

# APPENDIX B

## Annual Governance Statement – half-year review of progress against significant issues identified during 2022-23, to be addressed in 2023-24

Issue	What the issue is	Proposed Actions	Responsible Officer	Update 30 September 2023
Workforce Development	Like many other Councils Bridgend is experiencing significant workforce challenges particularly in Social Services. Audit Wales identified that the Council did not have in place a strategic Workforce Plan to guide and inform approaches to managing short term critical workforce pressures and ensuring future resilience within the workforce.	The Council's Strategic Workforce Plan is being developed and will embed sustainable development principles, to enable the Council to address the significant workforce issues it faces. The Plan will be considered by Corporate Management Board/Cabinet Corporate Management Board and the Trade Unions before implementation.	Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development	<p>The Strategic Workforce Plan was approved at Cabinet on the 19 September 2023.</p> <p>Strategic Workforce Planning training for Corporate Management Board (CMB) and HR officers has been undertaken with the Local Government Association (LGA).</p> <p>In addition to the workforce planning already underway, training options are being explored for the wider organisation</p>
Strategic Asset Management	An Audit Wales review identified workforce challenges are impacting on the Council's ability to plan strategically and to ensure the Council's buildings meet statutory safety requirements.	Whilst not all workforce issues have been resolved, additional staff have been appointed, including a dedicated Legionella Officer. The statutory compliance figures are now significantly improved, with the 5 major areas (gas, electricity, fire, asbestos and legionella) now	Corporate Director - Communities	The position remains that, whilst not all workforce issues have been resolved, additional staff have been appointed, including a dedicated Legionella Officer. The statutory compliance figures are now significantly improved, with the 5 major areas (gas, electricity, fire, asbestos and legionella) now

		showing compliance in the 90% level.		showing compliance in the 90% level.
Disabled Facility Grants (see AW report referred above)	The Council has been slow to respond to Audit Wales proposals for improvement in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants and performance remains poor. The council is developing a new operating model for 2023-24 which is intended to be simpler, better coordinated and more responsive to service user needs.	The Council will implement a contractors' framework during 2023-23, which will provide the Council with end-to-end ownership of the process from referral to completion.	Head of Partnership Services	There has been delays with the contractor's framework due to capacity related issues, external solicitors have drafted the agreement and it is in readiness to be approved by Cabinet to go out to tender before the end of the year. An implementation date will be determined following the necessary standstill period which is anticipated will be the middle of 2024.
Decarbonisation 2030	Whilst the Council has in place a Decarbonisation 2030 strategy, it has not fully identified the resources needed to implement the strategy nor how partners may help to deliver the strategy ambitions.	A detailed 2030 Action Plan is being prepared, which will set out the resources required to deliver the expected carbon reductions. This will be approved by Cabinet and will include details of partners and projects of mutual benefit that will contribute to the Councils Net Zero Ambitions.	Corporate Director – Communities/ Group Manager – Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability	The 2030 Decarbonisation Action Plan for 2023-24 was finalised in June within the budget constraints facing the Council, with activity reported to the 2030 Programme Board every quarter. Activity is underway to deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar PV and battery storage at Bryncethin Depot</li> <li>• Rooftop solar PV where possible on Council buildings through private/third sector investment</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continued roll-out of EV charging infrastructure across the estate</li><li>• Carbon literacy training</li><li>• A multi-year plan to install LED lighting</li><li>• A tool to capture emissions levels from the Council's supply chain and then work with suppliers to reduce their carbon impact</li><li>• Options to deliver the Bridgend Town Heat network with a private sector partner</li><li>• Audits of energy management practices to optimise system performance and reduce building energy consumption</li><li>• A review of data management to improve the emissions reporting process</li><li>• A low carbon heat project funded by Welsh Government</li></ul> <p>The Council's financial position continues to be challenging and additional internal funding has not been secured. Options for external</p>
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				funding will continue to be sought to deliver against the 2030 Action Plan.
Long to medium term financial management	<p>The Council has robust financial management process in place, but there are some areas where improvements can be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide additional training to full Council on Capital Strategy and Earmarked Reserves</li> <li>• provide finance training to schools on closing of accounts procedures and requirements</li> <li>• rationalisation of earmarked reserves and developing timescales for usage</li> <li>• continue to review consistently under and overspends and realign budgets accordingly</li> </ul>	<p>Treasury Management training was provided to members on 10 February 2023.</p> <p>Training with regards to the Capital Strategy is being provided to Councillors on 18 May 2023.</p> <p>A briefing note was shared with elected members in relation to reserves and how they have been built up and how they can be utilised.</p> <p>Earmarked reserves were reviewed throughout the year. A larger scale review has commenced in 2023-24.</p> <p>The budget was reported to Cabinet on a regular basis through the year with explanations included in the reports in relation to variances.</p> <p>The MTFs is reviewed during the financial year. Work has commenced early in 2023-24 to</p>	Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change	<p>Training has been provided for members during the year including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Strategy 18 May 2023</li> <li>• Statement of Accounts 13 July 2023</li> </ul> <p>The budget position has been reported to Cabinet and the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny committee and all member briefings on the budget position have been provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 July 2023</li> <li>• 25 October 2023</li> </ul> <p>The Council faces unprecedented in-year budget pressures and actions have been taken to reduce the growth in the overspend.</p> <p>The EMR's have been reviewed in year which enabled the Council to support the budget position in Children Services. A further review will be undertaken in the Autumn.</p> <p>The MTFs is being updated to reflect the ongoing pressures across all Directorates and this is being</p>

	continue to develop budget reduction proposals for the full life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy	identify further areas for possible budget reductions going forward.		used to inform the budget planning process for 2024.2025 which is underway.  Work has been undertaken to benchmark spend against other similar local authorities across all service areas.
Additional Training for Members to support their role in ensuring proper financial management of the Council	As new members have joined the Council it is crucial that they develop the skills and knowledge to undertake their role competently. There may be knowledge gaps in some areas particularly in relation to the Capital Strategy, Earmarked Reserves and Statement of Accounts.	Training to be provided on Capital Strategy, Earmarked Reserves and Statement of Accounts for all members.	Group Manager – Chief Accountant	Training provided to members as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treasury Management – 10 February 2023</li> <li>• Capital Strategy – 18 May 2023</li> <li>• Statement of Accounts – 13 July 2023</li> </ul>
Performance Management Arrangements	A review of the Council's performance management arrangements have identified that they do not consistently enable it to effectively manage its performance	A performance management improvement plan has been developed and discussed with Corporate Management Board, Cabinet/Corporate Management Board and Governance and Audit Committee in May 2023. The plan covers the performance management framework, data quality and accuracy, culture, roles and responsibilities, performance	Corporate Policy & Public Affairs Manager	Corporate Plan, Delivery Plan and updated Performance Framework have now been agreed by Council.  A Performance Management Improvement Plan agreed by Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) in June 2023, with updates to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) in October 2023, demonstrating the significant progress that has been

		<p>management capacity and the performance management system. Many of the issues in the report will be addressed by the new Corporate Plan Delivery Plan to be approved by Council in July.</p>	<p>made on the performance framework, capacity, roles and responsibilities and data quality and accuracy mechanisms.</p> <p>Updated performance analysis, reporting and presentation arrangements are being developed for part-implementation in quarter 2 (to CPA and COSC in December) with full implementation for quarter 4 (Summer 2024)</p>
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