

Appendix B

Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2024-25 – half year review

Issue	Governance Principle	What the issue is	Proposed Actions to address issue	Responsible Officer	6-month progress update
Medium to long term financial management	F	The impact of budget reductions is no longer sustainable through top-slicing of budgets, and the focus will need to turn to reductions in service delivery and the potential for the Council to cease providing some services.	<p>The budget setting process for 2025-26 is to start earlier than usual. The process for setting the budget will be reviewed with the Cabinet.</p> <p>The BREP process is being reviewed to ensure engagement and challenge to take place throughout the year leading up to the setting of the 2025.26 budget.</p>	Chief Officer – Finance, Housing & Change	<p>The budget setting process is underway for 2025-26. The process is having to consider all options with no services being protected. All Directorates have been request to look at future models of service delivery.</p> <p>All member briefings are now in place to update on the current year financial position and the budget setting process. Meetings were held with all political groups in July and will be repeated by December.</p> <p>The BREP process has been reviewed and more detailed work will be done within working groups that will report findings and issues to BREP for consideration.</p>
Recruitment	E	Difficulties remain in certain areas for recruitment of staff.	Targeted recruitment continues in certain key areas, with bespoke recruitment packages being developed as appropriate. We continue	Group Manager – Human Resources and	We are starting to see improved recruitment in certain areas where effort has been made to recruit, one example of this is Childrens Social Workers.

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			to work regionally and nationally to develop solutions that will not destabilise the job market	Organisational Development	Ongoing work with services continues to look at alternatives such growing their own via apprentices or graduates.
Decarbonisation <i>(carried forward from 2023-24)</i>	D	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.	The Welsh Government have announced that they have realigned their ambitious 2030 net zero targets for public sector decarbonisation to 2035. The Council's strategy will now be reviewed in line with national objectives however the intention to work with other public sector partners to deliver the strategy will still remain.	Corporate Director - Communities	Following the announcement from Welsh Government on the realigned target for decarbonisation to 2035, officers are now reviewing the Council's 2030 Strategy and Action Plan. This will ensure that we maintain our ambition and deliver the strategy over the longer timeframe but that the action plan reflects the amended resource profile. Working alongside partner organisations is critical to the success of Decarbonisation and this will include both liaising and working directly on projects with other Local Authorities, the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES), Welsh Government, CCR, the Health Board, RSL's and third sector organisations. A key part of this partnership working will be submitting grant applications for funding and this will continue over the next year.

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Use of performance information (service user perspective)	B	The Council's needs to ensure that performance information enables senior leaders to understand the service user perspective and to plan services accordingly.	The Council's performance management team is working with the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) to develop a small suite of PIs to measure service user perspectives better from 2025/26. Research has been completed to assess existing measures in the Council, measures in other councils and national measures and a workshop will take place on 3 June to review the research and develop an action plan.	Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, Human Resources and Corporate Policy	At a COSC workshop in June 2024, four priority themes were established – schools, homelessness, waste, and customer services. These will be examined in more detail at the COSC meeting in January 2025, including discussions around the results of the new national residents survey.
Improved Financial Management	G	The Council's assessment of its compliance with the 19 Standards outlined in the FM Code for 2023-24 identified that the Council could demonstrate compliance with all of the Standards, but that further actions could be taken to enhance compliance during 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the Council's Financial procedures and policies as required e.g. Financial Procedure Rules, Financial Scheme for Schools, Fees and Charges Policy, to reflect changing circumstances and processes as a result of the challenging financial climate. Provide additional training to full Council 	Chief Officer – Finance, Housing & Change	<p>The Finance procedures rules have been reviewed and updated and are to be considered by Cabinet in November 2024.</p> <p>Briefing sessions on the capital strategy will be provided to Members ahead of the Strategy being presented to Council in February 2025.</p> <p>A paper detailing the position with regards to reserves was shared with</p>

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			<p>and schools, as required, on Budget Management, Capital Strategy and Earmarked Reserves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop budget reduction proposals for the full life of the MTFs and a high level of monitoring of achievement of existing reductions • Try to improve and widen the reach of the budget consultation process to ensure more meaningful, and specific responses 		<p>members during 2023/2024. This has been updated and will be recirculated.</p> <p>The budget is closely monitored and reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. More briefings for members have also been provided</p> <p>More information has been shared with residents of Bridgend Council area to provide more information regarding the Council's budget, the services that are provided and what the Council is responsible for.</p>
Digital Strategy	D	<p>An Audit Wales review found weaknesses in the Council's strategic approach to managing and delivering its digital strategy. The Council's digital strategy 2020-24 is not expressed as a set of timebound measurable objectives and milestones. In the absence of clear objectives and measure of success, the Council cannot easily understand whether it is achieving its intended outcomes and value for money.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is currently drafting a new Digital Strategy. The new document will take into account the needs of stakeholders, both within and outside of the Council, and will be supported with an action plan which includes key milestones. 	Chief Officer – Finance, Housing & Change	<p>The development of the strategy will progress over the forthcoming months.</p>

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		The review also found that the Council has not consulted with all stakeholders, nor has costed the delivery of its digital strategy or savings achievable.			