

Appendix 1: Action Plan Progress Report

This table sets out progress against the agreed actions. This is to be reviewed weekly by CMT with the Head of Finance and reported monthly to the Finance and Audit and Executive Committees until the 2018/19 set of accounts has been closed and at that time it should be reviewed as to whether this frequency remains necessary.

Strikethrough = Completed in cycle.

Highlighted = Change to text since last update.

Action	By When	Who	Progress	Priority and RAG
3. To report weekly in writing on progress on the project plan to CMT and monthly to Finance and Audit and to Executive	Weekly to CMT Monthly to F&A and Executive	Head of Finance	Update issued weekly to CMT and monthly to F&A/ Executive.	High/ Green
4. To review the requirement of point 3 following the successful closure of 2018/19 accounts	31 st August 2019	Finance and Audit/Executive Committees	Learning points from 2018/19 closure to be documented during and post 2018/19 closure.	High/ Green
7. To ask Project Manager to institute a whole team approach for closure of accounts for 2018/19.	From 31 st October 2018 until at least 31 st July 2019	Head of Finance	Project Manager taking a lead on meetings and discussions with all team members. Project plan shares the duties over whole team. All team have had 1 2 1 meetings to discuss and clarify what is being asked of them. Further training to be provided. Fortnightly team meetings.	High/ Green
10. To review the	From 31 st	Strategic Finance	Duties of team reviewed in	High/ Green

Action	By When	Who	Progress	Priority and RAG
policies, working practices and procedures of the Accountancy team and document them.	October 2018 to end of March 2019	Manager	detail, and reflected in closedown plan. Discussions held with all team members.	
11. To progress the feasibility stage of a new Finance IT system to report to Executive stage including project management support and training	1 st December 2019	Head of Finance	Business Case, high level plan and draft report for Employment Committee report being prepared for CMT consideration.	Medium/ Green
12. To review the Accountancy team in terms of structure, skills, capabilities and capacity.	30 th September 2019	Strategic Finance Manager	Advanced Excel training arranged for team in late February. Team briefing/training on working papers 21/2/19. Further 1 2 1 training being provided. Structure to be considered further following closure of 2018/19 Accounts.	High/ Green
15. To implement new performance management arrangements.	From 1 st April 2019	Chief Executive with support from the rest of the Senior Management Team	Report to March Employment Committee for permission to recruit the necessary staff resource.	Medium/ Amber
16. To review the Council's organisational arrangements for strategic finance and report to Executive and Employment Committee.	31 st August 2019	Chief Executive with support from the rest of the Senior Management Team	Corporate Management Team discussed approach with Human Resources and further discussions will shortly take place with full Senior Management Team. This review sits alongside and is	Medium/ Amber

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			strongly linked to the proposal for a Business Plan.	
18. To implement appropriate testing mechanism of organisational culture.	From 1 st April 2019	Chief Executive with support from the rest of the Senior Management Team	Reports will follow the above decision.	Medium/ Green
19. To undertake a lessons learned review after the closure of the 2018/19 accounts and report to Finance and Audit and Executive Committees and thereafter annually.	30 th September 2019	Head of Finance/Strategic Finance Manager	Links to action 4.	High/ Green
20. To agree that if recruitment fails via Commensura after 2/3 attempts managers can approach other agencies but must agree rates and terms/conditions (and that they are equivalent to Commensura). Manager must inform HR of agreement. Ensure when managers have recruited outside of Commensura, HR receives a copy of the agreement and costs.	31st December 2018 1 st April 2019	HR Manager	Working with Comensura to update our candidate/supplier profile. Updated guidelines to be presented to Workforce Steering Group March 2019 and Managers Forum April 2019. Work continues to progress with the Action Plan for Comensura and the Key Account Manager to prepare guidelines to be presented to WSG March 19/Managers Forum April 19.	Medium/ Green
21. To ensure for	31st December	HR Manager	Planned for Quarter 1	Medium/ Green

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monitoring purposes the costs are highlighted in Management Information as non Commensura agency costs.	2018 1 st April 2019		Management Information reporting as Point 20 14.12.18.	
22. Provide guidelines for managers regarding the process for recruiting via Commensura and the parameters of our contract arrangements plus benefits versus the costs incurred with direct agency recruitment.	31st December 2018 1 st April 2019	HR Manager	As Point 20.	Medium/ Green
23. Ensure managers understand the implications of recruiting outside of Commensura and where their responsibilities lie and HR's.	21st December 2018 1 st April 2019	HR Manager	As Point 20.	Medium/ Green
24 (AFR). The evidence base to demonstrate that assets are investment properties should be improved, with clear links to the asset management strategy of authority.	1 st September 2019	DCE (BH)	The necessary resources are now in place to ensure an Asset Management Strategy is brought to members for approval during 2019/20. It is planned that an initial draft will be circulated in May 2019 for refinement by internal	High/ Green

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			stakeholders and the final draft brought to the September 2019 Executive meeting. As part of the preparatory work a review of all current leases is underway and scheduled for completion by the end of the current financial year. Assets Manager is preparing a detailed timetable of actions required for review by CMT.	
25 (AFR). The Council needs to ensure that it formally documents the process for valuations, and that the valuer is provided with detailed instructions for the annual valuation exercise. There should be clear working papers demonstrating that the Council has provided the valuer with all of the appropriate information and that it has considered whether the information provided back from the valuer is complete and reasonable. The	1st January 2019 1 st March 2019 (milestone is agreement of instructions)	Principal Accountant TM	The information to be sought from the valuer, and timing thereof, will be considered by the Head of Finance, Accountants and Estates Manager in early January 2019 ahead of a formal instruction to the valuer being issued. The valuation process will be pro-actively monitored and shared with the Accountancy Team and the Estates Manager. Approach discussed and agreed with valuers. Letter being drafted by Project Manager to be shared with rest of relevant team members. Draft letter sent to valuers following scrutiny by team,	High/ Amber

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Council may also wish to review the timing of these valuations, because at present valuations are undertaken at varying points in the year, making the process more complicated than we see at other similar Councils			and shared with external auditors. It has been agreed with the valuers for them to review the draft ahead of the formal instruction being issued. Valuations have commenced their work.	
27 (AFR). The report of the Chief Executive includes a detailed action plan to ensure that the issues that have occurred this year are not repeated. It is key that this action plan is implemented and considered in light of the recommendations we have made as part of this AFR to ensure that all issues are addressed as part of the production of the financial statements in future years.	Ongoing	Head of Finance and others	See earlier responses. Alongside the Action Plan within the Chief Executive's report, the Accountancy Team have a more detailed plan that that was reported to Executive in January 2019 and is being kept up to date. Any dates at risk of being missed are being scrutinised.	High/ Green
28 (AFR). The Head of Finance should ensure that an appropriate	1st January 2019 1 st April	Final Accounts Project Manager	Training on the production of quality working papers for all the Accountancy Team will be	High/ Green

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<p>training programme is in place for all officers that produce working papers to support the financial statements. The training should include the features of a good working paper and a reminder that a good working paper should enable another suitably qualified professional with no prior knowledge of the authority the means upon which to re-perform the work.</p>	<p>(milestone is for all training to have been completed)</p>		<p>provided by the Final Accounts Project Manager early in the New Year. Also see 12 above. Following the dissemination and discussion of closure plan (shared 4/1/19 with team), training will be provided by KJ and others. Also see above. Working paper training on Project Manager plan for February. Standard working papers examples (good and bad) being prepared for a short training session for the team 21/2/2019. Slipped slightly due to other more critical tasks.</p>	
<p>29 (AFR) A working paper should be provided at year end which demonstrates how the Council has considered the work of the actuary and its reasonableness.</p>	<p>1st May 2019</p>	<p>Principal Accountant (Revenues)</p>	<p>This has been discussed with the Pension Fund Actuaries. An approach is planned that will enable variances to be identified, challenged, and explained. Now also discussed with valuers to agree the approach to be followed.</p>	<p>High/ Green</p>
<p>30 (AFR) Greater considerations should be given to whether more areas of the accounts would benefit from an increased</p>	<p>1st January 2019</p>	<p>Final Accounts Project Manager</p>	<p>The accruals process will be reviewed early in 2019, ensuring all parties are clear about their responsibilities, timings, and relevant de minimis levels. Initial</p>	

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<p>reliance on estimation techniques to aid faster close.</p>			<p>discussions held with auditors, notably over accruals. Work to be undertaken by KJ/VB to determine appropriate thresholds. Accruals policy discussed with Accountants and Auditors, with proposed de-minimis levels agreed. Incorporated into Closedown plan for Budget Managers (circulated 11/2/19), with supporting forms.</p>	
<p>31 (AFR) There are a number of areas highlighted throughout the AFR where we have agreed with officers that disclosure omissions will be corrected in future years. The Head of Finance should ensure that the identified areas are actioned in future years.</p>	<p>1st February 2019 31st March 2019 (milestone is for approach to be agreed by the end of the financial year)</p>	<p>Final Accounts Project Manager</p>	<p>The disclosure omissions will be reviewed as part of the preparation for closedown. It should be noted that some disclosures were previously removed with the support of the auditors as part of the "de-cluttering" of the accounts. Being considered by Project Manager.</p>	<p>Medium/ Amber</p>
<p>32 (AFR) Controls around journals should be improved, particularly in relation to those prepared by contract staff.</p>	<p>1st January 2019</p>	<p>Head of Finance & Principal Accountants</p>	<p>New controls on journals in place from 1st January 2019. Have been discussed with whole team. Initial review of implementation has raised some issues which will be addressed.</p>	

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			New process in place and being formally reviewed by SFM and PA(Revenue). Benefits of new approach being recognised.	
33 (AR) In future years officers should keep a full list of any proposed changes to the draft financial statements presented for audit. This list should be reviewed by the Head of Finance, in discussion with the auditors prior to any changes being made to the ledger and final set of financial statements.	1 st June 2019	Final Accounts Project Manager	Full controls will be implemented to ensure all proposed changes to the Statements are fully documented for discussion and agreement with the auditors.	Medium/ Green

Completed Actions in previous cycles

1. To present the completed 2017/18 accounts to Finance and Audit and Executive Committees at the November round of meetings	November 27 th — F&A November 28 th — Executive	Head of Finance	Completed	
2. To prepare a detailed project plan for the closure of 2018/19 accounts for approval by the Finance and Audit and Executive Committees at the December round of meetings, building upon the action plan developed by staff	January 2019— F&A January 2019— Executive	Head of Finance	Completed	
5. To recruit for the Strategic Finance Manager (SFM) post	From 31 st October 2018	Head of Finance with assistance from HR	Completed	
6. To reach agreement to maintain in post the current CIPFA Agency member of staff as project lead for closure of accounts until at least new SFM in post or the end of the closure of the 2018/19 accounts	31 st October 2018	Head of Finance with assistance from HR	Completed	

8. To appoint an Interim SFM until a permanent recruit is in place to lead the team and to institute normal management practices re team meetings 1-2-1s, appraisals, etc.	From 31 st October 2018 until at least 31 st July 2019	Head of Finance	Completed	
9. To retain the services of the 2 former members of staff at least on a part time basis until the closure of the 2018/19 accounts.	From 31 st October 2018 until at least 31 st July 2019	Head of Finance	Completed	
13. To provide a package of support to enable the delivery of improved performance management.	From 31 st October 2018	Deputy Chief Executive (AJ)/HR Manager	In place and ongoing.	
14. To review and report on proposals for the Council's performance management system.	31 st January 2019	Chief Executive with support from the rest of the Senior Management Team	A report elsewhere on the February Executive agenda sets out the proposal to establish a Business Plan for the Council and if agreed it will then be subject to a more detailed report in March 2019.	
17. To devise appropriate testing mechanism of organisational culture and to seek approval from the Executive.	31 st January 2019	Chief Executive with support from the rest of the Senior Management Team	It is proposed that in conjunction with the response to the 2018 IIP assessment that a staff PULSE survey be undertaken on a quarterly basis. The outcomes will be	

			reported regularly.	
26 (AFR). The arrangements for an impairment review should be considered and documented. These arrangements should be implemented as part of the 2018/19 closedown process.	1 st January 2019	Principal Accountant <u>TM</u>	The approach to the impairment review will be reviewed ahead of seeking information from the valuer (above). This will involve the full team and the Council's Estates Manager, and is in accordance with the Code of Practice. Valuation meeting scheduled for 16/1/19 with all stakeholders. Approach discussed and agreed with valuers.	