

DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021/22

Surrey County Council has a responsibility for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that there is a sound system of governance, appropriate controls are in place and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. This Annual Governance Statement describes significant organisational and service activities during 2021/22, progress against key issues raised in last year's governance review and identifies key areas of focus for 2022/23, and provides assurance the Council is complying with its Code of Governance and the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" (2016).

Organisational Governance

Surrey Community Vision

Notwithstanding the continued challenges and impacts brought about by Covid-19, the 2030 Community Vision and Organisation Strategy have remained key to providing the continued focus to support residents and communities during 2021/22.

- The Surrey Forum was established in 2021 as a multi-agency partnership set up to provide strong and visible leadership for Surrey and realise the full economic, social, and environmental potential of the county. The Forum brings together partners from Surrey County Council, district and borough councils, the business community, higher and further education, and the voluntary community and faith sector (VCFS). It complements existing partnerships and enables partners to better co-ordinate, align and collaborate as the county emerges from Covid-19. The Surrey Forum will work closely with the existing Strategic Partnership Boards (Health and Wellbeing Board, One Surrey Growth Board, Greener Futures Board) who oversee and respond to significant issues in Surrey.

Covid 19 – ongoing recovery

The Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG), established by the Surrey Local Resilience Forum in April 2020 to co-ordinate and manage the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic across Surrey, was stood down in July 2021. The work of the RCG was focused on shorter term 'restart and restore' actions, with existing agencies and partnerships identified to have accountability for medium- and longer-term actions. Where issues did not have a relevant group to take them forward, some new processes/partnerships were established (e.g. Surrey Interfaith Forum, Surrey Charities Forum). As well as identifying delivery partners for the actions, strategic partnerships (e.g. Health and Wellbeing Board) took on a governance role to ensure the proposed actions were fully considered, implemented, and communicated as appropriate. Written documentation was produced recording the agreed allocation of delivery and oversight responsibilities. The impact of the pandemic, as well as recovery across the county was measured through datasets brought together in the [Local Recovery Index](#). Updates on Covid 19 recovery and the legacy of 'Building Forwards Better' is reported to the Surrey Forum.

Twin track and budget

Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook remains uncertain and financial resources will continue to be constrained. Existing approaches to delivering efficiencies will be largely exhausted by 2022/23 so a 'twin track' approach will be in place going forward, running the 2022/23 budget setting process whilst simultaneously developing

a new cross cutting approach to identifying and delivering efficiencies from 2023/24 onwards. This approach helps plan overall outcomes and will help put the Council on a stable financial footing over the medium term. It also sets in train a more ambitious transformation programme which will be more collaborative both internally and with partners. Outcomes from the twin track work will significantly influence the shape of the transformation programme from 2023/24 onwards.

Workforce

The key focus in 2021/22 has once again been to support the Council through the Covid pandemic and providing the appropriate guidance, particularly with regards to frontline staff who support some of our most vulnerable residents. There was increased activity around wellbeing communications and webinars, particularly addressing mental health issues, stress and fatigue.

The Council's Agile Transformation Programme has seen real acceleration during the year, with staff adopting different working practices and using technology to facilitate virtual collaboration and hybrid meeting practices across different sites. Internal communications continue to support staff with practical information, advice and support, but also providing Chief Executive and Executive Directors' blogs and vlogs to communicate key messages, as well as to share best practice, recent updates and engaging content.

The Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan was refreshed in March 2022 with a greater emphasis to support residents and our workforce with protected characteristics, and those who experience other inequalities (such as socio-economic inequality) to have more opportunities to have improved outcomes. There has been increased focus on our employee reference groups (ERG's) and sponsorship from the Corporate Leadership Team has provided support in some of the challenges that are faced by our diverse workforce.

The latter part of 2021/22 has seen the progression of our "Workforce of the Future" strategy to provide focus to key people priorities around our Pay & Reward offer, new approaches to attracting younger candidates and supporting youth groups into work and a renewed focus has been concentrated on tackling specific attraction, recruitment and retention issues across the Council.

Health Integration

The health and care landscape has undergone significant change this year in preparation for the passage of the Health and Care Act. The Act abolishes the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) that formerly held statutory responsibility for health commissioning for local populations and replaces them with Integrated Care Systems (ICS). From July 2022, these new legal entities will assume the responsibilities previously held by CCGs and additional commissioning responsibilities delegated by NHS England including ophthalmology, dentistry, and pharmacy. The ICS replicate the previous geographic footprint of the CCGs and therefore Surrey County Council is a statutory partner in two ICS - Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Partnership and Frimley Integrated Care Partnership.

During 2021/22 Surrey County Council has been working closely with both ICSs to support the development of these new organisations, including the relationship between new the Integrated Care Partnerships and existing Surrey-wide statutory bodies such as the Health and Wellbeing Board. During this year the Council has built on the positive partnership working of the initial pandemic response with continue support to hospital discharge, infection control in care homes managing health and care outside of hospital settings and supporting the testing and vaccination programmes. The two new joint roles within Surrey

Heartlands Integrated Care System, the Executive Director for Public Service Reform and the Executive Director for Integrated Commissioning and Adult Social Care have established integrated teams and these joint working arrangements are being formalised. The Health and Wellbeing Board, in implementation of the refreshed Health and Wellbeing Strategy, have agreed a number of priority populations for whom efforts to address health inequalities within Surrey will be focused.

Service-specific governance considerations

Children's Services

The Ofsted inspection in early 2022 found that services for children and families in Surrey have improved in all areas meaning that the service is no longer in intervention. The inspectors found that the service requires improvement to be rated as good but had 'improved' since the last inspection in 2018.

The Youth Offending Service (YOS), which works with some of our most disadvantaged young people, has been recognised as 'Good' by HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP), having been 'Inadequate' in 2019.

Oversight and scrutiny of the improvements to children's services continue to take place at the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership, the Surrey Corporate Parenting Board and the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee. Detailed action plans are in place which will take the service through to the next full inspection.

Surrey County Council, along with many other councils, has seen an increase in the cost of supporting young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The costs are charged to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Over the last few years, costs have outstripped the DSG grant received as demand has increased and there is a DSG deficit of £118m in the balance sheet by 31 March 2022. As the DSG is ring-fenced, there can be no direct contribution from the General Fund. The council has created an "Offsetting Reserve" equal to the DSG deficit to ensure stability and resilience in the balance sheet. A SEND Transformation programme has been set up to bring about the changes needed to reduce demand and costs. In March 2022, the council successfully negotiated a "Safety Valve" Agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). The agreement involves delivering on all aspects of the Transformation programme, in return for £100m from the DfE alongside £144m contribution from the existing council reserve set up to offset the costs, and transfers from the Schools Block and DSG balances.

Rethinking Waste programme - Waste Procurement

Following an extensive data gathering and engagement exercise with the waste market, all Surrey Districts and Boroughs and peer Waste Disposal Authorities (county and unitary councils), the Council will shortly be commencing the re-procurement of Waste Disposal Authority Service contracts to move away from an integrated contract to several separate contracts for specific elements of the service, ahead of the conclusion of the current arrangements in September 2024. These proposals have been examined by the Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee and members of the Committee have supported the proposals.

The Rethinking Waste programme is governed by a programme board chaired by the Executive Director for Environment Transport and Infrastructure and overseen by the Major Projects Board. Challenges regarding how the Eco Park will be taken to market are currently being considered by the Eco Park member reference group as well as CLT and a wider team of subject matter experts.

MySurrey

The Digital Business & Insights (DB&I) programme to implement a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system commenced in September 2020. The new system (MySurrey) go live was due to be implemented during the year but has been delayed twice due to data migration and HR requirements scope issues, which has led to additional funding requirements. Following a period of re-planning, a revised critical path for the launch of MySurrey later in the year has been agreed with senior stakeholders.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Resources is the Senior Responsible Officer for the Programme and chairs the Strategic Programme Board which oversees the project and makes strategic decisions, allocates resources and manages issues and risks. Where appropriate, strategic risks for the programme are escalated to the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

Highways Contract

The current arrangements to deliver highways maintenance and improvement activities expired in April 2022 and a new contract arrangement was put in place. A "Competitive Procedure with Negotiation" procurement exercise was completed to identify the next provider and the winning bidder was presented to Cabinet in September 2021.

A Member Reference Group from the Communities, Highways and Transport Select Committee supported and scrutinised the development of the procurement strategy, the outputs of the procurement process and, more recently, the mobilisation phase. During the procurement phase progress reports were presented to Informal Cabinet and the Major Projects Board and have continued into the mobilisation phase – this has allowed opportunity for assurance of the programme's progress against the timeline, feedback on emerging themes and to enable input and steer the process as it evolved.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service

An inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reported in December 2021 that since the last inspection in 2018, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service had made good progress and has resolved two performance concerns regarding managing its resources and responding to emergencies. However, the report judged that the service still requires improvement at effectively and efficiently keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks and requires improvement at looking after its people. Further changes are also needed, including measuring the impact of its fire prevention work, testing its plans for dealing with major incidents, such as a terrorist attack, and ensuring there is a robust recruitment and retention plan.

Adult Social Care

Officers are currently working through the implications and financial modelling of the Social Care Reform changes, due to come in to force in October 2023. The financial implications of the workforce changes needed, the funding cap and establishing the fair cost of care are dependent on the level of government support provided, which so far is not clear. Officers are working with colleagues in other councils to ensure government is fully apprised of the risk implications and costs.

Governance Systems Assurance

During the year an updated risk strategy and framework was approved by the Audit and Governance Committee and updated in the Constitution of the Council. A new format risk register was developed and embedded in each Directorate to focus on the underlying causes of risks, the possible effects and the controls and mitigations. In addition, a Corporate Risk Register and Corporate Risk Heat Map have been established to clearly identify the top risks faced by the Council.

The annual review of corporate governance policies and process was carried out by the Council's Governance Panel, and Internal Audit completed a review of corporate governance. Both reviews concluded that governance systems are in place with many being updated and improved throughout the year. The reviews recommended that further work could improve accessibility, training, and communication of key governance systems to give more confidence these were understood and embedded across the organisation.

A full Member Induction Training Programme was delivered to all new and returning County Councillors following the County Council elections in May 2021 covering the core elements of Council governance including the Code of Conduct, members interests, data protection and security, member/officer relations and the use of social media.

A twelve-month review was carried out following the Council's adoption of a new Code of Conduct for councillors in May 2021. The Code expanded on the previous principles-based Code and introduced specific obligations on councillors. The Council also introduced a new procedure for considering complaints which emphasised informal resolution and a criteria-based assessment of complaints. The review concluded members were aware of the Code of Conduct, understood the policy and it was considered fit for purpose. No breaches of the Code were found.

The council's External Auditor's report on value for money published in February 2022, which looked at the year 2020/21, reported improvements have been made in the areas of financial sustainability and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The report identified only two key weaknesses and recommended firstly; the pensions transformation programme should continue to be implemented to clear the backlog of pensions administration work, and secondly; the Council should continue to focus on the implementation of the Children's Services improvement plan. The External Auditor noted that both these weaknesses were identified by the Council in last year's Annual Governance Statement with transformation programmes already in place by the Council to address failings, which have been monitored and reported on during the year.

The Council's financial management arrangements during 2021/22 fully complied with CIPFA's Statement on "The Role of the Chief Finance Officer" (CIPFA, 2010). The Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Resources (s151) met his financial responsibilities during the year and ensured financial management arrangements were in place. He reports directly to the Chief Executive and had regular contact with the Leader and key Members, Monitoring Officer, Chief Internal Auditor and other Executive Directors.

An assessment of compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code was undertaken during the year. The review concluded that the Council could demonstrate overall compliance with the standards, evidence could be strengthened for a small number of indicators, and there are several areas where, because of various changes over the past two years including the Finance Improvement Programme and the Finance Academy, the Council's arrangements exceed the standards.

During the year an Independent Member was appointed to the Audit and Governance Committee for a period of four years.

The Chief Internal Auditor has provided reasonable assurance that the council has in place an adequate and effective framework of governance, risk management and internal control for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. Overall, whilst the majority of audit opinions

issued in the year were generally positive, internal audit activities have identified a number of areas where the operation of internal controls has not been fully effective, as reflected by one minimal assurance opinion and eight partial assurance opinions issues in the year. Actions have been agreed with management to address weaknesses in control identified in these reviews.

The Council's governance arrangements for 2021/22 are regarded as fit for purpose and are in accordance with the governance framework shown in Annex A. The Council is committed to maintaining these arrangements and ensuring that the improvements required are prioritised and sufficiently resourced. The action plans below show progress on the improvement areas identified last year and the areas for improvement this year.

2020/21 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan – Follow Up

Issue identified during 2020/21	Action taken during 2021/22
<p>Children's Services</p> <p>To continue to make improvements in our Children's Services.</p>	<p>Continued focus on Children's Services improvement through oversight and scrutiny of action plans and ongoing activity.</p> <p>Update provided on page 3 of the AGS.</p> <p>Improvement in Children's Services are ongoing and will continue to be reviewed by external inspectors.</p>
<p>Pensions Administration</p> <p>To continue improvements in the Pensions Administration service and integrate with the Pension Fund team.</p>	<p>The Pensions Transformation Programme has continued to address improvements in people, process, and technology. The new organisational structure is now a single team encompassing, investments, accounting, governance, and administration for a sovereign Surrey Fund.</p> <p>Improvements in Pensions Administration are ongoing and included in the 2022/23 AGS action plan.</p>
<p>Governance</p> <p>To promote good governance not only through systems and process but emphasise behavioural characteristics and values.</p>	<p>The centre for governance and scrutiny are part way through a review of the organisational characteristics, behaviours, and values which evidence good governance in all its elements, to promote high standards across the organisation.</p> <p>Included in the 2022/23 action plan</p>
<p>Land and Assets</p> <p>Improving the effectiveness, efficiency and commercialisation of the Land and Property function to ensure it supports service delivery to residents and organisational objectives for the council.</p>	<p>A Land and Property "purpose and Strategy" program has focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -implementing Planon – an integrated property work management system; -a new project planning and risk framework for all capital projects; -a culture, values, and skills project for all staff; -a new operating model for facilities management; -a review of finance, risk, audit recommendations, performance, and stakeholder engagement.

Issue identified during 2020/21	Action taken during 2021/22
<p>Risk Management</p> <p>To continue to develop the Council's risk management approach and embed across the organisation.</p>	<p>A new risk management framework has been introduced. Risk registers are in place for each Directorate and being updated as a live document. As required, risks are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register to provide a view of the top risks that could impact the Council (or de-escalated as appropriate).</p> <p>Risk management arrangements continue to develop, and updates are provided to Cabinet and assured through the Audit and Governance Committee.</p>
<p>Company Governance</p> <p>To ensure the Council's companies meet best practice in oversight, planning and governance arrangements.</p>	<p>Further improvements have been made to the governance arrangements for Council companies including, business planning, oversight, training and development on the role and responsibilities of directors and conflicts of interest, risk management reporting and scrutiny.</p>

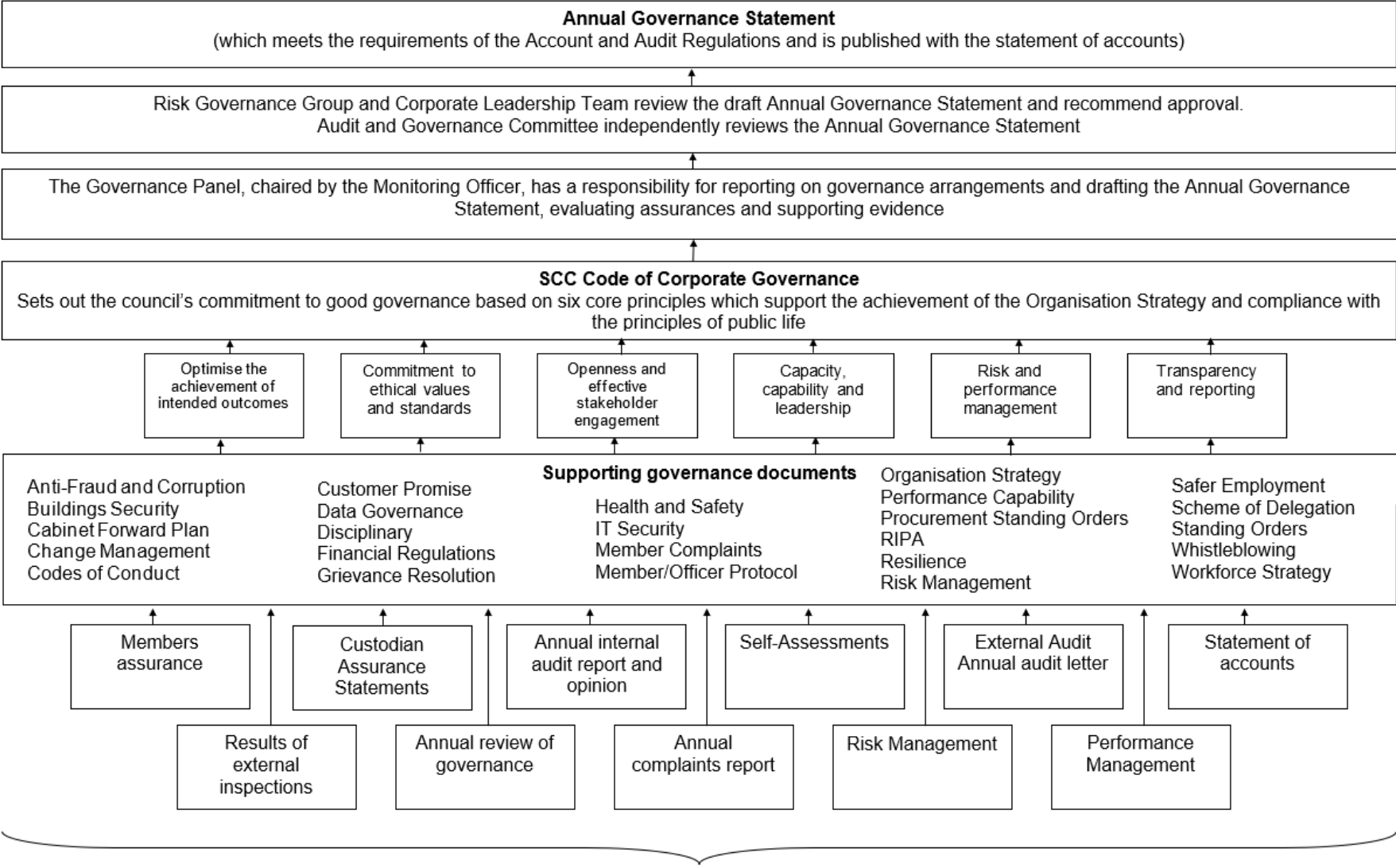
2022/23 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan

Issue identified during 2021/22	Action to be taken during 2022/23
<p>Pensions Administration</p> <p>To continue improvements in the Pensions Administration service and integrate with the Pension Fund team.</p>	<p>Transition the Pensions Helpdesk and control of Pensions Bank Account.</p> <p>Finalise induction approach and "about us" video.</p> <p>Implement recommendations from Value Stream Mapping work (with systems provider Heywoods).</p>
<p>DB&I programme-MySurrey</p> <p>To ensure the DB&I programme is implemented successfully.</p>	<p>The programme will complete go-live of the new fully integrated Unit4 solution to manage the Council's back-office finance, procurement, HR and payroll processes in addition to payrolls for external customers. The focus in the coming months is the completion of user acceptance testing, payroll parallel running and delivery of the required tasks to transition the Council from SAP to Unit4 in time for go-live.</p>
<p>Governance</p> <p>To promote good governance not only through systems and process but emphasise behavioural characteristics and values.</p>	<p>The Governance Panel will coordinate improved accessibility, training, and communication of key governance systems.</p> <p>A Surrey Approach to cultural and behavioural governance will be implemented focusing on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Extent of recognition of individual and collective responsibility for good governance. -Awareness of political dynamics. -How the council looks to the future to set its decision-making priorities. -Officer and councillor roles.

Issue identified during 2021/22	Action to be taken during 2022/23
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How the council's real situation compares to its sense of itself. -Quality of local (external) relationships. -The state of member oversight through scrutiny and audit.
<p>Children's Services Improvement</p> <p>To continue to make improvements in our Children's Services.</p>	<p>An action plan will be submitted to Ofsted by 22 June to focus improvement on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The quality and effectiveness of assessments and plans for all children, including disabled children, homeless 16- and 17-year-olds and privately fostered children. -Partnership work to secure support for children and young people's mental health and well-being -The provision of essential information to carers about children and viability assessments to inform placements with friends or family. -The sufficiency of suitable accommodation for young people, including care leavers. -The quality and impact of supervision to ensure that decisions are timely and support the progression of children's plans. -The proportion of permanent staff, to reduce turnover.
<p>Surrey Fire and Rescue Service</p> <p>To continue to make improvements in SFRS.</p>	<p>Action plans will be regularly monitored and reported to the select committee against the following key actions</p> <p>Effectiveness – up to date risk information; evaluations of its prevention work; quality assurance process and audits; cross boarder learning and the adoption of national operational guidance.</p> <p>Efficiency – to monitor, review and evaluate outcomes of collaboration activity; effective measures of workforce productivity to assure efficiently and effectively meet Making Surrey safer Plan priorities; analysis and challenge of scenario planning.</p> <p>People – Identify and develop aspiring leaders; visible senior managers who model service values; timely response to feedback from staff; promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion; and more to understand bullying and harassment.</p>

Tim Oliver
 Leader of the Council
 July 2022

Joanna Killian
 Chief Executive
 July 2022



All these sources and others provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of our controls over key risks

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