

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CODE – SELF ASSESSMENT UNDERTAKEN IN MARCH 2023

ACTION PLAN FOR STANDARDS WHERE SOME IMPROVEMENTS ARE PROPOSED – PROGRESS UPDATE

	Financial Management Standard	RAG rating	Actions needed	Ownership	End date	Progress to 30 th September 2023
A	The leadership team is able to demonstrate that the services provided by the authority provide value for money (VFM)	Amber	<p>To continue to raise awareness of the importance of Value for Money (VFM) and increase understanding within the Council of what represents VFM in a local context, so that continued prominence and consideration can be given to evidencing its delivery in all reports, discussions and operational arrangements.</p> <p>To further embed the Knowing Your Business (KYB) Programme to aid understanding of the key cost and income drivers and their impact on securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness from all Council's resources.</p> <p>To assess and evaluate what action has been undertaken by service leads as a result of receiving the updated budget planning principles. These principles include the requirement to consider and evidence Value for Money across all services.</p> <p>To evaluate what assessment has been undertaken by service leads as a result of receiving CIPFA's publication 'A guide to support VFM for public managers' within their new Service Plans developed for 2023/24.</p> <p>To evaluate the impact of the new Performance Board in ensuring all service leads are accountable for achieving enhanced evidence of VFM across all aspects of their delivery arrangements in 2023/24.</p>	Corporate Leadership Team	March 2024	<p>The external auditors have undertaken their review of the Council's VFM arrangements as part of completing their audit of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts. The results of the 2021/22 audit show that there are no significant areas of concern identified. They are yet to undertake their review of the 2022/23 arrangements.</p> <p>In light of the unprecedented financial challenges over the medium to long term, VFM considerations have been brought into sharper focus. Elected Member briefings have been arranged to enhance the understanding of the current situation, the severity of the challenge, assess the risks and seek savings solutions at pace.</p> <p>Ernst & Young (EY) have been engaged to provide additional independent challenge and sector insight to help develop options to mitigate the range of financial pressures that are being faced.</p> <p>Work will be undertaken to evaluate and track the impact of the focus on VFM for reports presented to the new Performance Board that has recently being created.</p>

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E	The financial management style of the authority supports financial sustainability	Amber	<p>To further embed the Knowing Your Business (KYB) Programme to increase the effectiveness of the framework of financial accountability.</p> <p>To assess and evaluate the delivery of the financial aspects of service plans in accordance with the framework of financial accountability.</p> <p>To support the setting up of the transformational blueprint and the development of the strategic and transformational phases to deliver the Council's change programme.</p>	Corporate Leadership Team	March 2024	<p>Budget challenge sessions have been undertaken for each Executive Director and their service leads with the Chief Executive, Executive Director for Finance and Resources and Senior Finance Officer leads.</p> <p>These sessions were designed to identify specific actions that can be taken immediately to reduce spending / maximise income for 2023/24 and to highlight potential initiatives where permanent savings can be made, or increased income can be generated across the medium term.</p> <p>Representatives from EY were in attendance to add independent insight and external challenge.</p>

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I	The authority has a rolling multi-year medium-term financial plan consistent with sustainable service plans	Amber	<p>To work with the Portfolio holder for Corporate Matters and Performance Delivery to further embed medium-term financial planning within the organisation at an operational level to ensure strategic financial planning is not only consistent with but is also integrated into all relevant service delivery plans.</p> <p>To continue to increase the understanding and awareness of cost drivers, demand pressures, customer insight, benchmarking intelligence and consideration of income/commercial opportunities throughout the Council.</p> <p>To continue to enhance the level of resilience testing of all these key drivers to assess the potential impact of changes in the type and cost of demand on the overall medium-term financial plan.</p> <p>To evaluate the impact on strengthening the Council's future financial sustainability by the introduction of Service Plans for 2023/24 (which include risk assessments and contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Plan) and the phased implementation of the new Transformational Change Programme, the first phase of which will include functional maturity assessments across all service areas.</p>	Corporate Leadership Team	March 2024	<p>The Corporate Plan 2022 to 2026 was launched in September 2022, and is due to be refreshed at Cabinet in November to reflect the current Administration's priorities and the changed circumstances faced by the Council.</p> <p>Each service area has developed its own service plan for 2023/24. The Finance & Resources sections contained within each one clearly sets out each service's approved budget that it needs to work within, the savings and income generation initiatives it is responsible for delivering, and the areas targeted for overspend reduction.</p>