



# Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025



# Scope of Responsibility

We are responsible for ensuring that our business is conducted in accordance with the law and that proper standards and public money are upheld and safeguarded and accountability properly demonstrated. We have a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to arrange continuous improvements in how our functions are exercised, whilst considering a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. This is a “continuous” function, and therefore the Council needs to adapt and evolve its governance arrangements to ensure proper governance, democratic accountability, transparency and public scrutiny in the eyes of all its stakeholders.

We are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of our affairs and facilitating effective exercise of our functions (which includes arrangements for the management of risk).

Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Council to conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and to publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This report therefore serves as a review of the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The Council has continued to respond through supporting residents, the community, and local businesses.

We have prepared this AGS to comply with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit regulations 2015, and in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’ (2016) and its seven principles.

In line with the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework this statement is ‘an open and honest self-assessment’ of the Council’s performance for 2024/25.

## The purpose of the Governance Framework

The Governance Framework comprises the systems, policies, processes, culture, and values by which we direct and control, and the activities through which we are accountable to, and engage with, the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

Our system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. However, it cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives, and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The Council has a Code of Corporate Governance that sets out the governance arrangements at the Council. This is reviewed and updated annually.

# Assurance Opinion

Internal Audit is responsible for objectively assessing the adequacy of governance and the management of risk and providing an objective and evidenced based opinion on governance, risk management and internal control. A risk assessment methodology is used to formulate an internal audit plan.

Using the risk assessment, the Chief Internal Auditor can determine the frequency of audit review and presents an Annual Internal Audit Plan to the Audit & Resources Committee for approval in March each year. The reporting process for Internal Audit requires a report of each audit to be submitted to the relevant service lead and/or Service Director, Corporate Director, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Executive. The report includes recommendations for improvements included in an action plan and requires agreement by service leads, Service Directors, Corporate Directors, and the Chief Executive. The process includes follow-up reviews of high priority recommendations to ensure that they are acted upon, usually within six months.

The following opinion is based on the audit activity undertaken during 2024/25. During 2024/25 the Service Director Governance and Support carried out a review of the resilience and capacity of the in-house Internal Audit team. Options were considered and the Audit and Resources Committee agreed that a joint working arrangement with Hampshire County Council would ensure that there was sufficient resilience and capacity. From 1 April 2025, the Internal Audit Team transferred to Hampshire County Council's Southern Internal Audit Partnership. The opinion for 2024/25 has been prepared by the former Chief Internal Auditor who is satisfied that sufficient assurance work has been carried out to allow the formation of a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of Eastleigh Borough Council's internal control environment.

The Chief Internal Auditor's 'Annual Report and Opinion for 2024/25' confirms that, in summary, the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate in most areas. On occasions, due to financial pressures which escalated during 2024/25 and an increased emerging strain on the internal control framework, the Chief Internal Auditor is of the opinion that work completed in the past year has shown that revised systems and processes are not always complied with. There were examples across the Council where further work was required to enhance the control environment, and this requirement has grown following structural changes and changes in key staff. Where significant risks were identified, additional work was expedited to ascertain if weaknesses were isolated to one operational area and not the wider corporate estate. Action to address the mitigation of risks identified is being closely monitored by the Internal Audit Team and where necessary progress is escalated to the Corporate Leadership Board and Audit and Resources Committee. The Internal Audit Plan has been amended to reflect the Council's emerging risk exposure. The 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan was presented to the Audit and Resources Committee in March 2025 by the Head of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership. The former Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Opinion will be reported to the Audit and Resources Committee on 14 July 2025.

# Sign off by CEO and Leader:

Strong governance is fundamental to the delivery of high-quality services, the sound management of public funds and ensuring compliance with legislation. While we are always proud of our many achievements and our ambitious plans, one of the hallmarks of Eastleigh Borough Council is its openness to scrutiny and challenge, and its ability to adapt to external factors, including instability in the economy, moderating its plans in line with emerging risks and responding to recommendations of auditing bodies and other external regulators. During 2024/25 we engaged in an external governance review, the overall outcome of which was positive. The strength of our existing governance and the additional steps we have recently taken are set out in this document. We are committed to cementing strong governance arrangements through our conduct, our action plans and the matters identified and noted in this Annual Governance Statement.



**Councillor Keith House**  
Leader of the Council



**James Strachan**  
Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith House".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Strachan".

# Key Elements of the governance framework and an assessment of its effectiveness for 2024/2025

## External Governance Review

*In December 2023, the Council received a [Best Value Notice \(BVN\)](#) from the former Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This followed recommendations from the [Capital Review of EBC](#) undertaken by CIPFA earlier in the year, and from other external reports including a Corporate Peer Challenge and EY's Value for Money Report. All these reviews recognised that the Council had already taken steps to strengthen governance arrangements, and all suggested further improvements which were progressed through a consolidated External Review Action Plan during 2024/25.*

*As part of this Action Plan, and as a requirement of the BVN, the Council commissioned an external governance review during summer 2024. This provided more in-depth assurance on our governance leadership structures in line with Best Value Principles. The Council welcomed this review, which provided an expert, independent assessment of governance effectiveness, impact and culture, bringing fresh insight and broader governance perspectives. The findings from the review are reflected in the AGS for 2024/25.*

*In December 2024, MHCLG confirmed that the Council had worked positively with the department and has gained extensive external scrutiny and challenge throughout the period. Ministers were reassured as to the Council's capacity to comply with its Best Value duty under the Local Government Act 1999 and the Notice was not reissued.*

## English Devolution White Paper

The [English Devolution White Paper](#), published on 16 December 2024, outlines the government's approach to accelerate and standardize the processes of devolving powers, funding and programs from Central Government to local and regional leaders in England. In February 2025, Government confirmed that it had selected Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and all councils in the area, including Eastleigh Borough Council, to be part of its Devolution Priority Programme (DDP). A requirement of the DDP is that district and county councils should merge with neighbouring authorities to form larger unitary councils by April 2028 (known as Local Government Reorganisation). There is a period of uncertainty as we prepare our proposal which will be submitted in the autumn 2025. However as we progress through Local Government Reorganisation, key elements of the existing governance framework will be reviewed and assessed. The creation of a new unitary authority will require its own governance framework which will be developed by its newly elected Councillors and leadership team. It is anticipated that this will include harmonizing some existing arrangements and best practices.

The Council's [Corporate Plan](#) 2023/26 vision is clear; to lead and support the Borough of Eastleigh and its communities enabling improved quality of life for local residents promoting thriving and healthy people and places, supporting the local economy, and maintaining an attractive and sustainable environment that residents value.

A number of the Council's published strategic ambitions, and the Action Plan underpinning them, will have to be carried forward to the new unitary council for consideration. Nevertheless, the Borough Council is now organising itself to be able to realise its ambitions as far as possible before it is superseded by the new unitary council.

While in many respects Council services will continue unaffected both in the short term and, in many cases, long into the future, at some point the responsibility for making decisions will transfer from this Council to a new set of Councillors representing residents from a larger area.

### **Key Governance Matters**

The Council is pleased to demonstrate, through this Statement, its continued commitment to ensuring that strong governance remains fundamental to the delivery of high-quality services, the sound management of public funds and ensuring compliance with legislation.

As part of the annual audit of the Statement of Accounts, which includes this Annual Governance Statement, the external auditor raised three potential weaknesses in arrangements. The full detail can be found within the auditor's Value For Money conclusion on the Council's website. In summary, the external auditor raised the following:

- Ability of the finance function due to complexity of arrangements.

Council's response: The external auditor acknowledged that capacity within the Finance function has been increased during 2024/25 and the Council acknowledges that continuing development and training is always required within the Finance function as is comfortable with the expertise of the internal team to manage financial affairs appropriately.

- Governance and procurement risks associated with the One Horton Heath Development.

Council's response: This relates to findings in 2023/24 and the Council is comfortable that governance is significantly improved with recent internal audit reviews highlighting no significant risks.

- Capacity and expertise within the Internal Audit service.

Council's response: During 2024/25 the [Audit and Resources Committee](#) considered the capacity of the audit function and agreed that with effect from 1 April 2025 the Council Internal Audit function be provided by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership. This provides resilience that an in-house team could not provide.

The Council remains open to scrutiny and challenge and welcomes recommendations from the external auditor as a way to improve governance matters where possible.

Governance will continue to be an important area for the Council with the upcoming structural changes as a result of Local Government Reorganisation and will remain a central theme in all decision making.

### **Governance Framework**

We believe that success is achieved not just by 'what we do,' but by the 'way we do it.' Having staff who demonstrate the right behaviors for our organisation is just as important as having the right skills, experience, and knowledge for our roles. Defining and demonstrating those behaviors is essential if we are to deliver on our mission of 'Supporting Communities, Improving Lives.' Our 'Way We Work' framework is based on our core values: Ambition, Fairness and Empowerment.

The following table provides detail of how the Council can demonstrate compliance with the principles of Good Governance in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' (2016) and its seven principles:

Principle A – Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law.

Principle B – Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

Principle C – Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Principle D – Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.

Principle E – Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals

within it. Principle F – Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public

financial management. Principle G – Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to

deliver effective accountability.

## Principle A – Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law.

- The roles and responsibilities of our Councillors and staff and the processes we use to govern Council business are defined in the Council’s Constitution. Our [Constitution](#) sets out how we operate and how we make decisions. The Council must make decisions efficiently, transparently, and be accountable.
- We have codes of conduct in place for Councillors and staff to make sure that public business is conducted with fairness and integrity and that we define high ethical values and the standards of behavior we expect.
- We annually review the Code of Conduct and it is supported by a documented and published [Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure](#) and Independent Persons Protocol.
- The [Whistleblowing policy](#) has been updated. Whistleblowing is viewed as a positive act that can make a valuable contribution to our efficiency and long-term success and we encourage freedom of speech. Staff are required to complete mandatory Whistleblowing training every two years.
- We have appointed two independent persons. The Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer meet annually with the Independent Persons to review Councillors’ conduct for the previous year. The Monitoring Officer provides a retrospective Annual Report to the Administration Committee.
- We have appointed two Independent Co-opted (non-voting) Members to the Audit and Resources. This role will bring additional scrutiny and expertise to the Committee and will support the Committee in ensuring there is sufficient assurance over governance, risk and control.
- To comply with legislative requirements, the Council must appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to provide advice on the Councillors’ Allowance Scheme and formally conduct a review every four years. A review was carried out in 2022/23 and recommendations regarding the Councillors’ Allowance scheme from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2026 were agreed by [Council on 28 November 2022](#).
- We [publish a register of interests](#) for each elected Councillor to ensure that any conflict of interest remains open and transparent. This is reviewed annually following the Borough Elections.
- The register of gifts and hospitality for Councillors is maintained by the Monitoring Officer.
- We annually review the Constitution, the latest of which was carried out in [November 2024](#) and [February 2025](#).
- We maintain a staff register of gifts and hospitality.
- The Local Authorities ([Members’ Allowances](#)) Regulations 2003 require that every authority publicises, within its area, the sum paid by it in that year under the scheme to each Councillor and co-opted member in respect of basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, travelling and subsistence allowance; we [comply with this requirement](#). The values for 2024/25 will be published in June 2025.
- Recommendations arising from the Best Value Notice, CIPFA’s Capital review, the External Auditor’s Value for Money report and the Corporate Peer Challenge, [Cabinet agreed](#) to a single consolidated External Review Action Plan (ERAP) that will address the requirements of all four reports. Progress was reported quarterly to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Actions were completed and in December 2024 the BV notice was lifted.

## Principle B – Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

- Our Council meetings are open for members of the public to attend.
- Our [committee agendas, minutes, and decisions](#), (including Cabinet decisions) are made publicly

available on the Council's website to ensure transparency and openness. All our public meetings are also held in accessible venues around the Borough. A limited number of reports are considered in private session only when the subject meets the prescribed criteria. A summary of these is published and the rationale for non-disclosure made available.

- Councillors are appointed to outside bodies which are external organisations, including formal or informal partnerships, to which the Borough Council is a party, which have requested that the Borough Council appoint an Elected Councillor or a representative to them or to which the Council expects to make appointments.
- The draft budget and statement of accounts are published for public scrutiny and as part of the budget setting process the Council writes to partners.
- We communicate our work, purpose, aims and vision regularly through several different communications channels. The Borough News is delivered to 55,000 plus homes and we have a range of social media channels through which we communicate updates.
- We publish and regularly update a range of content and open data on our Freedom of Information, Publication Scheme and [Transparency Code](#) pages on our website.
- We offer a [Primary authority](#) partnership for businesses as a single point of contact for Environmental Health matters.
- We publish a [contracts register](#) on a quarterly basis.

In addition to the overarching requirements for acting in the public interest found in principles A & B, achieving good governance also requires a commitment to, and effective arrangements for:

### Principle C – Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable, economic, social, and environmental benefits

- The Council adopted a new Corporate Plan 2023-26. The Plan sets out five priority themes for our work for the medium term, reflecting our core purpose to shape our places and improve people's lives, and our ambitions on housing and the environment.
- We updated our [Procurement Policy](#) to recognise carbon neutrality as one of the primary considerations as part of the Council's response to the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency declaration.
- Corporate performance reporting monitors a suite of Corporate Performance Indicators (CPIs) which are reported internally monthly and quarterly to Policy and Performance Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet. The CPIs are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they still reflect the Council's strategic priorities.
- The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 was adopted in April 2022. It sets out the policies and plans to guide future development for a twenty-year period and will be used to determine planning applications in the borough. The Council is undertaking an early review of the plan. The Council has recently consulted on the first stage of the Local Plan Review between December 2024 and January 2025. We are now considering all the comments received and working on the next steps. There is a dedicated [webpage](#) providing updates.

### Principle D – Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

- We produce a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) annually, considering known issues and applying a number of assumptions to the Council's finances. The MTFP provides, on a rolling basis, a projection of the

Council's finances over a four-year period and in doing so establishes the broad financial principles around which Councillors can develop portfolio plans and consider, at a high level, the Council's budget strategy. This is updated and reported each quarter.

- Due to the ongoing financial challenges facing all of Local Government nationally the Council has updated its savings programme alongside the Medium-Term Financial Plan to ensure that the Council can continue to set a balanced budget into the future.
- Since October 2022, Service Managers have worked towards determining how the Council's Savings Requirement can be achieved. Progress was reported through the quarterly performance report and through the [25/26 budget report](#), the Council recognised the ongoing £5.1M saving already achieved to date.
- As part of the Budget process the savings target has been updated to reflect the savings achieved to date and the latest forecast position. This has led to the creation of a revised savings target being created in the medium-term financial plan (MTFP). The continued priority will be to monitor the existing commitments whilst continuing to encourage new ideas to come forward to help bridge the savings gap in the later years of the MTFP. This will be kept under review as we progress towards LGR.
- Service Reports are collated quarterly into "Executive Summary Reports" and shared with Service Directors and the Corporate Leadership Board to generate the Corporate Performance Report for Policy and Performance Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet. The performance report draws together both financial and qualitative performance, including progress against Corporate Performance Indicators and highlight risk exposure and resource implications.
- We continue to review and update our corporate policies register on our website [Council Policies](#).
- We have in place a process for monitoring all statutory government returns to ensure completion and compliance.
- A forum of statutory officers, comprising of the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer meets monthly to seek, support and advise on issues within their own portfolios, agree a collective position on issues that cut across portfolios and consider, and if necessary, whether to collectively intervene on any issue presenting material, legal, financial or reputational risk to the Council.

## Principle E – Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

- The designated role of Head of Paid Service is accountable to the Council for all aspects of management including sound governance, providing quality information/support to inform decision making and scrutiny, supporting other statutory officers and building relationships with all Councillors.
- The Corporate Leadership Board continues to work collaboratively and provide cohesive leadership which aims to clarify accountability and responsibility. More empowerment is encouraged, and decision making is made at the right level promoting more clarity of how this happens and creating a senior structure that aligns specialisms more closely with our Corporate Plan.
- Actions for year one within the updated and refreshed People Strategy 2023-26, which was launched in April 2023 have been delivered and support our vision and ambition of "a high-performing, resilient, well-supported family of staff who are proud to work for Eastleigh Borough Council, building a culture of continuous learning and being an employer of choice for early and developing careers, for the wider benefit of the Borough." The People Strategy action plan is closely monitored, and progress is annually reported to the Audit and Resources Committee within the staffing update report.
- We have a Professional Qualification Policy and Career Grade Policy to enable staff to develop their career and support our 'grow our own' strategy.

- Regular monitoring and management of the Council's performance, including financial performance, is key to ensuring delivery against strategic objectives set out in the Council's corporate plan 2023-2026, and contributes to the management of corporate risk. Performance Indicators are reviewed monthly Cabinet Members with quarterly and annual performance reports by way of Executive Summary Reports are scrutinised by Policy & Performance Scrutiny Panel.
- Financial monitoring is treated as a continuous process throughout the year, with a business partnering service supporting service managers to understand their financial position and set forecasts and generate live management information between formal reporting periods.
- We continue to review and update the Councillor training, development, and induction programme as necessary and encourage attendance. Training is delivered either face to face or virtually.
- Annual review of the [Constitution](#) was completed in November 2024 and updated to ensure that the Constitution adequately reflects the governance arrangements for housing and companies, along with any update identified as part of the External Governance review. A further update was agreed in February 2025 to incorporate amendments necessary as a result of the new Procurement Act 2023.

## Principle F – Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

- We have a Risk Management approach which includes robust systems of identification, evaluation and control of risks which threaten the Council's ability to meet its objectives to deliver services to the public.
- The Corporate Risk Register is managed by the Corporate Leadership Board and updated quarterly for newly stated risks and ongoing matters. The register is also reviewed by the Strategic Risk Management Group (SRMG). The Audit and Resources Committee and Cabinet annually appoint a Councillor to this group.
- Senior Managers are responsible for maintaining operational risk registers and for escalating matters for inclusion on the Corporate Risk Register.
- Our Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 officer) is responsible for the proper administration of all aspects of the Council's financial affairs including ensuring that appropriate advice is given to the Council on all financial matters.
- There is regular financial monitoring and quarterly reports are produced for presentation to the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
- A risk assessment for every decision taken by Council, Cabinet or Committee is included in the covering report.
- Audit and Resources Committee and Cabinet Members receive Risk Management Training and Development. The last session was delivered by an external consultant in February 2024. A further session is planned for 2025.
- We continue to review and update all our obligations under GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) legislation.
- The Audit and Resource Committee act as the Council's Audit Committee for internal and external audit, overseeing and reviewing the Council's internal audit plan, risk management arrangements and ensure effective relationships between internal and external audit. The Committee also receives and considers the work of external audit and approves our governance and assurance statements, statement of accounts, and anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements.

- We continually review the effectiveness of our complaints and compliments procedure including the outcome from complaints referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to identify lessons learnt and take appropriate action. A process for reviewing Housing Ombudsman Complaints is being developed by the Head of Housing and will be adopted in 2025/26..
- A new Customer Behaviour Policy and associated protocols was approved by [Cabinet on 21 March 2024](#) to provide an essential practical toolbox for staff, and transparency to our customers when responding to unacceptable customer behaviour.
- We ensure effective anti-fraud and corruption arrangements are in place. The Counter Fraud Annual Report, presented to the Audit and Resources Committee, summarises how the Internal Audit Team has promoted an anti-fraud culture during the year and presents the Counter Fraud Strategy and Action Plan for the following year.
- Disclosures made under the Whistleblowing Policy are investigated by Internal Audit. A Whistleblowing investigation will seek to answer the specific questions raised by the discloser. Other internal audit assurance reviews may be commissioned or expedited as necessary.
- The Monitoring Officer is responsible for ensuring the Council acts in accordance with the law and the Constitution.
- The Monitoring Officer is the Senior Information Risk Owner and responsible for ensuring information security risks are mitigated and that Information Asset Owners are identified and aware of their responsibilities.
- An Information audit is regularly completed. Data owners were required to ensure the data we hold in the Record of Processing (ROPA) is correct and that all privacy notices and retention details are up to date.

## Principle G – Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

- The views of internal and external auditors are reported regularly to the Audit and Resources Committee.
- The Chief Internal Auditor’s Annual Internal Audit Report and Opinion forms part of the review of effectiveness along with the Annual Governance Statement.
- We are committed to being open, accountable, and transparent by making information available to our customers on our website. This includes the Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme and the Transparency Code 2015 pages which are regularly reviewed and updated.
- Our Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) processes have been reviewed and are regularly updated to comply with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) guidelines.
- We continue to embed GDPR requirements and monitor the effectiveness of this legislation, which has reduced reports of data breaches.
- Transparency arrangements are continuously reviewed.
- The resilience of the [Internal Audit function](#) was reviewed during 2024/25. To enhance resilience and capacity it was agreed that it be delivered through a joint working arrangement with [the Southern Internal Audit Partnership](#).

# Progress on Improvement Areas requiring focus during 2024/25

Governance Issues	Planned completion date	Status
Complete the annual review of the Corporate Plan and Three-year Corporate Plan Action Plan 2023-26.	September 2024	Complete
Continue to deliver the Continuous Improvement plan and encourage additional ideas to support future requirements.	Ongoing	Complete
<p>The recommendations from the Corporate Peer Review, the Best Value notice, CIPFA Capital review and EY Value for Money report have been consolidated into one external recommendations action plan (ERAP). Monitoring of implementation of these recommendations will be closely monitored during 2024/25.</p> <p>Any recommendations arising from the External Governance Review being conducted in Spring/Summer 2024 will be incorporated into the ERAP and actioned.</p>	March 2025	Complete
The Constitution will be further updated to include reference to the arrangements for housing and companies.	November 2024	Complete
A joint process for Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Complaints will be developed following the joint code of practice and complaint handling code	November 2024	In progress. A revised policy and process has been drafted and was presented to the Corporate Leadership Board on 2 April 2025. This will be presented to the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet in June 2025.

Production of a Staff Survey action plan following the staff survey which was carried out in April 2024 and agreement of timetable of actions.	March 2025	Complete
Customer Service Survey – the findings from the survey conducted in April 2024 will be incorporated into an action plan for delivery.	September 2024	Complete
Local Plan Review – to continue through 2024/25 – carry forward to 2025/26	Ongoing	Ongoing
Following the review completed in 2022 and the Local Area team re-structure, a more in-depth review will be completed in 2024/25 to re-design the service to better meet the revised aims.	March 2025	Lead Local Area Manager  Whilst a review commenced in 2024/25, the focus for the team has changed and is now on supporting work around Local Government Reorganisation and the work on re-designing the service has been paused.

# Priorities identified in the review of governance arrangements to carry forward to 2025/26

In the review and preparation for this Annual Governance Statement, the following key areas were identified as meriting attention over the next 12 months. Implementation is monitored by the Corporate Governance Group quarterly.

Governance Issues for action in 2025/26	Proposed deadline	Responsibility
Local plan review – to continue during 2025/26	Ongoing	Planning Policy Manager
Embed the new Customer Complaints Policy	December 2025	Customer Support Manager
Consider the impact of Local Governance Reorganisation on governance arrangements and prepare for Mayoral Election in May 2026	Ongoing	Corporate Leadership Board
Annual review of the Constitution	November 2025	Service Director – Governance and Support (Monitoring Officer)
Data cleansing exercise	March 2026	Service Director – Governance and Support and Data Protection Officer