figure of £318,000. He asked if this could potentially increase again if this was still not at a competitive level in attracting good candidates.

Andrew Durrant was unsure whether the figure also related to contractors staff too, a standard pay inflation was being applied across all council service areas. This would not necessarily close the gap between RBWM and other local authorities.

Kevin McDaniel, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health, said that each council service area would need to consider the impact of pay differently. In care, a recent announcement about the rise in the living wage meant that further reconsideration would need to be given by Optalis to ensure that the funding covered the additional increase in pay.

Councillor Reeves asked if there was a figure in mind which once reached, the council would switch the focus from building up the reserves to start paying off the debt.

Elizabeth Griffiths said that there was not a specific number, it was about where the council was at the point in time and what risks there were. The council had very low reserves in comparison to the risks which were posed as significant.

Councillor Reeves asked where the council was receiving interest payments from and if there was any flexibility to move with the inflation base rate.

Elizabeth Griffiths confirmed that the council had made loans to other organisations, for example Achieving for Children. Interest was charged on these loans and they were provided to help assist with cash flow. Elizabeth Griffiths would need to confirm the detail after the meeting.

**ACTION – Elizabeth Griffiths to confirm the detail behind the interest on loans given to other organisations from the council.**

Councillor Reeves asked if the £5.1 million allocated towards transport had been considered in connection with the new highways contract and the pricing which would have been agreed, or if it was taking into account the current contract pricing.

Andrew Durrant clarified that highways sat within Neighbourhood Services, which was £6.5 million. The amount had decreased between the current budget and next year's budget due to increased additional income generation. The actual position was based on inflationary rises in-year which were currently known. The new highways contract had resulted in a cost saving for the council of around £800,000.

Councillor Price noted a £15.5 million outflow on Maidenhead Golf Club in 2025/26 and an inflow of £14.7 million in 2026/27. She wondered if this would be two years apart or at the end and start of consecutive financial years, as this could have a big impact on whether borrowing was required.

Andrew Durrant explained that the council were currently firming up the valuations for the site and considering the timescales. There was the potential for an overlap between financial years and the figure to secure the land at the Golf Club would increase over time.

Elizabeth Griffiths said that the council needed to borrow to support its cash flow and this was reported but not included in the report. The outputs were included along with narrative around what was driving them.

Councillor Price considered the efficiencies appendix and felt that the Place directorate had been tasked with maximising income and service transformation. She asked if redundancies were included as part of the efficiency savings.

Stephen Evans said that service transformation did not necessarily mean redundancies. For example, it could be the implementation of the new case management system in adult social care which would improve service delivery. Every service needed to be carefully considered and there were a number of statutory services in the Place directorate.

Andrew Durrant said that of the £2.5 million of savings delivered in-year, most of this had been achieved. There would be some challenges but based on current arrangements the Place directorate was in a good position to deliver. Positive conversations had taken place with contractors to see how things could be done differently to provide further savings.

Councillor Price said that there was a greater reliance on voluntary organisations delivering non-statutory services which were not provided by the council and she had expected a statement around this. This had only been referenced in one of the EQIAs, but Councillor Price was concerned that the council was missing an opportunity to further utilise the voluntary sector.

Kevin McDaniel confirmed that there was no reduction to the Communities service area for next year. The team had launched the Community Lottery which had generated the most revenue in comparison to other similar community lotteries. The Service Lead for Communities was now part of the Corporate Leadership Team and worked closely with the Place directorate to collaborate with community groups on things like grass verges around the borough.

Stephen Evans added that when the new Corporate Plan was published there would be a focus on the community and voluntary sector and building positive relationships with the council.

Councillor Howard highlighted the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 funds, which he understood should be used for capital projects to support development. However, the budget highlighted that it was being used in other areas, for example tree maintenance.

Andrew Durrant said that CIL and S106 had been carefully considered. Green infrastructure was a legitimate use of this funding and the CIL team ensured that regulations were abided to, in close partnership with the finance team. Going forward, the team needed to ensure that tree inspections were funded through the revenue budget.

Councillor Price continued that there was £3.7 million of CIL contributions in this area, although it was unclear how big the CIL pot was, how much was due to be received from developers and where this would be spent in future. She suggested that scrutiny should be monitoring CIL to ensure that there was a robust process in place.

Councillor Howard said that it was about transparency, it was an ongoing issue between the borough and the parish councils. He was concerned that in previous years there had been CIL funding spent on things which were difficult to justify as capital infrastructure.



Andrew Durrant agreed that there was more work to do, the team could improve communication with the parish councils. Funding was considered by the internal capital review board on a regular basis. The entire capital programme for Place next year would be funded through CIL, S106 and grant funding and therefore no capital borrowing would be required. An audit had recently been undertaken on CIL practises and forecasting was starting to improve.

Councillor Howard felt that CIL and S106 funding was often spent in a small geographical area and he wanted to make sure that communities were being engaged with to understand the best way to spend the funding. Councillor Howard considered contract management and the defects which had been noted at Braywick Leisure Centre. This was a surprise and a concern given how new the leisure centre was and that the council could be required to pay for this.

Andrew Durrant said that there were some historical issues around the design and make up of Braywick Leisure Centre where air and moisture transfer from the pool to the gym area had been damaging gym equipment. The council were working closely with the Property Services team and Leisure Focus to try and recoup some of the liability and costs. Discussions were ongoing and it should be the responsibility of the building contractor to rectify the defect.

Councillor Howard said that he had seen an improvement in the last three to six months around how contracts were being managed. There had been a change in culture and this was positive.

Councillor Wilson asked if there was any warranty that the council could claim on with regard to Braywick Leisure Centre.

Andrew Durrant confirmed that the council were looking at this but there was a risk that Braywick Leisure Centre was outside the warranty period.

Councillor Wilson asked where parking income sat in the budget. This was confirmed to be Neighbourhood Services.

Councillor Wilson asked if the £20 million on contracts in Neighbourhood Services was an annual cost and how much was cost and income.

Andrew Durrant said that this included parking income and leisure management which were two large sums of income but expenditure was effectively net of income. The area included the highways, ground maintenance and waste contracts.

Councillor Wilson noted that there was a line in capital for lamppost repairs. He asked if people who crashed into lampposts could be charged for damage to council infrastructure.

Andrew Durrant said it was a challenge for all local authorities particularly to access the right level of evidence to claim the money back. The insurance route was also an option but evidence was still needed.

Councillor Howard wondered why the council was reluctant to go down the insurance route.

Andrew Durrant said that he'd need to clarify with the Insurance and Risk Manager, as it could be around an increase in insurance premiums each time a claim was made.

**ACTION – Andrew Durrant to ask Insurance and Risk Manager for further information around insurance claims for damage to council street furniture.**

Councillor Price considered service reductions and felt that there should be further transparency with Councillors and the public that this was the reality of the situation. On temporary housing costs, these were rising and many were unable to afford the deposit.

Councillor Price had suggested to a housing organisation of putting money into a pot to act as the guarantor, this was an idea to reduce the council's housing costs.

Andrew Durrant said that the administration and how the fund was applied would need to be looked at. He added that the council did offer an interest free loan scheme on rental properties, he could share further details of this with the Panel after the meeting.

**ACTION – Andrew Durrant to share information on the interest free loan scheme available to residents for rental properties.**

Councillor Reeves said that the cost of housing in the borough was high compared to neighbouring areas and there was a shortage of affordable housing. There was no mention of social housing. He felt that social housing was key to ensuring that residents stayed in the borough. Councillor Reeves asked when the council would be able to invest in more temporary accommodation as it was needed now. On council tax, there had been reductions in both growth estimates and collection rates and this was concerning. He welcomed the move to levy 100% empty home premiums and dwellings occupied as second homes.

Stephen Evans said that the Cabinet had spoken about social housing, the council was not a stock holding authority. The recent Sawyers Close application in Windsor was a good outcome and would provide more social housing. Abri and Housing Solutions would be working closely with the council. Buildings in the borough were being considered for suitability to be used as temporary accommodation.

Councillor Hunt raised concern about one social housing provider putting a property on the open market. She was against this as she did not want to see a loss in social housing. Councillor Hunt asked if the council was satisfied that housing providers were selling social housing stock.

Stephen Evans responded that there could be a number of reasons why a housing provider would be looking to sell a property and this was within their own Terms of Reference.

Councillor Howard congratulated officers on the increase in council tax levied against those with second homes, he considered whether this was the maximum that could be charged.

Elizabeth Griffiths said this was the projected estimation of what could be collected following this raise. The council tax base was an estimate of what could be collected and this was based on the current number of homes, the growth that was estimated, and an estimated collection rate. In previous years, the collection rate had been overestimated.

Councillor Reeves said that it was good to clarify that the decrease in the council tax collection rate was to ensure that estimates were realistic.

Councillor Jones, Cabinet Member for Finance, made a point of clarification around the empty homes. The current legislation allowed for 100% premium on top of council tax to be charged for empty properties after two years. The proposal in the legislation was to reduce this to one year which was where the increase in income came from.

Councillor J Tisi said that high risk savings totalled a 'relatively low amount', he asked if this could be quantified.

**ACTION – Amount of high risk savings in the budget to be shared with the Panel.**

Councillor J Tisi considered the efficiency savings to children's services, particularly around stepping down placement support when it was appropriate to do so. He questioned whether this would have a high impact on children.

Lin Ferguson, Executive Director of Children's Services and Education, said that that it would be a challenging savings target but it was achievable. A new team was in place which were making sure that the right children could remain with their extended family rather than coming into care and there had already been significant cost avoidance. Reviews were being done for children who were currently in expensive residential placements to either change to a foster home or be rehabilitated into the extended family, where appropriate. It was also designed to ensure that the right children were coming into care.

Councillor J Tisi asked for further information on service reductions in adult social care.

Kevin McDaniel said that the significant growth in the adult social care budget reflected the cost to the council of looking after people on a statutory basis. The preventive work came from some of the efficiency savings, making sure that people did not start receiving support from the council before it was actually needed.

Councillor J Tisi noted £548,000 which was allocated to supporting charities which were local and not national. Councillors had been approached by local charities who were concerned that they would not be able to budget for next year. He asked if the council was looking to retain the relief for local charities.

Stephen Evans clarified that this was planned for 2025/26 but was not proposed for next year.

Councillor J Tisi said that the saving for the removal of the 'Around the Royal Borough' magazine was small and understood why this decision had been made. He asked if this was intended to be permanent or if this could be brought back in future years.

Stephen Evans said it was considered by the spending control panel and it was decided to not go ahead for this year. It was not an essential service and while it helped with communication other sources would need to be explored.

Councillor Wilson felt that 'Around the Royal Borough' should be reconsidered in future years should funding allow it to be brought back. On adult social care, there was an uptick of around £5 million on each budget. He asked how much of this was due to previous budgets being underestimated.

Kevin McDaniel said that the shortfall was highlighted in the budget growth items, the additional cost was the expected inflation pressure costs driven by the rise in the cost of the living wage and other cost of living demands.

Councillor Jones explained that there had been significant discussions on the decision to stop 'Around the Royal Borough'. It had been explored to include something in council tax demands.

Councillor Price said that adult social care precept from next year was 0, she asked if this was confirmed or if it was because officers had not yet been informed.

She was told that officers had no confirmation as the government had not yet confirmed if the adult social care precept would continue.

Councillor Price commented on special educational needs and disabilities in the EQIA around the review of school transport. It had been stated that the proposal did conflict with statutory requirements but the risk to the policy was overruled.

Lin Ferguson said that home to school transport was one of the costliest budget lines, a peer review was currently ongoing into home to school transport and recommendations would be made on the way forward following completion.

The Panel considered the recommendations which they wanted to make for consideration by Cabinet.

Councillor Howard said that the Panel should express its concern with the Braywick Leisure Centre situation and that the council was forthright in negotiations with the contractor and operator.

Councillor Price said that savings should be openly communicated so that Councillors and residents understood the reasons and impacts. A more robust and transparent process around CIL was requested.

Councillor Reeves said that there needed to be consideration on social housing and a social housing plan as there was no narrative around this in the budget. Cabinet should consider buying housing stock to use as social housing.

Councillor J Tisi suggested that more clarity should be provided to local charities around the support being given by the council, particularly as there was still time before it was brought forward in the 2025/26 budget.

**AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the draft budget for 2024/25 and requested that Cabinet:**

- i) Noted the concern of the Panel on the Braywick Leisure Centre defects and encouraged officers to be forthright in negotiations with the contractor to ensure that this was not paid for by the council.**
- ii) Ensured that savings were openly communicated so that residents understood why they were being made and what would change as a result.**
- iii) Considered a more robust and transparent process around Community Infrastructure Levy, particularly on how funds were being spent.**
- iv) Gave further consideration to social housing as there was a lack of comment on this in the draft budget. Consideration should also be given around the viability of the council buying its own housing stock to provide further social housing.**
- v) Ensured that further clarity should be given to local charities, in advance of any proposed changes to the support provided in the 2025/26 budget.**

### Proposed increases to Fees and Charges

Councillor Howard commented on the parking charges and asked why there were so many different levels of charge. He felt that some of the charges were not realistic, as it seemed a percentage charge had just been added each year.

Andrew Durrant said that there were different rates at different locations. In future, the rates could be rationalised. There had been a standardised increase in parking charges while maintaining a free residents discount. A sensible approach had been applied to maximise revenue but there was further work to do to rationalise this going forward.

Stephen Evans said that some fees were discretionary and some were non-discretionary. This meant that some were set by central government while others were set at a level where the council could only recover its costs.

Councillor Jones added that parking income was a driver in balancing the budget, particularly with the low council tax base. Charges had been increased each year without a full review,

each of the borough's towns were different and a standardised approach was difficult. Councillor Jones suggested that she would like to see a parking charges strategy come forward to serve the residents better.

Councillor Howard supported this suggestion, it was good to reconsider parking charges using a proper review rather than just increasing by a certain percentage each year.

Councillor Price said that in previous years the Panel had seen the percentage increase for each fee but this had not been included. She requested that this was added for future years. Councillor Price asked for reassurance that a drop in demand had been factored in when parking charges were increased. On charging for use of parks, a discretionary charge for local charities was very open and this could put off charities from running events at an early stage. Councillor Price had noted that for charges on fines and anti-social behaviour, the council was not charging the maximum amount.

The Chair added that enforcement was needed for fines, he asked for further information on the relationship between the level of the fine and the amount of resource for enforcement.

Andrew Durrant said that there was an application process which would be considered by the Parks team, this discretion would allow the team to charge a smaller fee for certain groups and events. The Safety Advisory Group would consider applications for larger events. The Communities team would work in partnership with any events and could look to support with the event fee through the Community Lottery, for example. On enforcement, price points had been considered and a new enforcement contract had recently been agreed. A higher charge could be tabled but this would not necessarily lead to a behaviour change.

Councillor Wilson considered charges for betting shops, he asked if this was a national charge level.

Andrew Durrant explained that many of these charges had not changed, they were reviewed on a regular basis but not annually. These were mostly around cost recovery rather than generating further income.

The Chair noted that there was a 3% increase in the budget to cover pay inflation but there was not a 3% rise in fees being charged, which could be needed to ensure that costs were recovered.

Stephen Evans said that he was unsure of when the cost recovery fees were last reviewed, they could significantly increase to cover the gap once they were next reviewed. The Assistant Director of Housing, Environmental Services and Trading Standards would be looking at the level needed for cost recovery in due course.

Councillor Reeves considered the cost for funeral memorials and why there was an additional charge for an inscription.

Andrew Durrant explained that the plot was purchased at a specific point in time to co-bear two people. The further cost was paid at the point in time when the individual passes away and would be buried, as there was no way of knowing when this would be.

Councillor Reeves mentioned the discretionary charges for events in parks. He asked how the council was planning to promote this application form and ensure that groups were not discouraged from applying.

**ACTION – Andrew Durrant to confirm what the application process would look like and how this would be communicated out to local charities and community groups.**

Councillor Jones confirmed that the council would be in contact with groups and organisations which ran existing events to make them aware of the change.

Councillor Reeves noted the increased charges to the hiring of the Desborough Suite at the Town Hall for both commercial and non-commercial uses. He asked why this had been increased for non-commercial events as the council should be supporting community groups.

Stephen Evans said that the Desborough Suite was currently being used as a vaccination centre but charges could be looked at.

Councillor Hunt supported Councillor Price's suggestion to include the percentage increase from the previous year. She understood that charges needed to be raised but this needed to be balanced. There was a new charge on CCTV but this was listed as three separate lines. There were also new charges on pre-applications and enforcement, she asked who was charged with planning enforcement.

Stephen Evans said that the budget needed to balance from the main sources of income, which was council tax, business rates and fees and charges. Income needed to be maximised from fees and charges and they played a significant role in ensuring that sufficient income was raised by the council.

Councillor Howard felt that there was a lack of parking enforcement and this could impact on maximising revenue. He felt that there should be better communication between enforcement and the local community.

Andrew Durrant said that there would be a mixture of days and times where enforcement officers would visit different areas of the borough. There was capacity for mobile surveillance too as part of the new enforcement contract.

Councillor J Tisi agreed with the point made by Councillor Howard on parking enforcement. The council had little choice but to raise fees and charges as there were no credible other options. He asked if there was a material cost difference on car parking permits between one, two and three permits. Councillor J Tisi asked how the council compared to other local authorities on the cost of parking permits.

Andrew Durrant said that the consultation was live until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024. The comments and feedback would be reviewed and the planned implementation was 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024.

**ACTION – Andrew Durrant to check the detail on the cost difference on the number of vehicles in relation to parking permits.**

The Chair asked how benchmarking was done and whether it was left to each service area or if there was a formalised approach.

Stephen Evans confirmed it was largely down to each individual service area and benchmarking was normally done against neighbouring and similar authorities.

Councillor Reeves felt that charges on CCTV were largely commercial in nature and would help the council to maximise its income. It would be good to reassure residents who had to pay for parking permits that the council would provide appropriate enforcement measures.

Stephen Evans confirmed that Councillor Reeves was correct with his comments on CCTV.

Councillor Price said that there was little choice for residents as bus services were not being improved to help encourage them to not use or have a car.

The Chair summarised the discussion, particularly that communication was a key piece on fees and charges and that a review structure for all fees and charges had been suggested.

Stephen Evans said that if there was a service change as a result of proposals in the budget, this would require a consultation from the service area.

Councillor Price felt that the budget consultation was very well presented.

Stephen Evans thanked Councillor Price for her comments and said that her positive feedback would be passed on to the team.

**AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the proposed changes to fees and charges and:**

- i) Provided comments on the proposed fees and charges to be considered as part of the consultation period.**

Work Programme

This item was not considered.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 9.50 pm

Chair.....

Date.....

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Report Title:	Quarterly Assurance Report Q2 2023/24 or where latest data is available until October 23.
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	
Meeting and Date:	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, 29 January 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Stephen Evans, Chief Executive Rebecca Hatch, Assistant Director of Strategy & Communications
Wards affected:	All

www.rbwm.gov.uk



## **REPORT SUMMARY**

*The purpose of this report is to provide the Quarterly Assurance Report (Appendix A) focused on the latest available position in relation to performance indicators and the corporate risk register. Audit and Workforce insights are also included. The Quarterly Assurance Report is a mechanism to support good governance and reflects performance (Q2 23/24 or where latest information is available until October 2023) and risk for RBWM.*

*Panel Members are invited to consider whether there may be areas that would benefit from further scrutiny and analysis, as part of the Panel's forward work programme.*

## **1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel notes the report and:

- i) Undertakes scrutiny of the Quarterly Assurance Report (Appendix A) and considers potential implications for the Panel's forward work programme.**

## **2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 The Quarterly Assurance Report (QAR) at Appendix A was introduced in October 2023 to bring together the latest available performance insights and risk information. Audit and Workforce insights are also included. As a mechanism to support good governance, there are no options associated with this report.

## **3. KEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The council is developing a new Council Plan which will set out a vision for the borough over the coming years and describe the most important aims and priorities that the council will focus on delivering. The new Council Plan provides a framework for decision-making and resource allocation.

- 3.2 The aims and priorities of the new Council Plan will be presented at both Cabinet and Full Council in February 2024, alongside the 2024/25 Budget. The full Council Plan, inclusive of deliverables and a refreshed suite of performance indicators, will be considered by the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet in March, and presented to Full Council in April 2024.
- 3.3 As part of its consideration of the first QAR in November 2023, the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel shared constructive feedback in relation to the QAR's future evolution, including feedback on additional performance indicators to be considered for inclusion. The Panel's feedback is being factored into the development of the new performance management framework that will support the new Council Plan, and which will be monitored through the Quarterly Assurance Report going forwards.
- 3.4 In the interests of good governance, an interim performance management framework (PMF) has been developed to share performance with Cabinet and the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel in 2023/24. This is set out in the QAR (see Appendix A). Performance reporting for indicators is based on a traffic-light concept where green is on/above target, amber provides an early warning for possible intervention, and red suggests intervention may be necessary.
- 3.5 When considering the last QAR in November 2023, the Panel specifically queried how the council's Citizens' Portal fits in with the new Quarterly Assurance arrangements. For background, the Citizens' Portal was introduced by the council in 2022 as an online dashboard to provide visibility of council performance and progress against its then current Corporate Plan. Performance reports shared with the Panel across 2022 included links to relevant dashboards on the Portal to allow Members to explore and interact with the reported data. The Portal will not play a role in the new performance management arrangements. The Portal's contents, reflective of the previous Corporate Plan's performance management framework, has been deactivated. The council is looking instead at publishing future performance reports on a dedicated page of the RBWM website.

#### **4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY**

- 4.1 This report combines the council's performance and risk. Robust information on performance and risk helps to inform future resource allocation decisions, including the current budgeting process. A separate Budget Monitoring report is provided to Cabinet monthly with full detail of the council's latest financial position.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations.

#### **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 Specific risk management activities and consideration of the corporate risk register is included within the relevant sections of Appendix A. Failure to

manage risks appropriately could have financial, reputational or other consequences. Risk owners are required to implement controls to mitigate risks and update these regularly.

## 7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 **Equalities.** This report does not have direct implications for equality and diversity.

7.2 **Climate change/sustainability.** This report does not have direct environmental impacts.

7.3 **Data Protection/GDPR.** There are no data protection impacts as a result of this report

## 8. CONSULTATION

8.1 No consultation was required in creating this report.

## 9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 The Quarterly Assurance Report set out at Appendix A provides an update on latest position in relation to performance and risk. There are no implementation items associated with this report.

## 10. APPENDICES

10.1 This report is supported by 1 appendix.

- Appendix A: Quarterly Assurance Report

## 11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 There are no background documents.

## 12. CONSULTATION

<b>Name of consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>			
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources & S151 Officer	18.01.24	18.01.24
Elaine Browne	Deputy Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer	18.01.24	18.01.24
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Deputy Director of Finance & Deputy S151 Officer		

Jane Cryer	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer		
<i>Mandatory:</i>	<i>Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>		
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	N/A	N/A
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive		
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place		
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health		
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children’s Services & Education		
<i>Assistant Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Rebecca Hatch	Assistant Director of Strategy & Communications	16.01.24	16.01.24

## REPORT HISTORY

<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Urgency item?</b>	<b>To follow item?</b>
For information	No	No

Report Author: Radhika Thirunarayana-Govindarajan, Lead Performance Analyst and Rachel Kinniburgh, Service Lead – Strategic Policy, Performance & Insights

## APPENDIX A

# Quarterly Assurance Report

Performance Data as at Q2 (Jul-Sep) 2023/24 or where latest monthly data is available until October-23.

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Report Author(s)	
Radhika Thirunarayana-Govindarajan	Lead Performance Analyst
Rachel Kinniburgh	Service Lead – Strategy, Policy & Performance
Steve Mappley	Insurance & Risk Manager

## 1. Executive Summary

### Performance

- 1.1 An interim suite of performance indicators (“the Interim PMF”) has been developed for reporting in 2023/24 as part of Quarterly Assurance reporting arrangements. A new Council Plan and related performance management framework is currently in development and will be in place by April 2024. The Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel will have a role in reviewing the new performance management framework, and comments shared by the Panel to date – including the need to include outcome/impact focused indicators – are being factored into the new framework’s development. The structure and format of this report will continue to be refined in line with feedback from both Cabinet and the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel to ensure that it delivers the insights required for assurance and decision-making.
- 1.2 The Interim PMF has a total of 65 indicators, with further indicators being identified for inclusion as appropriate over time. It is noted that the indicators reported in 2023/24 follow different frequencies (e.g. monthly, quarterly), and this report sets out the latest data available at the time of this report’s preparation – either Q2 (Jul-Sep) or Oct-23. This report’s preparation has preceded availability of Q3 data for indicators reported on a quarterly frequency.
- 1.3 Table 1 summarises the volume of indicators reported in this QAR for each Directorate with a breakdown by RAG status and an indication of the change since the last QAR was reported to Cabinet in Oct-23 shown in brackets. Of the 37 target-based indicators, 84% are either green or amber (31/37), 14% are red (5/37) and 3% (1/37) have no latest data available. Details of performance for each Directorate are set out in relevant sections of this report and a high-level summary of key messages across all Directorates is provided at 1.4.

**Table 1: Latest available period performance with Directorate breakdown (previous QAR position identified in brackets to show change)**

Directorate	Red	Amber	Green	Monitoring only	No data available	Total
RBWM corporate cross-cutting	1 (→ 1)	0 (↓ 1)	3 (↑ 2)	9		13
Adult Social Care & Health	2 (↓ 4)	0 (→ 0)	4 (↑ 3)	7		13
Children’s Services & Education	1 (→ 1)	1 (→ 1)	9 (↑ 8)	4		15
Place	1 (↑ 0)	1 (↓ 2)	7 (↓ 8)	8	1	18
Resources	0 (↓ 1)	4 (↑ 2)	2 (↓ 3)	0		6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b> (↓ 7)	<b>6</b> (→ 6)	<b>25</b> (↑ 24)	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>65</b>

## Key messages:

- 1.4 **Finance:** The council's serious financial position remains the most acute challenge. A separate Budget Monitoring report is provided to Cabinet monthly with full detail of the council's latest financial position. The risk to the council's financial stability is driven in large part by key strategic risks within services – in particular rising costs, demand pressures and recruitment challenges within adult social care, children's social care and housing. The council's financial position is impacted by its ability to mitigate risks in these areas. While the draft budget for next year has been balanced, it is dependent on the delivery of a large transformation programme and on a range of external factors. The in-year position continues to fluctuate and has been worsening over recent months due to these pressures.
- 1.5 **Adult social care:** the service continues to see acute staffing challenges. A reliance on agency staff to deliver a statutory duty has significant financial implications for the council and risks the quality of care provided. The percentage of posts filled by permanent staff has been declining and is at 70% (Oct-23), meaning that almost a third of posts are vacant or filled by temporary or agency staff.
- 1.6 Despite the challenges, data released in December 2023 as part of the annual Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) shows a trend of growing satisfaction year-on-year in some key areas of service quality. The borough is ranked top nationally for social care-related quality of life, 2<sup>nd</sup> nationally for the proportion of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment, 3<sup>rd</sup> nationally for residents feeling safe, and 4<sup>th</sup> nationally for people's overall satisfaction with their care and support. These figures provide reassurance on the quality of services provided, as requested by Corporate Overview & Scrutiny.
- 1.7 **Children's social care:** The service continues to see acute staffing challenges to deliver its statutory duties, which means an over-reliance on agency staff and related financial implications for the council due to higher costs.
- 1.8 **Housing:** The cost of living crisis continues to impact the housing service. This, combined with a growing number of asylum seekers, a limited housing stock, and increasing prices for rental properties continues to place considerable strain on the provision of temporary accommodation within the borough and remains a key challenge for the council. The % of households in temporary accommodation within the borough was 39.3% in Oct-23 (red), down from 43% (amber, Aug-23) reported in the last QAR. As at Dec-23 there were 264 households in temporary accommodation, 163 of which (62%) were placed out of borough. Of those placed out of borough, 83% (136/163) were placed in Slough.

## **Risk**

- 1.9 Risks potentially carrying the most damaging impacts on our measurement scale are classified as key risks. The inclusion of risks within any level of risk register does not mean there is an immediate problem but signifies officers are aware of potential risks and have devised strategies for the implementation of relevant mitigation measures towards the accepted appetite position. Table 2 sets out the current risk assessment status by Directorate.
- 1.10 Cabinet Members are notified of the key risks where they are named as the risk owner, typically as part of a Member briefing. Officers are tasked with ensuring that any comments by Members are reflected in the assessment.
- 1.11 If any risks are of such low inherent impact that there is no good reason to continue referencing them as key risks then they are removed from the key risk registers. They are usually re-categorised as service area risks unless to do so would simply create extraneous “noise” and be of no management benefit. In which case they would be removed completely.

**Table 2: Current risk assessment status by Directorate**

	High	Medium/ high	Medium	Low
RBWM strategic risks	3	4	5	3
Adults, Social Care and Health	0	0	3	0
Chief Executive	0	0	1	0
Children’s Services and Education	1	0	0	2
Place	0	2	0	2
Resources	0	0	3	0



## 2. RBWM corporate cross-cutting

### Performance

2.1 Scorecard 1 sets out cross-cutting corporate indicators and reflects the latest data available at the time of this report's preparation.

**Scorecard 1: Corporate cross-cutting performance** [please note a separate Budget Monitoring report is provided to Cabinet monthly with full detail of the council's latest financial position]

Corporate cross-cutting									
Information governance									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
[RBWM:IG1] % of information requests processed within 20 working days or within agreed timelines	Oct 23	91.3%		84.4%	↑	90.1%	90.0%	90.0%	Monthly
Budget									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
[RBWM:M1] % forecast variance to service revenue budget	Oct 23	7.9%		6.8%	↓	7.9%	0.0%	0.0%	Monthly
[RBWM:M1a] Forecast variance to service revenue budget (£000s)	Oct 23	£7,396		£6,288	?	£7,396			Monthly
[RBWM:M2] % savings made or on track	Oct 23	45.0%		45.0%	?	45.0%		100.0%	Monthly
[RBWM:M2a] Savings made or on track (£000s)	Oct 23	£4,871		£4,871	?	£4,871			Monthly
[RBWM:M3] Overdue debts (excluding Housing Benefits over-payments) (£000s)	Oct 23	£7,380		£7,457	?	£7,380			Monthly
Complaints & Compliments									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
[RBWM:C10] # of compliments received (RBWM Formal Corporate)	Sep 23	97		120	?	217			Quarterly
[RBWM:C6b] # of contacts progressed as complaints (RBWM Formal Corporate)	Sep 23	43		53	?	96			Quarterly
Workforce									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
[RBWM:P01] Headcount	Oct 23	575		566	?	575			Monthly
[RBWM:P02] FTE	Oct 23	523.21		514.69	?	523.21			Monthly
[RBWM:P05] # of working days lost to sickness per headcount (YTD)	Oct 23	1.95		1.57	↓	1.95	3.38	5.80	Monthly
[RBWM:P06] % voluntary turnover (Month)	Oct 23	1.24%		0.54%	?	1.24%			Monthly
[RBWM:P07] % voluntary turnover (YTD)	Oct 23	8.33%		7.14%	↑	8.33%	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly

## Key messages

2.2 **Finance:** The council's serious financial position remains the most acute challenge. In Oct-23 the % forecast variance to service revenue budget was 7.9% (red), worsening from 6.8% in Sep-23. In monetary terms this is a £7,396,000 variance in Oct-23 compared to £6,288,000 in Sep-23. The council has taken swift and decisive action to address the serious financial challenges it faces. This includes introducing a spending control panel which reviews all avoidable spend over £500 and working with each directorate to create robust and deliverable plans to increase income, reduce costs and deliver transformation. A separate Budget Monitoring report is provided to Cabinet monthly with full detail of the council's latest financial position. The council shared its draft Budget in December 2023, which sets out proposals for a balanced budget for 2024/25, however significant delivery risks remain.

2.3 **Workforce:** The council monitors a range of workforce-related indicators, including the number of working days lost to sickness and voluntary turnover, that are drawn from the council's internal HR system. The Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel has acknowledged that it would be beneficial to incorporate additional indicators into this report to provide additional insight into agency staff, vacancy rate and the related financial impact. Discussions are in train with officers from relevant services to define the required indicators and the data points required to report against these as part of future reporting. More broadly, maintaining workforce stability is a key risk for the council and included on the corporate risk register (HR26), shown in Table 3, with key mitigations. It is acknowledged that there are capacity gaps across the council which will take time to be addressed, but which are being actively looked at as part of the budget-setting process for 2024/25.

2.3.1 **Working days lost to sickness:** The end of year target is to have fewer than 5.8 working days lost to sickness in total, with a set monthly target trajectory up to 5.8. In 2023/24 sickness has been consistently below the set target trajectory and therefore flagging as green with no concerns. The latest position at the time of this report's preparation is 1.95 (Oct-23), lower than last year (2.15 Oct-22). It is acknowledged that hybrid working has seen a reduction in sickness absence as staff who feel that they are well enough to work from home may choose to do so. Trends will be monitored closely during the winter seasons as Covid Boosters and Winter flu vaccinations are rolled out by the NHS. Sickness is reported at a Directorate and service-level under "Workforce" in relevant sections of this report.

2.3.2 **Voluntary turnover:** It is acknowledged that some staff-churn is healthy for any organisation and so the year-end target for RBWM is for % voluntary turnover to be within an acceptable range of 12.9% at the end of the financial year. Monthly targets are profiled as a trajectory line up to that 12.9% year-end target. The latest position at the time of this report's preparation is 8.33%, which falls within the acceptable range of the Oct-23 target (7.53%) and therefore flagging green. Voluntary turnover is reported at Directorate and service-level under "Workforce" in relevant sections of this report.

- 2.4 **Information governance:** The council monitors the timeliness of processing Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, including Environmental Information Requests (EIRs) that relate to various environmental aspects. Monthly performance shows volatility as responsiveness can be impacted by the complexity of incoming FOIs and, on occasion, the need to retrieve records or information stored in offsite storage facilities. The council is currently meeting its target of 90% with 571/634 (90.1%) of FOIs responded to within timescales in total between 1 April and 31 October. This indicator will continue to be monitored.
- 2.5 **Complaints and compliments:** It is acknowledged that all complaints and compliments data is drawn from a live system and data may retrospectively change as complaints progress through the various stages of the process. The council publishes an Annual Compliments and Complaints Report, providing detailed focus on volumes of compliments and complaints including reasons for complaints, outcomes and lessons learnt. A Q2 snapshot of the system shows that there have been lower volumes of both complaints (Q2: 97) and compliments (Q2: 43) received in Q2 compared to Q1.
- 2.6 “Universal services” such as waste & recycling, council tax, parking tend to see higher complaints volumes generally, however there can be volatility in volumes of complaints for these areas across quarterly reporting periods due to a range of factors including seasonality (e.g. annual billing for council tax, bin collection during holidays due to collection date changes). A higher proportion of complaints received in Q2 related to housing options (23.3%, 10/43) and this follows a quarter on quarter rise in housing options complaints since Q3 22/23, a trend that could be attributable to a combination of factors including increased demand, team vacancies and possible counting of banding appeals as complaints. The service is reviewing the data, key themes and learnings to identify how to reduce complaints in this area. There has been a reduction in the volume of complaints in relation to both waste & recycling (14%, 6/43) and planning applications & enquiries (14%, 6/43) from Q1. There were no complaints in Q2 about debt recovery, enforcement and parking compared to a sum of 13 complaints in Q1, contributing to an overall reduction in complaint volumes in Q2 23/24.

## **Risk**

- 2.7 Senior management undertook a comprehensive re-evaluation and revision of the entire strategic risk register during December 2022 and January 2023 which informs much of the content of our current key strategic risk registers as per Table 3. Throughout the year the key operational and strategic risks are reviewed typically as part of a directorate management meeting to encourage discussion and challenge. A review and refresh of the strategic risk register will take place in 2024 once the new Council Plan is in place.
- 2.8 Since the Q2 report one new risk has been added to the resources directorate's risk portfolio:
- There is a risk that the current CRM<sup>1</sup> needs to be shut down because it goes end of life, fails the necessary mitigations and this happens before the new becomes operational.
- 2.9 No risks have been removed from any our key risk registers in the last quarter.
- 2.10 Mitigation timescales will be introduced into the risk commentaries at future risk review sessions to provide further granularity around the progress of outstanding control measures.

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<sup>1</sup> Customer Relationship Management software.

**Table 3: Strategic Risks**

Risk	Directorate	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review
<p>HOF6 - The council's financial strategy needs to be effective in dealing with pressures. Addressing the ongoing impact of historical Council Tax cuts and the cost of servicing debt remain key concerns.</p> <p>As at the end of November, the forecast revenue outturn for the year is an overspend of £7.396m reducing to £3.688m including unallocated contingency budgets and changes to funding budgets.</p> <p>The risk is that although we have drafted a balanced budget for the coming year, our reserves will be so depleted that our already low level of financial resilience has reduced even further which increases our risk of having to issue a S114 notice.</p> <p>The drafting of a balanced budget was a significant achievement but in order for it to be realised, a large scale transformation programme is under way and there is still huge uncertainty about the longer term position.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly budget updates at ELT/Cabinet briefing.</li> <li>• Strategic business plan at Cabinet briefing 06/23.</li> <li>• Since October, all non-essential spend over £500 has required approval via a Spending Control Panel.</li> <li>• Capital expenditure has been reviewed to minimise borrowing requirements.</li> <li>• Budget challenge sessions successfully concluded and a balanced draft budget published in December.</li> </ul>	Executive Director Resources	16	16	8	Static	24/10/23

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Risk	Directorate	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review
<p>CLIM12 - Climate change – extreme weather conditions, carbon emissions.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate strategy approved Dec 2020.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Climate Change Adaption plan.</li> </ul>	Executive Director Place	12	12	9	Static	21/11/23
<p>SDCHIL29 - Impact of winter flu and possible future pathogen variants.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RBWM Outbreak Control Plan.</li> <li>Hospitals have critical incident plans e.g., postpone non-urgent operations. Priority that beds are available for seriously ill patients.</li> </ul>	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health	12	12	8	Static	21/09/23
<p>HR26 – Maintaining workforce stability. Problems in recruitment and retention of staff.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place: likely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision for salary increases in MTFP.</li> <li>Salary gateways where appropriate.</li> <li>Ongoing consideration of revisions to posts to attract suitably qualified candidates.</li> <li>HR manager - recruitment and retention to work with senior managers to develop strategies to reduce agency spend.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continual review of terms and conditions and further national benchmarking.</li> </ul>	Chief Executive	9	9	3	Static	31/10/23

Risk	Directorate	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review
<p>SDCHIL27 – a potential increase in residents suffering complex mental health disorders could impact on RBWM to support the consequences.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with ICB and ICP to ensure that health services prioritise mental health services.</li> <li>Develop "Mental Health in School" teams across the borough</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public health strategy alignment.</li> <li>Progress in Frimley ICB.</li> </ul>	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health	9	9	3	Static	20/09/23
<p>HOUS03 - Increasing migration and movement of people placed in local hotels could result in an increased demand on RBWM's critical front-line services.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Berkshire and national meetings to ensure RBWM is notified of when asylum seekers are appearing.</li> <li>Work with the Home Office, Clearsprings etc to try and find a solution to growing numbers of asylum seekers in hotels.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve early notification process by having access to the asylum placement information portal.</li> <li>Recognise budget pressures and reflect in MTFP.</li> </ul>	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health/ Executive Director Children's Services and Education Executive Director of Place	9	9	3	Static	31/10/23
<p>SDCHIL28 – Financial implications arising from the state of the social care market and demand pressures.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p>	Executive Director of Adult Social Care &	9	9	6	Static	05/10/23

Risk	Directorate	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of robust management controls in Optalis to manage funding packages and spend.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transitions strategy.</li> <li>Commissioning plan for supported housing</li> <li>Pan ICS commissioning task group for low volume of residents with highly complex needs.</li> <li></li> </ul>	Health/ Executive Director Children's Services and Education					
<p>HR25 - IT infrastructure failure, cyber-crime, technological change.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure remote working.</li> <li>Networks protected by multiple security layers using firewall and other control technologies.</li> <li>Multiple data centres provide increased resilience.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Go through cyber policy following external review.</li> </ul>	Executive Director Resources	8	8	3	Static	31/10/23
<p>POLPER20 - Failure to secure best value for contracted services.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change control mechanisms.</li> <li>Exit clauses/strategies negotiated.</li> <li>Robust governance arrangements at Member and officer levels.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve commercial management skills and capacity to assist services.</li> </ul>	Executive Director Resources	8	8	4	Static	24/10/23



Risk	Directorate	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve governance on decentralised contract management.</li> </ul>						
<p>SDCHIL25 - Major safeguarding issue leads to significant and preventable harm/death to vulnerable people.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MASH strengthens response to children and young people at risk of significant harm incl. CSE.</li> <li>Adult Safeguarding hub setup within the general front door service.</li> <li>Revised adult and children's safeguarding partnership arrangements implemented with external scrutineers engaged throughout.</li> </ul>	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health/ Executive Director Children's Services and Education	6	6	6	Target achieved	20/09/23
<p>CORP7 - Uncertainty around major schemes and commercial projects.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prop Co's risk register details regeneration risks with joint venture partners with quarterly board review.</li> <li>Appraisal of all our projects so there's complete understanding of each individual scheme.</li> <li>Introduction of improved governance for Prop Co including creation of new Shareholder Panel to hold company to account.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure minimum EPC<sup>[1]</sup> of E for our commercial and residential stock as per MEES<sup>[2]</sup>.</li> </ul>	Executive Director Place	6	6	6	Target achieved	21/11/23

Risk	Directorate	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review
<p>SDCHIL26 - Cost of living crisis - increased levels of debt, community tension, anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HSF pilot well established.</li> <li>• Active communication about ways of getting support (Here to Help).</li> <li>• Engagement with voluntary sector to support with Household Support scheme.</li> </ul>	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health	6	6	6	Target achieved	20/09/23
<p>HOF15 - Fraud and corruption leads to loss of council resources.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong protocols in place including anti-money laundering, prevention of bribery and anti-corruption policies.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess counter-fraud resource options best suited to the council (following up SWAP risk assessment exercise summer 23) by 31 March 2024.</li> </ul>	Executive Director Resources	4	4	4	Target achieved	24/10/23
<p>ELEC02 - Failures in running an election leads to loss of confidence by electorate in RBWM.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory training for staff involved.</li> <li>• Guidance provided by the Electoral Commission incl. polling station, verification and count centre risks.</li> <li>• Election project group chaired by the RO, comprising senior officers. Group maintains an elections project risk register.</li> </ul>	Deputy Director of Law and Governance	3	3	3	Static	24/10/23

Risk	Directorate	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review
<p>POLPER21 - Legislation not responded to effectively leads to external intervention.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistant directors/managers keep up to date with service developments</li> <li>Legal advice on decisions is a mandatory part of our report writing mechanism.</li> </ul>	Executive Director Resources	4	4	4	Target achieved	24/10/23

<sup>1</sup> Energy Performance Certificate

<sup>2</sup> Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

## Audit

2.11 The purpose of inclusion in this report is to monitor the implementation of the highest priority actions agreed (priority 1). The audits selected for monitoring are those where high corporate risks have been reported. These are listed in Table 4. Oversight of Internal Audit delivery is the responsibility of the Audit and Governance Committee.

**Table 4: Audits Priority 1**

<b>Name of Audit</b>	<b>Priority 1 Action</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Agreed date for implementation</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>Business Continuity Planning</b>	All services to complete a Business Impact Analysis (BIA)	917	ED Place	<del>30/09/2023</del> <b>31/01/2024</b>	Work has been started, but an ICT DR plan will not be ready before January 2024.  All services should have completed their BCP and BIA by the end of November.
	All services to complete a Business Continuity Plan (BCP)	943	ED Place	<del>30/09/2023</del> <b>30/11/2023</b>	The intention is to have 90% of the plans updated and signed off by the end of November, the last 10% will be completed once independencies have been identified.
	A corporate BIA to exercise to be completed and incorporated in the corporate BCP	887	Service Manager – Joint Emergency Planning Unit	<del>31/10/2023</del> <b>31/01/2024</b>	Once all services have completed their service BCPs and Business Impact Analysis, JEPU will update the corporate BCP and present this to CMT for approval. CMT meeting has been moved to January 2024.
	A process of review of BCPs to be put in place for all high value contracts.	896	ED Place	<del>31/12/2023</del> <b>31/12/2024</b>	a) The process will initially look at the critical service providers during the BC process.  b) A meeting with the procurement to review the process has been requested.

Name of Audit	Priority 1 Action	Ref.	Responsible Officer	Agreed date for implementation	Progress Update
<b>Contract Management</b>	Implement a contract management framework and associated guidance	494	Procurement Manager	31/12/2023	No update received
	Review the published contract register to ensure completeness and compliance with the Local Transparency Code 2015	495	Procurement Manager	31/03/2023	<b>Self-assessed as complete</b> in August 2023 as compliant with the Code.
	Complete analysis to identify spend where a contract is needed and agree how compliance can be achieved	496	Procurement Manager	31/03/2023	<b>Self-assessed as complete</b> in August 2023. Analysis completed and Agresso updated following spend reports and client updates.
	Deliver contract management training to all contract managers	497		31/03/2023 <b>Overdue</b>	Cannot be delivered by HR. Asked Procurement to take forward if new posts are approved – <b>TBC</b>
	Analysis undertaken to identify and take action in relation to all agency off-contract spend	504	Head of HR	<del>31/12/2023</del> <b>31/03/2024</b>	Appointment to new HR post has now been made, starting in Dec 2023. Priority will be to work with services on use of agencies and to scope a new contract.
	Procedure to authorise alternatives to the agency corporate contract to be agreed.	505	Head of HR	<del>31/12/2023</del> <b>31/03/2024</b>	Appointment to new HR post has now been made, starting in Dec 2023. Priority will be to work with services on use of agencies and to scope a new contract.

Name of Audit	Priority 1 Action	Ref.	Responsible Officer	Agreed date for implementation	Progress Update
<b>S106 Agreements</b>	Agree a process which sets out roles and responsibilities and the arrangements for recording, monitoring and collecting financial contributions	1211	Service Lead Infrastructure	30/09/2023	<b>Self-assessed by service as complete.</b> A follow-up audit has just commenced, and early indications are that the new process designed and implemented has made clear the roles and responsibilities for the end-to-end process.
	Agree a proactive approach to alerting a designated officer for each agreement when a contribution milestone is reached and payment is due.	1212	Service Lead Infrastructure	30/09/2023	<b>Self-assessed by service as complete.</b> A follow-up audit has just commenced, and early indications are that the new process designed and implemented has provided a full audit trail of payment milestones agreed and due.
	To maintain a full audit trail. To consider using Exacom or similar as a management system for S106 agreements and payments.	1213	Service Lead Infrastructure	30/09/2023	<b>Self-assessed by service as complete.</b> A follow-up audit has just commenced, and early indications are that the new process designed and implemented has provided a full audit trail for agreements and payments.
<b>Premises Health &amp; Safety</b>	Conduct a comprehensive review of all premises not solely occupied by RBWM staff. Where roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined, introduce Service Level Agreements	2039	Executive Director of Place Services	31/03/2024	Executive Director and Prop Co will be liaising with the Asset Management Team and Legal to review the leases in place to clarify roles and responsibilities. There is also a working group for Tinkers Lane with Contract Managers to bottom out what the obligations in the contracts are. Property Services have

Name of Audit	Priority 1 Action	Ref.	Responsible Officer	Agreed date for implementation	Progress Update
	(SLAs) to explicitly outline each party's roles and responsibilities related to health and safety.				collated a list of assets as a start for the Asset Team to either add to or remove. <b>Self-assessed as on track for completion by 31/03/24.</b>
	Ensure that all fire risk assessments for properties with lease or partnership arrangements are brought up to date. Ensure all fire extinguisher inspection certificates are stored for centralised monitoring.	2118	Head of Compliance and Operations, RBWM Property Company	31/12/2023	<b>Self-assessed as complete.</b>

### 3. Adult Social Care & Health Directorate

#### Performance

3.1 Scorecard 2 sets out KPIs reported for the Adult Social Care & Health Directorate and reflects the latest data available at the time of this report's preparation.

#### Scorecard 2: Adult Social Care & Health Directorate

Adult Social Care & Health Directorate									
Health improvement									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
[DA2:19] % of clients engaged in treatment that are 'showing substantial progress' (Drug & Alcohol)	Sep 23	44.4%		44.0%	↑	44.4%	55.4%	55.4%	Quarterly
% of service users (tier 3) who have successfully quit smoking at 4 weeks	Sep 23	63.8%		67.0%	↓	63.8%	60.0%	60.0%	Quarterly
% of service-users who lost any amount of weight at the end of active intervention	Sep 23	85.0%		68.4%	↑	76.9%	75.0%	75.0%	Quarterly
Complaints & Compliments									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
[Opt:C1b] # of contacts progressed as complaints (Adults)	Sep 23	6		13	?	19			Quarterly
[Opt:C5] # of compliments received (Adults)	Sep 23	6		8	?	14			Quarterly
Adult social care									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
# of permanent admissions to care for those aged 65yrs+ per 100,000	Oct 23	28		34	↓	278	388	668	Monthly
% of older people (aged 65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital	Mar 23	90.7%		90.8%	?	90.7%			Annual
% of permanent admissions to a care home for those aged 65yrs+ (previously self-funded)	Oct 23	21.4%		29.4%	?	21.4%			Monthly
% of safeguarding concerns progressing to enquiry	Oct 23	36.2%		42.0%	↓	36.2%	34.0%	34.0%	Monthly
% of statutory service establishment posts filled with permanent staff	Oct 23	70.0%		72.0%	↓	70.0%	90.0%	90.0%	Monthly
[ASCOF] % of clients with Learning Disabilities in settled accommodation	Mar 23	75.1%		79.3%	?	75.1%			Annual
[ASCOF] % of Mental Health clients securing appropriate employment	Mar 22	11.0%		11.0%	?	11.0%			Annual
[ASCOF] % satisfied/very satisfied with the care & support services they receive (exc LD customers)	Mar 23	73.5%		65.1%	↑	73.5%			Annual



## Key messages:

- 3.2 Adult Social Care is a highly regulated environment, and it is acknowledged that the indicators reported in Scorecard 2 are a sub-set of a larger and more detailed data-set that the service monitors routinely to provide assurance of delivery against its remit.
- 3.3 **Adult social care:** The service continues to see acute staffing challenges with the % of statutory service establishment posts filled with permanent staff following a sustained downward/worsening trend from Apr-23 (74%) to 70% in Oct-23, below the 90% target. Wider factors contributing to unfulfilled vacancies, especially for Adult Social Workers, include salary disparities with local authorities, an increased demand and a shortage of experienced staff, creating it a job seeker's market. A reliance on agency staff has significant financial implications for the council and the corporate risk register includes "maintaining workforce stability" as a key risk (HR26) with mitigations including development of strategies to increase permanent recruitment / retention to reduce agency spend (see Table 3).
- 3.4 Data released in December 2023 as part of the annual Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) ranks the 150 local authorities which provide social care in England on how well they deliver to achieve the outcomes that matter most to people. The rankings include feedback from independent survey undertaken annually in the borough. The data shows a trend of growing satisfaction year-on-year in some key areas, and the borough is ranked top nationally for social care-related quality of life, 2<sup>nd</sup> nationally for the proportion of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment, 3<sup>rd</sup> nationally for residents feeling safe, and 4<sup>th</sup> nationally for people's overall satisfaction with their care and support. A random selection of adults who had contact in the last 12 months with Optalis, or a contracted social care provider, were invited to participate and over 275 borough residents responded to the survey, including residents with learning disabilities, those living in care homes and residents in the community.
- 3.5 **Health improvement:** the indicators reported are drawn from a more detailed suite of indicators used to monitor key contracted services for drug and alcohol treatment, weight management and smoking cessation. It is acknowledged that the council's Public Health commissioned weight management service is relatively new, and while the proportion of service-users who lost any amount of weight at the end of intervention is performing above target (75%) at 85% in Q2 it should be noted this is 17 of 20 people who completed the programme from the 155 who were referred in the quarter.
- 3.6 The proportion of clients engaged in drug and alcohol treatment showing "substantial progress" is 44.4%, below target (55.4%) and the national figure of 47% but showing a sustained quarterly improvement from Q3 22/23 (39%). The cohort includes service-users who are new to treatment as well as service-users who have relapsed and been readmitted.

- 3.7 It is highlighted that while the Q2 position in relation to the proportion of service-users who have successfully quit smoking at 4 weeks has worsened in Q2 (63.8%) from Q1 (67%) there are no concerns as Q2 saw higher volumes of people accessing the service in Q2 (116) compared to Q1 (97). Service-provider information has shown that the majority of quitters in Q2 are from identified priority groups that the council is trying to reach, and those with a mental health condition and/or a long-term condition continue to have strong outcomes.
- 3.8 Overall, there are no concerns currently with performance against health improvement indicators as all are either meeting target or showing sustained incremental improvement:

### **Workforce**

- 3.9 Scorecard 3 outlines workforce information for the Adult Social Care & Health Directorate across each of its service-delivery units. Please note that the workforce data does not include figures for Optalis. Working days lost to sickness for the Directorate and each of its service-delivery units has been consistently below the set target trajectory and therefore flagging as green with no concerns. There are no concerns at present in relation to voluntary turnover in relation to the Directorate and the service-delivery units identified in Scorecard 3.
- 3.10 Optalis carry out a range of services for residents of the borough, including the delivery of statutory social work assessments for those who may need our care. The workforce in this service has an establishment of 130 posts, of which 74% (96/130) are covered by permanent staff, 11% (14/130) by agency staff and the remainder 15% (20/130) are vacant.
- 3.11 Within this cohort, 71% (10/14) of the agency staff are qualified social workers with only 58% (23/40) of the social worker establishment covered by permanent staff. The current level of social worker capacity - 33 people - is the lowest level of safe operation, and any further permanent turnover will have to be covered with agency staff.

### Scorecard 3: Workforce (Adult Social Care & Health Directorate)

Adult Social Care & Health Directorate Workforce								
Headcount								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Adult Social Care & Health Directorate	Oct 23	27		26	?			Monthly
Public Health	Oct 23	8		8	?			Monthly
Safeguarding Information & Advice	Oct 23	6		6	?			Monthly
Transformation & Community Partnerships	Oct 23	11		10	?			Monthly
FTE								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Adult Social Care & Health Directorate	Oct 23	23.43		22.43	?			Monthly
Public Health	Oct 23	7.60		7.60	?			Monthly
Safeguarding Information & Advice	Oct 23	3.68		3.68	?			Monthly
Transformation & Community Partnerships	Oct 23	10.65		9.65	?			Monthly
Working days lost to sickness per headcount YTD								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Adult Social Care & Health Directorate	Oct 23	0.56		0.29	↘	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Public Health	Oct 23	1.09		0.36	↘	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Safeguarding Information & Advice	Oct 23	0.29		0.14	↘	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Transformation & Community Partnerships	Oct 23	0.31		0.33	↗	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Voluntary turnover (Month)								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Adult Social Care & Health Directorate	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	?			Monthly
Public Health	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	?			Monthly
Safeguarding Information & Advice	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	?			Monthly
Transformation & Community Partnerships	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	?			Monthly
Voluntary turnover (YTD)								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Adult Social Care & Health Directorate	Oct 23	7.27%		7.41%	↗	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
Public Health	Oct 23	23.53%		23.53%	↗	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
Safeguarding Information & Advice	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	↔	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
Transformation & Community Partnerships	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	↔	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly

## Risk

3.12 Table 5 sets out the current key risks for the directorate.

**Table 5: Adult Social Care & Health Directorate key risks**

Risk	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review date
<p>HSG0006 - Inadequate strategic planning between children's services, adults and health.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust management controls to manage funding packages and spend.</li> <li>• Procedures to plan and manage transitions between children's and adult services.</li> </ul>	8	8	6	Static	20/09/23
<p>HSG0009 - Failure to meet aspiration of suitably integrated health and social care.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the NHS to develop the ICS as part of the NHS long term plan.</li> <li>• Strong governance - integrated health &amp; social care commissioning board takes risk-based decisions on BCF progress/performance.</li> </ul>	6	6	6	Static	20/09/23
<p>HSG0007 - Increased demand resulting from adult social care demographics.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market management by strategic commissioning.</li> <li>• Collaborative commissioning with NHS and other East Berkshire authorities on a range of provision, including intermediate care.</li> </ul>	6	6	6	Static	20/09/23

## 4. Chief Executive Directorate

### Performance

4.1 There are no performance indicators reported by this Directorate.

### Workforce

4.2 Scorecard 4 outlines workforce information for the Chief Executive's Directorate. There are no concerns in relation to sickness, with number of days lost to sickness well below the target for Oct-23 for both the Directorate and the service-delivery unit. There are no concerns in relation to % voluntary turnover (YTD) as reported amber values (12.90% for Chief Executive Directorate and 12.50% for Strategy, Performance & Communications Service) are the result of staff leaving a small team earlier in the year, which significantly inflates reported percentages.

### Scorecard 4: Workforce: Chief Executive's Directorate

Chief Executive Directorate: Workforce								
Headcount								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Chief Executive Directorate	Oct 23	16		16	?			Monthly
Strategy, Performance & Communications	Oct 23	15		15	?			Monthly
FTE								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Chief Executive Directorate	Oct 23	15.41		15.41	?			Monthly
Strategy, Performance & Communications	Oct 23	14.41		14.41	?			Monthly
Working days lost to sickness per headcount YTD								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Chief Executive Directorate	Oct 23	0.09		0.09	↕	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Strategy, Performance & Communications	Oct 23	0.10		2.00	↕	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Voluntary turnover (Month)								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Chief Executive Directorate	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	?			Monthly
Strategy, Performance & Communications	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	?			Monthly
Voluntary turnover (YTD)								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Chief Executive Directorate	Oct 23	12.90%		12.50%	↕	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
Strategy, Performance & Communications	Oct 23	12.50%		12.90%	↕	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly

## Risk

4.3 Table 6 sets out the current key risks for the directorate.

**Table 6: Chief Executive Directorate key risks**

Risk	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review date
<p>CMT40 - Insufficient emergency response or business continuity planning (BCP) failure.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inter authority agreement with JEPU in place (RBWM, WBDC and BFBC) to provide resilience with experts in the field.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% of service BCP's agreed by end of November. Those outstanding will be completed once interdependencies are identified.</li> <li>• Work has been started, but an ICT disaster recovery plan will not be ready before January 2024.</li> <li>• JEPU to run a BCP test in the form of a whole-council exercise during 2023-2024.</li> </ul>	8	8	8	Static	26/09/23

## 5. Children's Services & Education Directorate

### Performance

5.1 Scorecard 5 sets out KPIs reported for the Children's Services & Education Directorate and reflects the latest data available at the time of this report's preparation.

#### Scorecard 5: Children's Services & Education Directorate

Children's Services & Education Directorate									
Domestic abuse									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
# of children in households of MARAC referrals (including repeats)	Sep 23	41		33	?	74			Quarterly
# of reports to police in RBWM (crimes + non-crimes)	Sep 23	840		712	?	1,552			Quarterly
Complaints & Compliments									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
[AfC:C1b] # of contacts progressed as complaints (Children's)	Sep 23	29		21	?	50			Quarterly
[AfC:C5] # of compliments received (Children's)	Sep 23	16		27	?	43			Quarterly
Children & young people									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
[AfC:15] # of first-time entrants into youth justice system	Sep 23	3		6	➔	9	11	22	Quarterly
[AfC:16] # of children referred per 10,000 population (cumulative)	Sep 23	265.00		134.00	➔	265.00	265.00	530.00	Quarterly
[AfC:2] % of borough schools rated by Ofsted as good/outstanding	Sep 23	93.8%		92.3%	➔	93.8%	95.0%	95.0%	Quarterly
[AfC:21] % of children subject to a CPP for 2+ wks visited within last 10 working days	Sep 23	86.4%		96.5%	➔	86.4%	95.0%	95.0%	Quarterly
[AfC:3] % of EHCP assessments completed within 20wks (inc exceptions)	Sep 23	92.1%		97.8%	➔	95.2%	90.0%	90.0%	Quarterly
[AfC:33] % of children placed with in-house foster placements	Sep 23	68.9%		67.9%	➔	68.9%	60.0%	60.0%	Quarterly
[AfC:34] % of care-leavers living in suitable accommodation (19-21yr olds)	Sep 23	96.7%		94.8%	➔	96.7%	95.0%	95.0%	Quarterly
[AfC:35] % of care-leavers in education, training and employment (19-21yr olds)	Sep 23	63.9%		65.5%	➔	63.9%	60.0%	60.0%	Quarterly
[AfC:38] % of referrals closed in the period with a positive outcome	Sep 23	96.6%		94.2%	➔	95.3%	90.0%	90.0%	Quarterly
[AfC:6] % of eligible children receiving a 6-8wk review within 8wks	Sep 23	89.1%		86.2%	➔	87.7%	87.0%	87.0%	Quarterly
[AfC:7] % of children with a review at 2-2.5 years of age	Sep 23	94.6%		72.0%	➔	83.2%	77.2%	77.2%	Quarterly

## Key messages:

- 5.2 Children's Services is a highly regulated environment, and the Children & Young People indicators reported in Scorecard 5 are a sub-set of a larger and more detailed data-set that the service monitors routinely to provide assurance of delivery against its remit.
- 5.3 It is acknowledged that the service has conducted a best practice annual review in Nov/Dec-23 of targets and related tolerance thresholds for all Children & Young People indicators reported here. While this review of targets and tolerances falls outside of standard financial year-end reviews, such a review at this time allows the service to take account of the most up to date regional and national benchmarking data for both children's social care and educational outcomes that is usually published in November/December. The methodology for this target review has been to ensure that, at a local level and as a minimum, the service strives to align with national published performance with the exception of KPIs where performance has been ahead of its comparators – in such instances the service has adjusted targets and tolerance thresholds to continue to be stretching and aligned with Achieving for Children aspirations.
- 5.4 **Children and young people:** Out of the 11 children and young people measures, 8 have improved since the last quarter and 3 have declined. Of the 3 that have declined, 2 (EHCP timeliness and Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training) remain above target, whilst 1 (child protection visiting) is below target. The below target measure bucks the long-term positive trajectory and work is being carried out to understand why this has happened. However, the AfC target of child protection visiting every 10 days is a good practice target which is above the national expectation.
- 5.5 **Children and young people:** Further outcome-focused indicators are being identified for inclusion in future reporting to bring a stronger focus to quality assurance and outcomes for children beyond the operational delivery focus currently reported. However, of the current measures reported, there are a number that are already outcome-focused. For example, it is a good outcome to have Care Leavers living in suitable accommodation and being engaged in education, training or employment and for both of these measures, we are above our target. Another measure is referrals closed with a positive outcome for the child or young person. The target for this measure is 90% and the current quarter is reporting 96.6%, which is an improvement on the previous quarter, as well as above target performance.
- 5.6 **Domestic Abuse:** the number of children in households of MARAC referrals (including repeats) is 41 in Q2, following a consistent quarterly increase from 13 in Q4 22/23. The number of reports to police in RBWM (crimes + non-crimes) is 840, 18% higher than Q1 23/24 (712) and the highest in the last 3 years since Jun-21. The RBWM Domestic Abuse Executive Group has led on a number of initiatives to raise awareness of domestic abuse in the borough, particularly coercive control and individuals are now reporting incidents that they might not



historically have reported, or even seen as domestic abuse. This means that more families can be supported by the professional network, rather than the domestic abuse remaining hidden. Our Think Families Transformation Project is currently in the research/discovery phase and domestic abuse is coming out as a priority area for action. This research will inform next steps so that we can continue to improve our work in this area, by taking a whole family approach.

## Workforce

5.7 Scorecard 6 outlines workforce information for the Children’s Services & Education Directorate and there are no concerns in relation to either working days lost to sickness or the % voluntary turnover YTD for the Directorate. The vacancy rate in front line social worker posts is 39% in Q2, down from 43.9% in Q1. The agency rate in front line social worked posts remains at 41.5% in Q2.

### Scorecard 6: Workforce (Children’s Services & Education Directorate)

Children's Services & Education Directorate: Workforce								
Headcount								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Children's Services & Education Directorate	Oct 23	2		2	?			Monthly
FTE								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Children's Services & Education Directorate	Oct 23	2.00		2.00	?			Monthly
Working days lost to sickness per headcount YTD								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Children's Services & Education Directorate	Oct 23	2.00		1.00	↘	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Voluntary turnover (Month)								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Children's Services & Education Directorate	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	?			Monthly
Voluntary turnover (YTD)								
Org Structure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Children's Services & Education Directorate	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	➔	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
Achieving for Children: Workforce								
Measure	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
Vacancy rate in front line social worker posts	Sep 23	39.0%		43.9%	?			Quarterly
Agency rate in front line social worker posts	Sep 23	41.5%		41.5%	?			Quarterly

## Risk

5.8 Table 7 sets out the current key risks to the directorate.

**Table 7: Children's Services & Education Directorate key risks**

Risk	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review date
<p>SSS019 - Maintain a satisfactory level of health or development for children with complex and multiple needs.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital funding to increase the number of special units attached to mainstream schools</li> <li>Intensive Support team work to avoid children coming into the care of the council/reunify with their family when safe to do so.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RBWM to have one of 33 new special free schools being created nationally.</li> </ul>	12	12	6	Static	21/10/23
<p>SSS017 - Failure to improve standards in our schools.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Termly meetings with all Heads and Chairs of Governors, engaging regional Ofsted lead as appropriate, to drive education agenda.</li> <li>Maintain the education and early years link approach with risk assessed identification of challenging schools.</li> </ul>	4	4	4	Static	05/09/23
<p>SSS018 - Exposure to health and safety risks in schools.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing programme of fire safety works.</li> <li>Asbestos management surveys in place.</li> <li>Electrical testing up to date.</li> </ul>	4	4	4	Static	05/09/23











## 6. Place Directorate

### Performance

6.1 Scorecard 7 sets out KPIs for the Place Directorate and reflects the latest data available at the time of this report's preparation. Staff shortages have impacted the Directorate across a number of service-delivery areas, including Neighbourhood Services. At the time of this report's preparation resourcing levels are being looked at as part of the budget-setting process for 2024/25. It is acknowledged that the Directorate has been carrying significant pressure in terms of inflationary costs on major contracts and the continued impact of the way in which people use services since the pandemic (e.g. parking).

6.2 Overall performance across the indicators reported here is broadly favourable, albeit with key challenges in relation to Housing particularly. Following feedback from the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel on 6 Nov-23, Officers are identifying suitable indicators relating to grounds maintenance for inclusion in future reports.

### Scorecard 7: Place Directorate

Place Directorate									
Planning applications									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
[P:1] % of major planning applications processed in time	Sep 23	100.0%		80.0%	➔	91.7%	65.0%	65.0%	Quarterly
[P:2] % of minor planning applications processed in time	Sep 23	77.1%		80.6%	➔	78.8%	70.0%	70.0%	Quarterly
[P:3] % of other planning applications processed in time	Sep 23	83.6%		84.0%	➔	83.8%	85.0%	85.0%	Quarterly
Community safety									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
# of ASB interventions	Sep 23	0		0	?	0			Quarterly
# of group dispersals across the borough	Sep 23	46		91	?	137			Quarterly
Number of ASB incidents & complaints	Sep 23	155		142	?	297			Quarterly
Environmental health & Trading standards									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
[HEHTS:01] % food businesses that are broadly compliant with food law	Oct 23	87.4%		87.1%	➔	87.4%	80.0%	80.0%	Monthly
[HEHTS:02] # of properties/dwellings improved formally and informally	Sep 23	8		10	?	8			Quarterly
[HEHTS:03] % of complaints (noise) that result in abatement notices	Oct 23	0.0%		0.0%	?	0.0%			Monthly
[HEHTS: 04] # of test purchase operations (TPOs) for age restricted products	Sep 23	1		4	?	5			Quarterly

Leisure centres									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
# of attendances at leisure centres	Oct 23	345,991		322,594	➡	1,953,905	1,149,069	2,010,286	Monthly

Highways									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
(Vol:4) % of 24hr orders responded to on time	Oct 23	100.0%		100.0%	➡	99.0%	98.0%	98.0%	Monthly
(Vol:5) % of emergency 2hr orders responded to on time	Oct 23	100.0%		100.0%	➡	99.6%	98.0%	98.0%	Monthly

Waste management & recycling									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
(4.2.1) % of household waste sent for reuse, recycling	Mar 23	52.1%		51.2%	➡	51.7%	50.0%	50.0%	Quarterly
(Ser:1) Average no. missed collections per 100,000 collections	Oct 23	16.00		18.42	➡	18.29	60.00	60.00	Monthly

Housing									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
# of households in temporary accommodation	Oct 23	244		237	?	244			Monthly
% of households in temporary accommodation that is located within the borough	Oct 23	39.3%		40.5%	➡	39.3%	50.0%	50.0%	Monthly
% successful homelessness prevention activity for households subject to the Prevention/Relief duty	Oct 23	1.9%		4.5%	?	8.6%			Monthly

### Key messages:

6.3 **Housing:** The number of households in temporary accommodation (TA) is 244 in Oct-23, rising from 223 in Apr-23 and at its highest point in the last 3 years. The % of households in temporary accommodation within the borough is 39.3% in Oct-23, below the target of 50% and following a month-on-month downward trend since May-23 (46.2%). This remains a key challenge for the council with contributing factors including: limited housing stock, the continuing cost of living crisis, increases in property prices and rents, and evictions from private rented sector. Additional pressures faced by the Housing Service include providing housing for asylum seekers exiting hotels following confirmation of refugee status. Changes in government policy mean that individuals receiving refugee status may only be given 7 days' notice to leave Home Office accommodation. Other factors include the Government's decision to freeze Local Housing allowance rates for 2023/24. It is acknowledged that increases in rent for private rental properties, coupled with other factors like loss of jobs or cost of living crisis, also sees an increase in rough sleepers who are not placed in temporary accommodation. As at Dec-23 there were 264 households in temporary

accommodation, 163 of which (62%) were placed out of borough. Of those placed out of borough, 83% (136/163) were placed in Slough.

- 6.4 The factors affecting temporary accommodation demand also have an impact on the number of rough sleepers in the borough. In Dec-23 there were 25 known rough sleepers which is a significant rise since Dec-22 where 10 were recorded. The housing service continues to provide a 3-stage pathway for rough sleepers to obtain support and access to healthcare, addiction services, education and housing.
- 6.5 The council largely relies on private rented sector to secure temporary accommodation and is looking to recruit an officer to bridge and nurture relationships with private rented sector, however has had two failed recruitment drives. The cost of temporary accommodation increasing beyond the council's capacity to fund is a key risk on the Directorate's risk register (HOUS02), shown in Table 8, with key mitigations in progress including seeking out new providers, negotiating lower costs and ceasing high-cost placements. The service is also liaising with partners and charities to secure accommodation and work for rough sleepers.
- 6.6 **Waste management & recycling:** The latest available data for the average number of missed collections per 100,000 collections for Oct-23 show a year-to-date average of 18.29 missed collections per 100,000, well below the target of 60, and with no concerns in Q2. However, we are aware of some localised issues with some residents and are working with Councillors and residents to resolve this. The recycling rate data is awaiting national verification from Defra and is shown up to March 2023 indicating an increase in recycling taking place across the borough. Latest waste management data has not been provided for this report due to the team being acutely short-staffed and with a wide range of services in its remit in addition to waste and recycling. Resource has now been identified to update the figures following necessary training and the latest information should be available for the next report. There is potential to run a promotion campaign to encourage residents to recycle more, however with staff shortages this campaign is yet to be confirmed. The service is proactively using resources as effectively as it can to support the waste agenda, including looking at opportunities with contractors and partners for financial contributions to support campaigns in relation to food waste and food minimisation.
- 6.7 **Planning applications:** Performance is broadly stable, with processing of both major and minor planning applications well above set targets for the year (Major 91.7% YTD vs 65% target; Minor 78.8% YTD vs 70% target). Processing of other planning applications shows some volatility quarter on quarter as the volume of applications fluctuates, and while year to date performance is short of target (85%) at 83.8% (amber), there are no current concerns.
- 6.8 **Environment Health & Trading Standards:** Performance in relation to the % of food businesses broadly compliant with food law is tracked monthly and remains

consistently above the 80% target at 87.4% (1,340/1,534) in Oct-23. There are currently no concerns in relation to this service.

**6.9 Leisure centre attendances:** Monthly attendance figures have followed a continuous upward trend since Apr-23, with a total of 1,953,905 attendances in 2023/24 up to end Oct-23, only 56,381 away from the year-end target of 2,010,286. Attendance figures are impacted by seasonality and usually show a decline in the months following peak summer. The service has, however, introduced events including swimming galas, building events, and a young people’s themed event “Random and Rocks” which has drawn in more customers.

**6.10 Highways:** There are no concerns in relation to Highways performance with the % of both 24hr orders and emergency 2hr orders responded to on time consistently maintained at 100% and above set targets of 98%.

## Workforce

**6.11 Scorecard 8** outlines workforce information for the Place Directorate across each of its service-delivery units. The number of working days lost to sickness has been consistently below the set target trajectory for 2023/24 and flagging green with no concerns. There has been some staff turnover in the Housing & Environmental Health, Neighbourhood, and Planning Services in Oct-23 however the year-to-date position for each of these service-delivery units shows an improving monthly trend in terms of moving closer to the target trajectory line.

### Scorecard 8: Workforce (Place Directorate)

Place Workforce								
Headcount								
Org Structure ↑	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Place Directorate	Oct 23	222		218	?			Monthly
Housing and Environmental Health	Oct 23	61		59	?			Monthly
Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth	Oct 23	54		52	?			Monthly
Neighbourhood Services	Oct 23	51		52	?			Monthly
Planning	Oct 23	55		54	?			Monthly

FTE								
Org Structure ↑	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Place Directorate	Oct 23	207.17		203.09	?			Monthly
Housing and Environmental Health	Oct 23	59.27		57.27	?			Monthly
Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth	Oct 23	46.80		44.80	?			Monthly
Neighbourhood Services	Oct 23	47.94		48.86	?			Monthly
Planning	Oct 23	52.17		51.17	?			Monthly

### Working days lost to sickness per headcount YTD

Org Structure ↑	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Place Directorate	Oct 23	1.85		1.34	🔴	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Housing and Environmental Health	Oct 23	2.63		2.25	🔴	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth	Oct 23	0.36		0.23	🔴	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Neighbourhood Services	Oct 23	2.91		1.94	🔴	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Planning	Oct 23	1.40		0.80	🔴	3.38	5.80	Monthly

### Voluntary turnover (Month)

Org Structure ↑	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Place Directorate	Oct 23	1.40%		0.94%	?			Monthly
Housing and Environmental Health	Oct 23	1.74%		1.77%	?			Monthly
Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	?			Monthly
Neighbourhood Services	Oct 23	1.96%		0.00%	?			Monthly
Planning	Oct 23	1.75%		1.77%	?			Monthly

### Voluntary turnover (YTD)

Org Structure ↑	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Place Directorate	Oct 23	9.30%		8.45%	🟢	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
Housing and Environmental Health	Oct 23	12.17%		10.62%	🟢	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth	Oct 23	4.12%		4.21%	🔴	7.53%		Monthly
Neighbourhood Services	Oct 23	3.92%		1.94%	🟢	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
Planning	Oct 23	17.54%		15.93%	🟢	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly

## Risk

6.12 Table 8 sets out the key risks to the directorate.

**Table 8: Place Directorate key risks**

Risk	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review date
<p>HOUS02 - Costs of temporary accommodation increasing beyond capacity to fund.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise and manage placements to ensure full occupancy.</li> <li>• Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 18-23.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek out new providers, negotiating lower cost and ceasing high-cost placements.</li> <li>• Look at alternative options such as social housing stock levels and private landlords.</li> </ul>	9	9	6	Static	21/06/23
<p>HPLAND019 – Failure to undertake inspections of council trees and delivering works.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety works are raised through the Arboriculture Services Framework.</li> <li>• Inspections targeted at trees in urban areas, as this is where impacts on tree health are the most frequent and significant.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracted inspections ceased end of 21/22 financial year. Budget proposals for inspection 23/24 put forward.</li> </ul>	9	9	8	Static	21/11/23
<p>IST02 - Flood risk is not sufficiently dealt with by preventative and responsive measures.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RBWM emergency plan and flooding risk management strategy</li> </ul>	4	4	4	Static	03/11/23



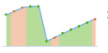
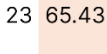
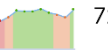
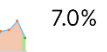


Risk	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi agency response plan co-ordinated by flood risk manager.</li> </ul> Key mitigations in progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow up strategic and EOC outcomes from October 23 flooding exercise. Date: tba.</li> </ul>					
PPS013 - Failure to assess resources and demands resulting from cold weather.  Key mitigations in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A comprehensive annual winter maintenance plan is in place detailing the roles and responsibilities of contractors.</li> <li>Risk assessments behind road treatment strategy. Contractors also have their own risk assessments for carrying out the works.</li> </ul>	2	2	2	Static	21/11/23

## 7. Resources Directorate

### Performance

7.1 Scorecard 9 sets out KPIs for the Resources Directorate and reflects the latest data available at the time of this report's preparation. Overall there are no concerns in relation to the indicators reported. Staff shortages have impacted the Revenue, Benefits, Library & Residents Service across a number of service-delivery areas, including a long-standing vacancy in the Collections team since 2022 and three vacancies in the Benefits team. The service has now filled these vacancies, and new staff continue to receive training.

### Scorecard 9: Resources Directorate

Resources Directorate									
Revenues									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
(RB:1) Percentage of Council Tax collected	Oct 23	67.49%		58.35%	🔴	67.49%	67.50%	98.50%	Monthly
(RB:2) Percentage of Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates) collected	Oct 23	65.43%		57.20%	🔴	65.43%	66.70%	98.30%	Monthly
Customer service									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
(LRS:4) % of calls answered within 2 mins (monthly)	Oct 23	90.2%		72.1%	🟢	84.2%	80.0%	80.0%	Monthly
(LRS:5) % of calls abandoned after 5 secs (monthly)	Oct 23	2.9%		7.0%	🟢	4.1%	4.0%	4.0%	Monthly
Benefits Claims									
Measure	Date	Period Actual	Period trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YE Target	Frequency
(RB:5) Average # of days to process new claims (Housing Benefits)	Oct 23	14.17		14.09	🔴	13.86	12.00	12.00	Monthly
(RB:6) Average # of days to process changes in circumstances (Housing Benefits)	Oct 23	6.97		5.25	🔴	5.85	5.00	5.00	Monthly

### Key messages

7.2 **Revenues:** At Oct-23, the % of council tax collected is 67.49%, slightly below the target of 67.50% (amber). In cash terms, this equates to £75,443,210 collected from April – 31 Oct-23, up £4.3m in comparison to Oct-22 (£71,141,194). At Oct-23 the % of Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates) collected is 65.43%, slightly below the target of 66.70% (amber).

7.3 **Benefits claims:** performance in relation to the average number of days to process both new claims and changes in circumstances for Housing Benefits is monitored monthly through internal systems and reported into the Department for Work and Pensions (the DWP) who will then adjust figures to enable

benchmarking with regional and national comparators. Performance against both indicators has shown volatility month on month, largely impacted by the service's staffing capacity challenges. Year-to-date performance for **processing new claims** is 13.86 days in Oct-23, above target (12.00) but within acceptable tolerance thresholds and so flagging amber. It is acknowledged that the service has always set an aspirational target of 12 days whilst the national average is 20 days to process new benefits claims. Latest available benchmarking data (Jun-23) shows RBWM to be outperforming both regional and national performance: RBWM 12 days / South East 21 days / England 21 days. The year-to-date performance for **processing changes in circumstances** is 5.85 days, above target (5.00) but again within acceptable tolerance thresholds and so flagging amber. Latest available benchmarking data (Jun-23) shows RBWM to be outperforming regional and national performance: RBWM 5 days / South East 10 days / England 10 days.

7.4 **Customer service:** the contact centre continues to perform well in relation to calls answered within 2 minutes (84.2% YTD, 58,762 / 69,826) and calls abandoned after 5 seconds (4.1% YTD, 2,867 / 69,826).

## Workforce

7.5 Scorecard 10 outlines workforce information for the Resources Directorate. Working days lost to sickness per headcount for Oct-23 is below target at directorate and all service levels (with the exception of Revenues, Benefits, Library and Resident Services) nonetheless, shows a decline in performance from Sep-23, in line with RBWM and other directorate performance. This could be attributed to the onset of winter.

### Scorecard 10: Workforce (Resources Directorate)

Resources Directorate Workforce								
Headcount								
Org Structure ↑	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Resources Directorate	Oct 23	308		304	?			Monthly
Finance	Oct 23	54		55	?			Monthly
HR, Corporate Projects and IT	Oct 23	63		63	?			Monthly
Law & Governance	Oct 23	42		42	?			Monthly
Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services	Oct 23	148		143	?			Monthly

FTE								
Org Structure ↑	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Resources Directorate	Oct 23	275.20		271.76	?			Monthly
Finance	Oct 23	52.06		53.06	?			Monthly
HR, Corporate Projects and IT	Oct 23	61.47		61.47	?			Monthly
Law & Governance	Oct 23	37.64		37.64	?			Monthly
Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services	Oct 23	123.03		118.59	?			Monthly

Working days lost to sickness per headcount YTD								
Org Structure ↑	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Resources Directorate	Oct 23	2.26		1.93	↘	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Finance	Oct 23	0.64		0.29	↘	3.38	5.80	Monthly
HR, Corporate Projects and IT	Oct 23	1.07		0.71	↘	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Law & Governance	Oct 23	0.75		0.60	↘	3.38	5.80	Monthly
Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services	Oct 23	3.75		3.44	↗	3.38	5.80	Monthly

Voluntary turnover (Month)								
Org Structure ↑	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Resources Directorate	Oct 23	1.32%		0.33%	?			Monthly
Finance	Oct 23	1.85%		0.00%	?			Monthly
HR, Corporate Projects and IT	Oct 23	4.65%		0.00%	?			Monthly
Law & Governance	Oct 23	0.00%		0.00%	?			Monthly
Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services	Oct 23	0.00%		0.70%	?			Monthly

Voluntary turnover (YTD)								
Org Structure ↑	Date	Latest Actual	Trends	Last Period	Period Improving / Worsening	Latest Target	YE Target	Frequency
^Resources Directorate	Oct 23	7.57%		5.96%	↗	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
Finance	Oct 23	11.11%		9.17%	↘	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
HR, Corporate Projects and IT	Oct 23	10.85%		6.20%	↘	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
Law & Governance	Oct 23	7.41%		7.41%	↗	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly
Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services	Oct 23	4.15%		4.23%	↘	7.53%	12.90%	Monthly

## Risk

7.6 Table 9 sets out the current key risks to the directorate.

**Table 9: Resources Directorate key risks**

Risk	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review date
<p>POLPER19 - Failure to comply with council constitution and code of conduct.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheme of delegation and report writing sign off.</li> <li>There is no opportunity for an individual member to make a significant decision in isolation.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitution working group undertaking a review of the constitution.</li> </ul>	8	8	4	Static	24/10/23
<p>PEN01 - Not bringing the fund back to a fully funded position by the agreed date of 31 March 2040.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Triannual valuation signed off on 19 March 2023 including consideration of climate risk.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange independent test of systems and recommend any further cyber security measures to implement.</li> </ul>	8	8	8	Static	24/10/23
<p>HR27 - There is a risk that the council must shut down the current CRM because it goes end of life, fails the necessary mitigations and this happens before the new CRM becomes operational.</p> <p>Key mitigations in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System not currently end of life and platform managed by external supplier</li> <li>Agreed testing schedule and alterations made on testing outcomes.</li> </ul> <p>Key mitigations in progress:</p>	n/a	8	4	New risk from Q3	02/11/23

Risk	Q2 rating	Q3 rating	Target	Direction	Last review date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed testing schedule, alterations made on testing outcomes, new CRM system installed, fully supported and operational Nov 24.</li> <li>• Additional capacity in the digital development team (exact posts will depend on type of solution chosen).</li> </ul>					

Report Title:	2023/24 Month 8 Budget Monitoring Report
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jones, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Elizabeth Griffiths, Executive Director of Resources Andrew Vallance, Deputy Director of Finance
Wards affected:	All



## REPORT SUMMARY

This report details the forecast outturn against budget for the 2023/24 financial year. It includes the revenue and capital budgets along with the financial reserve position at year end.

### 1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Cabinet:

- i) notes the forecast revenue outturn for the year is an overspend on services of £8.009m which reduces to an overspend of £4.347m when including unallocated contingency budgets and changes to funding budgets (para 5);
- ii) notes the forecast capital outturn is expenditure of £43.960m against a budget of £88.267m (para 11).

### 2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

#### Options

**Table 1: Options arising from this report**

Option	Comments
To note the Council's outturn.	This is the recommended option.
To not note the Council's outturn.	This is not the recommended option.

### 3. SUMMARY

- 3.1 RBWM faces significant financial challenges. In the Cabinet meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> of September, the Chief Executive and S151 Officer gave an update to Cabinet, stating that the Council's reserves would be so significantly depleted by the current forecast in year overspend and projected gap in next year's budget that the Council would no longer be able to finance its budget and was therefore at risk of issuing a S114 notice.

- 3.2 Since then, a huge amount of work has been done, and continues to be done to produce a balanced budget for 2024/25 and indeed, coupled with an ambitious but achievable transformation programme for the systems and services next year, the Council was able to issue a balanced draft budget in December 2023.
- 3.3 The overall financial position however remains extremely vulnerable, with a clear inter-play between the current year overspend and the council's financial resilience as we move into the 2024/5 financial year in April. While plans are being implemented to ensure that the required transformations happen, these are future deliverables and therefore inevitably carry an element of risk. The current year position continues to worsen which not only highlights the unexpected pressures that can be put on our finances at any time by our provision of statutory services but also reduces our current level of reserves to significantly below the minimum level set at February 23, leaving us increasingly vulnerable to unexpected costs and decreasing our already fragile financial resilience.

Although a draft balanced budget was presented to Cabinet in December, the level of reserves the council will have going into 2024/25 is likely to be minimal, removing the already low level of resilience we started the year with and meaning that the risk of issuing a S114 notice remains very real.

- 3.4 In spite of the ongoing work on financial controls, the position at month 8 has deteriorated by a further £0.659m. This is because the majority of the increases are either beyond our control or relate to past events. If we compare the positions between month 2, which was reported in July and marked the first reporting of a significant overspend, and our current outturn at month 8, it's easy to see the impact that rising costs in our statutory services have had.

- Adult Social Care overspend has increased from £2.85m to £6.36m
- Children's Services overspend has increased from £0.05m to £0.585m
- Place overspend has reduced from £2.5m to £1.7m
- Resources underspend has increased from (£0.53m) to (£0.65m)

It must be noted that within these movements the increased governance and work by individual directorates has reaped benefits. Place has suffered negative budget impacts but has found compensating savings to create an overall reduction. Resources have also absorbed impacts from unexpectedly high audit fees to reach an improved position. Children's services, while rising overall, have found ways to mitigate hundreds of thousands of pounds of cost. Adult's Services have managed to maintain the number of people requiring long-term residential care, in spite of the fact that the number of people discharged from hospital over the last year has doubled.



The increasing overspend we are noting each month is due to the cost of statutory services we are obligated to deliver. The team have done everything they can, where safe and appropriate, to increase prevention and check the rise in the number of clients, but the complexity of need drives the cost ever upwards. This is also difficult to predict and project and must be acknowledged as an issue not only for this year but, in spite of significant funding being added to these services for the 2024/25 budget, a risk for next year too.

- 3.5 As a further inclusion in the report, to allow for greater transparency and understanding of the underlying issues, the Council has included a table of known financial risks. These are acknowledged, under discussion and where possible, have been quantified but are not included in the forecast position reported. These are both positive and negative. Mitigations are either in place or are being developed by the services.
- 3.6 The initial process of setting the draft budget has been successfully concluded with a balanced draft budget published in December 2023. Further work is being done to review the potential of funding the transformative work that has been planned by a different route, which would allow the Council to boost its reserves a little in the short term.
- 3.7 The Spending Control Panel continues to run successfully and provide challenge to avoidable spend. All non-essential spend over £500 is referred to the panel.
- 3.8 The key variances in each directorate are outlined below. The main pressures remain unchanged and are mainly an increase in both costs and usage in demand led services. These increases are being offset where possible by the use of external grants and earmarked reserves.
- 3.9 Forecasts are expected to have a certain level of volatility during the year, especially on demand led budgets which, to some extent, are beyond our control. Directorates have been asked to establish clear action plans to address the current in year situation. Where feasible, any measures identified to improve next year's budget will be implemented as early as possible, allowing for benefits to be realised in this current financial year. This is particularly applicable to the increases in fees and charges which are being finalised and will be included in the forecast when agreed.
- 3.10 The cost of servicing debt remains a key concern and the forecast increase in interest costs is a large contributor to next year's budget gap.
- 3.11 This report also covers capital expenditure and debt recovery which are two high focus areas with significant impact on our current financial position. All current capital expenditure has been reviewed and additional resource has been put in place to recover debt.
- 3.12 Monthly reviews of the financial position are given to the Executive Leadership Team and Cabinet. Improvements to the Governance of our Property Company and all outsourced partners are underway and new boards have either been set up, or are in the process of being set up, to monitor and drive performance, transformation and cross departmental projects.

3.13 The organisation as a whole is responding to the challenge with regular communications, staff Q&A sessions and member involvement. Both Cabinet and Council have voiced and agreed their support to resolving the situation. The challenge is significant but both officers and members are working hard to alleviate the risk as far as possible.

**4. KEY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Council faces considerable financial risks that could have a significant and immediate impact on its finances. The expectation is that reserves will fall below the minimum level set out in the February 2023 budget papers. Whether the remaining level of reserves can be deemed adequate will depend on whether the authority can transform its ongoing financial position sufficiently to continue to reduce its expenditure and significantly reduce the current debt liability.

**Table 2: Key Implications**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Unmet</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>	<b>Significantly Exceeded</b>	<b>Date of delivery</b>
General Fund Reserves	<£7.9m	£7.9m to £12m	£12m to £15m	> £15m	Ongoing

**5. 2023/24 MONTH 8 REVENUE FORECAST OUTTURN**

5.1 The month 8 forecast is an overspend on service budgets of £8.009m. Assuming the contingency budget is applied and the budgeted contribution to general reserves not made, this reduces to an overspend of £4.347m. The movement between months 7 and 8 is detailed in the table below.

**Table 3: 2023/24 Month 8 Revenue Budget Forecast**

	<b>Current Budget</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn Mth 7</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn Mth 8</b>	<b>Over / (under) spend Mth 8</b>	<b>Change since Month 7</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>		<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Adult Social Care and Health	40,456	46,170	46,816	6,360	645
Children's Services	27,758	28,024	28,343	585	319
Place	11,672	13,869	13,382	1,710	(487)
Resources	12,326	11,542	11,680	(646)	136
Chief Executive Department	1,013	1,013	1,013	0	0
<b>TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>93,225</b>	<b>100,618</b>	<b>101,234</b>	<b>8,009</b>	<b>613</b>
Contingency and Corporate Budgets	2,983	739	788	(2,195)	49
Other funding and non-service expenditure	(96,208)	(97,669)	(97,675)	(1,467)	(3)
<b>DECREASE IN GENERAL FUND RESERVE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,688</b>	<b>4,347</b>	<b>4,347</b>	<b>659</b>

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	
Opening balance	(10,213)
Transfer out	0
<b>CLOSING BALANCE</b>	<b>(5,866)</b>

5.2 This shows a worsening at month 8 and would leave to a significant reduction in the level of already low general reserves.

5.3 Although the overall position is very similar in month 8 compared to month 7, there have been significant changes:

- The forecast outturn for Adults has increased by nearly £0.650m as a result of further line by line reviews of all service budgets, along with an increased number of residents needing support on leaving hospital
- The Resources directorate have reduced their expected saving because of circa £130k of additional scale audit fees for the 2023/24 audit
- The Place directorate have reduced their forecast deficit by nearly £500k by finding in-year savings, despite continued pressure on planning fee income and the effect of inflation on contract prices

## 6. ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

6.1 The Adult Social Care & Health directorate forecast outturn at M8 is an overspend of £6.360m.

**Table 4: Adult Social Care and Health**

	Budget	Forecast Outturn Mth 7	Forecast Outturn Mth 8	Over / (under) spend Mth 8	Change Since Mth 7
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Exec Director & Commissioning	1,563	2,010	1,888	325	19
Adult Social Care	38,648	43,915	44,683	6,035	626
Transformation and Community	170	170	170	0	0
Public Health Spend	5,392	5,392	5,392	0	0
Public Health Grant	(5,317)	(5,317)	(5,317)	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,456</b>	<b>46,170</b>	<b>46,816</b>	<b>6,360</b>	<b>645</b>

6.2 The overspend is primarily due to the residential care costs of older people and increased demand for services, driven by worsening health of a growing population. There also continue to be workforce challenges, meaning all savings in respect of staff costs are unlikely to be met. There are currently £1.27m (31%) of targeted revenue budget savings which remain RAG rated red, meaning that there is a significant risk that they won't be achieved and this is reflected in the forecast.

6.3 The worsening forecast between months 7 and 8 is also due to:

- Backdated Direct Payments for a number of older people have now been recognised in the forecast (£0.072m)
- Increased projection for rehabilitation costs in light of sustained levels of discharge from acute hospitals over the year (£0.078m)
- Likely bad debt costs (£0.142m) – failure to make the entire £350k saving despite the ongoing recovery project work
- Apprentice fee and additional staff costs for developing our own social workers (£0.053m)
- Additional agency staff costs for qualified Mental Health workers to maintain minimum staffing levels (£0.070m)

- 6.4 Ongoing actions to address the overspend include establishing a rigorous panel process for new care placements, the Homefirst project that seeks to support people as they leave hospital to reduce the risk of care home placements, and a targeted review of care packages between August and November. There are early indications that the panel review and Homefirst are having positive impacts, but with demand led services we must wait to see longer term trends before drawing firm conclusions.
- 6.5 There is significant inflationary pressure from all providers, especially those with no contractually agreed terms. This is particularly noticeable in residential and nursing home places where we are seeing requests for 8-16% uplifts on existing placements, having budgeted 5%.
- 6.6 The additional Urgent and Emergency Care Fund govt grant of £0.233m which was recently awarded has been incorporated into this forecast.
- 6.7 While vacancies in this section of the Finance team have been filled after a significant length of time, we are still working with a team who, bar one FTE, are entirely new this year. The complex set up where transactions are split over two ledgers also makes forecasting extremely difficult. These issues are expected to be resolved in part by the move from the current adult social care system to the new system currently being implemented.
- 6.8 Other risks include:
- Predicting the client income figure in the forecast outturn
  - Further bad debt write offs
  - Further inflationary pressures on fees

## **7. CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

- 7.1 The Children's directorate forecast outturn at M8 is an overspend of £0.585m.

**Table 5: Children's Services**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn Mth 7</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn Mth 8</b>	<b>Over / (under) spend Mth 8</b>	<b>Change Since Mth 7</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Management & Business Services	3,158	3,242	3,195	37	(47)
Education	1,279	1,041	1,081	(198)	40
SEN & Disabilities	3,676	4,205	4,291	615	86
Social Care and Early Help	21,043	21,225	21,465	422	240
Public Health	(11)	(16)	(16)	(5)	0
RBWM Retained Grant Budgets	(1,387)	(1,673)	(1,673)	(286)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,758</b>	<b>28,024</b>	<b>28,343</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>319</b>

7.2 Since month 3 there has been a high cost placement costing £14k per week. Cost outliers such as this cause disproportionate pressures on the budget and can quickly consume additional budget allowance for growth in demand, meaning that this expected growth then becomes an overspend.

7.3 Since month 7 there have been further additional costs:

- Increase in residential placements of £108k. This is for the placement of 2 young people costing £4.5k per week
- Placement of 3 young people into Independent Foster Placement costing £124k for 2023/24
- 8 new support packages for families, totalling £45k for 2023/24
- Placement of 2 young people into an in-house foster placement, costing £40k for 2023/24

7.4 There are currently £0.550m (18%) of targeted revenue budget savings which remain RAG rated RED, meaning there is a significant risk they will not be achieved.

7.5 Ongoing actions to address the areas of budget pressure include a new process around SEN cases to ensure only eligible young people are offered transport.

## 8. PLACE

8.1 The Place directorate forecast outturn at M8 is an overspend of £1.710m. This is a reduction of nearly £500k since period 7.

**Table 6: Place**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn Mth 7</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn Mth 8</b>	<b>Over / (under) spend Mth 8</b>	<b>Change Since Mth 7</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Executive Director of Place	20	20	20	0	0
Neighbourhood Services	9,277	10,970	10,844	1,567	(126)
Planning Service	1,331	1,725	1,498	167	(227)
Communities including Leisure	(1,250)	(1,032)	(1,054)	196	(22)
Housing	2,018	1,889	1,889	(129)	0
Property	(2,908)	(2,908)	(2,908)	0	0
Infrastructure, Sustainability & Transport	3,184	3,205	3,093	(91)	(112)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,672</b>	<b>13,869</b>	<b>13,382</b>	<b>1,710</b>	<b>(487)</b>

8.2 The overspend includes the following significant factors:

- Contract costs, including £0.600m on the SERCO contract and £0.360m on the Volker highways contract, have risen sharply due to inflation staying higher than expected for longer than expected.
- Daily parking income has improved significantly with performance at 91% of income targets but there remains an underachievement of parking income targets partly due to the continued lower levels of season ticket sales at 71% of budgeted income (1.020m). Development of the Maidenhead parking strategy is progressing and a comms campaign has launched to increase parking use in key locations.
- Reprocessing rates are still higher than anticipated (£0.285m), mainly due to stockpiling of material in overseas markets and paper mills in Europe being shut due to the energy crisis. An additional saving of £0.180m has been achieved by signing a new Dry Mixed Recycling contract for 50% of materials, and negotiating lower rates with the existing supplier for the rest.

- A reduction in major planning applications, reflecting the current economic situation, leading to a shortfall in planning fees income (£0.690m). This is £0.3m worse than month 7

8.3 The predicted overspend has decreased between months 7 and 8 partly due to

- A one-off CIL allocation of £0.573m for essential work to green infrastructure has been applied and various ear marked reserves and grants have been applied where appropriate to mitigate other costs.

8.4 Further risks in Place include:

- Pressures on Temporary Accommodation budgets from increasing levels of homelessness
- Legal costs following the refusal of a planning permission. Early forecasts of these are around £0.2m but have not yet been included in the forecast.

9.5 There are currently, £0.220m (9%) of targeted revenue budget savings which remain RAG rated red, meaning that there is a significant risk they will not be achieved.

## 9. RESOURCES

9.1 The Resources directorate forecast at M8 is an underspend of £646k.

**Table 7: Resources**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn Mth 7</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn Mth 8</b>	<b>Over / (under) spend Mth 8</b>	<b>Change Since Mth 7</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Executive Director of Resources	155	83	83	(72)	0
Revs & Bens, Library & Res Services	4,390	3,522	3,523	(867)	0
Housing Benefit	(377)	(346)	(346)	31	0
HR, Corporate Projects & IT	3,346	3,301	3,286	(60)	(15)
Corporate Management	(196)	304	556	752	252
Finance	1,615	1,549	1,448	(167)	(101)
Governance	2,368	2,280	2,280	(88)	0
Legal Services	1,025	849	850	(175)	0
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>12,324</b>	<b>11,542</b>	<b>11,680</b>	<b>(646)</b>	<b>136</b>



- 9.2 The underspends in the table above are mainly related to £0.43m staff vacancies and £0.8m of New Burdens Funding from ear marked reserves.
- 9.3 Planned savings on corporate debt of £0.2m were previously rated amber but due to arrangements for enhanced debt monitoring still being developed and current capacity issues, progress has not been as quick as anticipated. There is an expectation that £0.165m of these will not be achieved and this has been included in the forecast. Please see below for an update on the work that is being undertaken.
- 9.4 This under collection of debt, along with expected overspends on audit fees for 20/21 and confirmed rises in fees for 2023/24 are the cause of the overspend in Corporate Management.

## 10. SUNDRY DEBT

- 10.1 The current level of overdue sundry debt is £9.247m. On subsidiary systems there is also debt of £2.917m and £0.129m in relation to Housing Overpayments and Housing Rents respectively. This remains an area of high focus.
- 10.2 Some of the efficiency savings in this year's budget relate to reductions in debt. As such, work is currently ongoing to establish a more holistic, corporate led approach to debt. This includes:
- clearer and more frequent reporting of debt to encourage directorates to engage in the debt recovery process;
  - data cleansing, including write off of historic uncollectable debts, to allow efforts to be focused on collectable debts. Debts are only ever approved to be written off where they are truly uncollectable. This process is being balanced against collection of debt to avoid timing issues on the bad debt provision.
  - ensuring processes are in place for debt on subsidiary systems that are not covered by regular corporate processes (e.g. Housing Rents)
  - adopting a tailored approach where relevant, such as Adult Social Care where Optalis has recently recruited a dedicated income collection officer.
  - Review of billing processes and collection of current debtors. While increased effort has been put into the reduction of aged debt, it's important to improve early collection so the problem does not reoccur.
  - Investigation of where system capabilities can improve the process, for example to collect the history on a case as it moves between the stages of the process.

**Table 8: Aged Debt and bad debt provision**

	> 1 month	> 2 month	> 6 month	> 1 year	Total	Cost of Bad Debt Prov
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adults & Health						
Adult Social Care	339	749	683	2,677	<b>4,447</b>	461
Deferred Payments	21	100	114	528	<b>763</b>	0
Children's Services	16	24	0	6	<b>46</b>	3
Place						
Housing	3	8	13	1,316	<b>1,341</b>	66
Commercial property	53	610	148	110	<b>921</b>	185
Other Place	152	398	164	92	<b>805</b>	134
Resources	837	4	5	77	<b>924</b>	56
<b>Total Agresso Debt</b>	<b>1,421</b>	<b>1,893</b>	<b>1,127</b>	<b>4,805</b>	<b>9,247</b>	<b>905</b>

**Debt on other systems:**

HB Overpayments	<b>2,917</b>	0
Housing Rents	<b>129</b>	60
<b>Total overdue debt</b>	<b>12,293</b>	<b>965</b>

*Note: this excludes CTAX and Business Rates debt due to the collection fund*

**11. CAPITAL**

- 11.1 The 2023/24 budget of £88.267m includes the original capital programme budget of £34.766m approved by Council in February 2023 and an expenditure slippage of £52.929m carried-forward from 2022/23.
- 11.2 The capital budget for the current financial year is summarised in Table 9 below.
- 11.3 All capital expenditure from 2023/24 has been reviewed in order to minimise borrowing requirements and reduce spend where possible.

**Table 9: Capital programme outturn**

	Budget £000	Variance on Budget £000	Reprofiled to future years £000	Forecast 23/24 Outturn £000	YTD spend £000
ASC and Health	1,738	(213)	(899)	626	239
Children's Services	15,044	0	(4,049)	10,995	6,127
Place	67,712	(1,716)	(36,159)	29,838	12,946
Resources	3,774	(1,151)	(122)	2,501	808
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,267</b>	<b>(3,079)</b>	<b>(41,228)</b>	<b>43,960</b>	<b>20,120</b>

11.4 Table 10 below summarises how the capital programme for 2023/24 is financed:

**Table 10: Financing of the capital programme**

	Over / (under) spend £000
	£000
Government Grants	15,577
Other Grants	901
Community Infrastructure Levy	15,469
S106	1,959
Capital Receipts & contributions	200
Borrowing	9,854
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,960</b>

## 12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 In producing and reviewing this report the Council is meeting its legal obligations to monitor its financial position.

### 13. RISK MANAGEMENT

13.1 Projected variances require mitigation to reduce them during the financial year.

### 14. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

14.1 Equalities. There are no direct impacts.

14.2 Climate change/sustainability. There are no direct impacts.

14.3 Data Protection/GDPR. There are no direct impacts.

### 15. CONSULTATION

15.1 None.

### 16. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation date if not called in: 'Immediately'.

### 17. APPENDICES

17.1 This report is supported by one appendix:

Appendix A Revenue monitoring statement  
Appendix B Risks and assumptions

### 18. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

18.1 This report is supported by one background document, the budget report to [Council February 2023](#).

### 19. CONSULTATION

<b>Name of consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officers (or deputies)</i>			
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources		08/01/24
Elaine Browne	Monitoring Officer		08/01/24
<i>Deputies</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Deputy Director of Finance	Report Author	
<i>Directors</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive		08/01/24
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place		08/01/24
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services		08/01/24

Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Adult Services and Health		08/01/24
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Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance	Yes
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## REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Non-key decision	No	No

Report Author: Andrew Vallance, Deputy Director of Finance
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Service	Current budget	Forecast outturn	Forecast variance	Previously reported variance	Change from previously reported variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Chief Executive Department</b>					
Chief Executive	244	244	0	0	0
Strategy & Performance	769	769	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>	<b>1,013</b>	<b>1,013</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Children's Services</b>					
Director of Children's Services	(79)	(79)	0	0	0
Achieving for Children Contract	44,686	45,271	585	266	319
Children's Services - Retained	58,870	58,870	0	0	0
Dedicated Schools Grant - Income	(75,719)	(75,719)	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>	<b>27,758</b>	<b>28,343</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>319</b>
<b>Adult Social Care and Health</b>					
Executive Director and Commissioning	1,563	1,888	325	306	19
Adult Social Care	38,648	44,683	6,035	5,409	626
Better Care Fund - Spend	14,579	14,579	0	0	0
Better Care Fund - Income	(14,579)	(14,579)	0	0	0
Transformation and Community	170	170	0	0	0
Public Health Spend	5,392	5,392	0	0	0
Public Health Grant	(5,317)	(5,317)	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL ADULT SOCIAL CARE and HEALTH</b>	<b>40,456</b>	<b>46,816</b>	<b>6,360</b>	<b>5,715</b>	<b>645</b>
<b>Resources</b>					
Executive Director of Resources	155	83	(72)	(72)	0
Revenues, Benefits, Library & Resident Services	4,390	3,523	(867)	(867)	0
Housing Benefit	(377)	(346)	31	31	0
Human Resources, Corporate Projects & IT	3,346	3,286	(60)	(45)	(15)
Corporate Management	(196)	556	752	500	252
Finance	1,615	1,448	(167)	(66)	(101)
Governance	2,368	2,280	(88)	(88)	0
Legal services	1,025	850	(175)	(175)	0
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>12,326</b>	<b>11,680</b>	<b>(646)</b>	<b>(782)</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>Place</b>					
Executive Director of Place	20	20	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Services	9,277	10,844	1,567	1,693	(126)
Planning Service	1,331	1,498	167	394	(227)
Communities including Leisure	(1,250)	(1,054)	196	218	(22)
Housing	2,018	1,889	(129)	(129)	0
Property	(2,908)	(2,908)	0	0	0
Infrastructure, Sustainability & Transport	3,184	3,093	(91)	21	(112)
<b>TOTAL PLACE</b>	<b>11,672</b>	<b>13,382</b>	<b>1,710</b>	<b>2,197</b>	<b>(487)</b>
<b>TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>93,225</b>	<b>101,234</b>	<b>8,009</b>	<b>7,396</b>	<b>613</b>
<b>Sources of funding and non-service expenditure</b>					
Contingency and Corporate Budgets	2,983	788	(2,195)	(2,244)	49
Precepts and Levies	2,066	2,066	0	0	0
Financing and investment (income) and expenditure	5,180	4,653	(527)	(527)	0
Taxation and non-specific grant income	(110,629)	(110,629)	0	0	0
Minimum Revenue Provision	3,139	3,268	129	129	0
Transfer to / (from) earmarked reserves	(364)	(1,364)	(1,000)	(997)	(3)
Contribution to Pension Fund deficit	4,400	4,331	(69)	(69)	0
<b>TOTAL FUNDING AND NON-SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>(93,225)</b>	<b>(96,887)</b>	<b>(3,662)</b>	<b>(3,708)</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>(INCREASE) DECREASE IN GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,347</b>	<b>4,347</b>	<b>3,688</b>	<b>659</b>

Directorate	Risk and/or Opportunity Description	Estimated impact (Surplus) / Pressure £m
All	<b>FEES AND CHARGES UPLIFT FROM 1 JANUARY (excluding Parking)</b> Following approval at November 2023 Cabinet, some fees will increase from January 2024. This is not yet reflected in individual forecasts though an estimated impact figure was provided in the November report.	(0.160)
Place	<b>HOUSING ROUGH SLEEPER DISPERSAL GRANT</b> The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has been scrutinising how this grant has been used. The allocation was £1.492m for the period 2022-2025. Initial meetings with the department have been positive however, but we have yet to receive assurance grant will not be withheld.	0.250
Place	<b>TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION</b> This is a volatile area and there are a number of pressures, both locally and nationally, which make this worth noting as a risk as we head into year end. This risk includes the asylum hotels (for which specific grant of £298,500 has been received from government) and potential additional demand should Ukrainian families currently being hosted present as homeless.  There also remains a significant amount of Housing legacy debt on Agresso, though this is taken into account in the forecast via the bad debt provision (see below).	Unknown
Place	<b>PLANNING APPEAL</b> Costs in relation to a planning decision compensation / costs are expected. Initial indication is that this is £0.180m (not in the forecast), but this is an estimate and may increase.	0.180
Place	<b>TREE MAINTENANCE</b> Increase in re-active maintenance as a result of ongoing inspections by end of March 2024 have been included in the forecast. However, the higher end of this forecast indicated potential additional costs of £0.085m which are not in the forecast.	0.085
Place	<b>PARKING FEES AND CHARGES</b> Additional income will be generated by raising parking fees from February 2024, subject to consultation. This is not reflected in the forecast.	(0.150)
Resources	<b>EXTERNAL AUDIT FEES</b> Deloitte have requested to the local government audit regulator (Public Sector Audit Appointments) that they be allowed to charge additional fees of £0.400m in respect of the 2020/21 audit, which includes additional work responding to objections. This has been included in the forecast we are challenging the scale of these additional fees so there could be a benefit if that was accepted.	(0.050)
Resources	<b>BAD DEBT PROVISION (excluding Adults &amp; Health)</b> A saving of £0.190m was included in the 2023/24 budget in respect of reducing the bad debt provision (though the saving relates to Place as well, it has been recorded in Resources for simplicity). However, it is looking unlikely that this target will be achieved and there will be a cost from a requirement to increase the bad debt provision. Bad debt provisions are volatile depending on the timing of large invoices, but there is a risk that the requirement for an increase in the provision will be significant.  There are however some unreconciled credits on Agresso of approximately £0.360m which may mitigate the pressure.	0.090 - 0.450
Children's	<b>HEALTH FUNDING</b> The budget assumes health funding for two placement of young people, totalling £0.258m. However, there is a risk that health will not fund part or all of these costs.	0.258

Directorate	Risk and/or Opportunity Description	Estimated impact (Surplus) / Pressure £m
Adults & Health	<p><b>DATA QUALITY OF INFORMATION TO BASE ADULT SOCIAL CARE FORECASTS ON</b></p> <p>The lack of a care system that integrates with the ledger and automates processes results in significant concerns over the quality of data used to inform forecasting in Adult Social Care. Finance are reliant on the service to update manual spreadsheets of care packages, but there are significant differences between what is currently on the spreadsheets and the commitments recorded on the care system. This could be that the care system is not up to date, but each case needs to be followed up individually. As an example, in Mental Health there are £1.288m of care costs recorded on finance spreadsheets that are not recorded on the care system.</p> <p>There are also delays in notifying finance of new care package changes, some of which have been backdated to pre-1 April. So far prior year costs not accrued have been identified that total £0.250m. As an example, we have been made aware of services in October 2023 that backdate to December 2022.</p>	Unknown
Adults & Health	<p><b>INCOME FORECASTING</b></p> <p>Client income is proving difficult to forecast and there remains a risk of significant variations in forecast in the final months leading up to year-end. This is due to the invoicing of clients being a manual process and therefore requiring complex manual spreadsheets to monitor, exacerbated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- frequent backdating of financial assessments, for example due to delays at Court of Protection granting deputyship;</li> <li>- data quality issues (see data quality above) meaning finance may not be aware of the care package and the associated assessed client contribution;</li> <li>- learning disability clients who finance have recorded as having to make a contribution (including CHC) but have not been invoiced;</li> <li>- s117 clients where it may be that the ICB should be meeting costs.</li> </ul>	Unknown
Adults & Health	<p><b>PROVISION FOR SOCIAL CARE COSTS</b></p> <p>At the end of 2022/23 we provided for a Continuing Health Care case for which health have offered to pay 35% (£0.103m). We are still disputing this but if the 35% was accepted would allow is to release part of the provision.</p>	(0.103)
Adults & Health	<p><b>FUNDED NURSING CARE (FNC)</b></p> <p>FNC is a contribution from health to nursing residential placements. The Council pays care providers the FNC as part of its nursing block fees and then reclaims it from the Integrated Care Board (ICB). It can take a long time for the ICB to agree FNC with claims outstanding from 2021. The Council is projected to pay £0.244m more FNC than it receives (£0.162m in 22/23). There may be potential to increase the FNC agreed and increase the income in the current forecast.</p> <p>It should also be noted that by paying FNC as part of the block contract that Council takes the risk of applying for and obtaining this funding, whereas with other providers it is usual to pay net of FNC and the provider takes that risk. This means that in the case of the block spaces where the fee includes FNC that there is no financial imperative for the block provider to secure FNC.</p>	(0.244)
Adults & Health	<p><b>INCORRECT PAYMENT OF FUNDED NURSING CARE (FNC) BY HEALTH</b></p> <p>The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has paid FNC to block providers instead of paying this to the Council. Block providers have not disclosed that they are receiving duplicate FNC both the ICB and the Council (see issue raised above). There are six clients for which we are currently trying to recover funding.</p>	(0.097)
Adults & Health	<p><b>ADULT SOCIAL CARE FEES</b></p> <p>The ICB limited the uplift it will fund in 2023/24 to 1.8% so they are not paying the published fees and charges for Council / Optalis provided care services. The Director of Adults &amp; Health is challenging this decision.</p>	(0.060)
Adults & Health	<p><b>BAD DEBT PROVISION (ADULTS AND HEALTH)</b></p> <p>Although there is a project underway concerning the large amount of old debt in Adult Social Care, it is looking increasingly unlikely that any improvement will be realised in the year. The budget contains a bad debt saving of £350k which may not materialise in 2023/24. In addition the current bad debt provision is projected to increase by £0.433m. This makes a total overspend of £0.783m. £261m is in the forecast, the remainder is being released to the forecast over the coming months depending on how the debt profile changes. It should be noted that the current project chasing debt over 1 year old has shown some early success.</p>	0.522



Directorate	Risk and/or Opportunity Description	Estimated impact (Surplus) / Pressure £m
Adults & Health	<p><b>PUBLIC HEALTH REPLACEMENT SPEND</b></p> <p>The budget assumes Public Health funding of £0.190m will be received for preventative services (day care and supported employment). However, the Public Health team have previously indicated that such funding is predicated and a more substantive case being made. The forecast assumes Public Health will continue to provide this funding.</p>	0.190
Adults & Health	<p><b>SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT ON S117 AFTERCARE</b></p> <p>In 2023 the Supreme Court ruled on determining responsibility for aftercare when people are placed out of area and then detained again under the Mental Health Act 1983. This impacts on which local authority has responsibility for aftercare , (including funding) for a person detained in hospital under the Mental Health Act. The ruling represents a change in the law resulting in £1m risk to RBWM arising from specific circumstances.</p>	1.000

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## WORK PROGRAMME - CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stephen Evans (Chief Executive)</li> <li>• Elizabeth Griffiths (Executive Director of Resources)</li> <li>• Andrew Durrant (Executive Director of Place)</li> <li>• Kevin McDaniel (Executive Director of Adult Services and Health)</li> <li>• Lin Ferguson (Executive Director of Children’s Services and Education)</li> </ul>
<b>LINK OFFICERS &amp; HEADS OF SERVICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Vallance (Deputy Director of Finance)</li> <li>• Elaine Browne (Deputy Director of Law and Governance)</li> <li>• Nikki Craig (Assistant Director of HR, Corporate Projects and IT)</li> <li>• Louise Freeth (Assistant Director of Revenues, Benefits, Library and Resident Services)</li> </ul>

### MEETING: TBC 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Budget 2024/25 – Full Report and Strategies	<b>Elizabeth Griffiths</b> , <i>Executive Director of Resources</i>
Work Programme	<b>Mark Beeley</b> , <i>Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview &amp; Scrutiny</i>

### MEETING: 25<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Corporate Plan	<b>Rebecca Hatch</b> , <i>Assistant Director of Strategy and Communications</i>
Work Programme	<b>Mark Beeley</b> , <i>Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview &amp; Scrutiny</i>

### ITEMS SUGGESTED BUT NOT YET PROGRAMMED

ITEM	COMMENTS
Pickins Piece	<i>Currently TBC when this will be going to Cabinet – will come back to the Panel for pre-scrutiny for the final version of the report.</i>
RBWM Property Company Governance Action Plan	<i>On the Place work programme but is probably more appropriate to be considered by Corporate.</i>
Inequalities Project	<i>Progress report requested by Councillor Price.</i>
Contract management process	<i>Suggested by Councillor Reeves.</i>

[Terms of Reference for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel](#)

Cabinet Forward Plan