

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	Regular team meetings lead by Strategic Finance Manager and Project Manager. Plan shares workload throughout team. Team welcoming change, with some apprehension. Concern being managed, with assurance, support and training.	High/ Green
11. To progress the	1 st December	Head of Finance	Business Case considered by	Medium/ Green

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feasibility stage of a new Finance IT system to report to Executive stage including project management support and training	2019		CMT. Project Manager being sought through Employment Committee agreement. High level plan to be developed. JD to be drafted for next Hay Panel.	
12. To review the Accountancy team in terms of structure, skills, capabilities and capacity.	30 th September 2019	Strategic Finance Manager	Various training on-going, including advanced Excel, working papers, and ongoing 1-2-1s. Structure to be considered following closure of 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	The first stage of work on a Senior Management Review that will consider the arrangements for strategic finance amongst many other things has commenced. This review sits alongside and is strongly linked to the proposal for a Business Plan.	Medium/ Green
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 on feedback will follow the decision reached on Action 17 (see below completed actions).	Medium/ Green
19. To undertake a lessons learned review	30 th September 2019	Head of Finance/Strategic	To be reported to Members in Autumn.	High/ Green

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after the closure of the 2018/19 accounts and report to Finance and Audit and Executive Committees and thereafter annually.		Finance Manager		
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 1 st May 2019 (revised milestone as engagement process needs to be comprehensive)	HR Manager	Working with Comensura to update candidate/supplier profile. Updated guidelines presented to Workforce Steering Group March 2019 and to be presented to Managers Forum April 2019.	Medium/ Green
21. To ensure for monitoring purposes the costs are highlighted in Management Information as non Commensura agency costs.	31st December 2018 1 st August 2019 (revised milestone links to point 20 above)	HR Manager	Planned for Quarter 1 Management Information to SMT.	Medium/ Green
22. Provide guidelines	31st December	HR Manager	On track as Point 20.	Medium/ Green

Action	By When	Who	Progress	Priority and RAG
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.	2018 1st April 2019 1st May 2019 (revised milestone links to point 20 above)			
23. Ensure managers understand the implications of recruiting outside of Commensura and where their responsibilities lie and HR's.	21st December 2018 1st April 2019 1 st May 2019 (revised milestone links to point 20 above)	HR Manager	On track 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 stakeholders and the final draft brought to the September 2019 Executive meeting. As part of the	High/ Green

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			<p>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.</p>	
<p>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 Council may also wish to review the timing of these valuations, because at present</p>	<p>1st January 2019 1st March 2019 (milestone is agreement of instructions)</p>	<p>Principal Accountant <small>TM</small></p>	<p>Valuers commenced on work, but much cannot be completed until early April. Valuation request letter formally shared with auditors.</p>	<p>High/ Amber</p>

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valuations are undertaken at varying points in the year, making the process more complicated than we see at other similar Councils				
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	Alongside the Action Plan within the Chief Executive's report, the Accountancy Team have a more detailed plan 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 and plans agreed to ensure completion of the task. Considered in detail at Principal Accountants Meeting 12/3/2019.	High/ Green
28 (AFR). The Head of Finance should ensure that an appropriate training programme is in place for all officers that produce working papers to support the	1st January 2019 1st April (milestone is for all training to have been completed)	Final Accounts Project Manager	Working Paper requirements and examples shared with the team and subject to discussion. Feedback from auditors on working papers to date has been positive.	High/ Green

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<p>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>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. This is being explicitly included in Closedown plan.</p>	<p>High/ Green</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</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</p>	<p>Medium/ Amber</p>

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that the identified areas are actioned in future years.			Manager.	
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	
10. To review the policies, working practices and procedures of the Accountancy team and document them.	From 31 st October 2018 to end of March 2019	Strategic Finance Manager	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.	

<p>17. To devise appropriate testing mechanism of organisational culture and to seek approval from the Executive.</p>	<p>31st January 2019</p>	<p>Chief Executive with support from the rest of the Senior Management Team</p>	<p>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.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>1st January 2019</p>	<p>Principal Accountant TM</p>	<p>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.</p>	
<p>30 (AFR) Greater considerations should be given to whether more areas of the accounts would benefit from an increased reliance on estimation techniques to aid faster close.</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 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,</p>	

			with proposed de minimis levels agreed. Incorporated into Closedown plan for Budget Managers (circulated 11/2/19), with supporting forms.	
32 (AFR) Controls around journals should be improved, particularly in relation to those prepared by contract staff.	1 st January 2019	Head of Finance & Principal Accountants	New controls on journals in place from 1 st January 2019. Have been discussed with whole team. Initial review of implementation has raised some issues which will be addressed. New process in place and being formally reviewed by SFM and PA(Revenue). Benefits of new approach being recognised.	