

Improvement Plan Theme Progress Summary January 2024

Theme	Summary	Achievements this period	Key Milestones
Organisational Culture	<p><u>Establishing Organisational Culture</u></p> <p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Team Framework was agreed and is being implemented across the Council. Launch and Share events with managers have now concluded. Framework was introduced at all staff briefing in July 2023. • Organisational Health indicators have been reported for 2022-23 and the trends were used to inform the People Strategy and roll out of the One Team Framework. The People Strategy was presented to Leadership Team in October 2023 and priorities were agreed. • Employee Engagement Survey conducted in September 2023 to provide a temperature check on culture, with results received in early November 2023 with a plan to disseminate to directorates in place. • The Member and Officer relationship continues to be positive and is enabling the Council to move forward with decisions. To support continuous improvement, further insight was collated in Autumn 2023 through the Employee Engagement Survey and semi-structured interviews with a sample of Members and Officers. 	<p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual refresher of Corporate Governance Training delivered to members • Mechanisms identified for ongoing insight and assurance around the Officer and Member relationships <p>November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorships and Trusteeship training delivered. <p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal of new approach to Employee performance review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 2 Engagement: Determining Desired Culture - March 2023. Complete • Approval of document setting out the desired organisational culture - March 2023. Complete • Workforce Strategy approved- Due March Cabinet • Management Development Programme Agreed- Pilot held in April 23 • Corporate Induction Revised. Complete

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration around future workshops for all members based on thematic areas of council activity to enhance member participation and feedback. • Values and Behaviours Task and Finish Groups began w/c 21st November and is on track for update to Leadership team in February 2024 <p>Progress this month:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce strategy decision made to obtain Cabinet approval which is scheduled 13 March 2024. It is on the Forward Plan and currently with Directors for final consultation/comments. • Regular Values and Behaviours messaging shared through weekly communications with staff. Update on embedding Values & Behaviours to be brought to IPRM 1 February. • Employee performance review (appraisal) updated processes to be communicated later in January and early February 2024. The new approach is based around coaching conversations so there will be classroom-based training available to book from 11th March – 3rd April. Ready for the full launch from April 1st - the annual review cycle. All associated documentation will be on the intranet ready to use. <p>Next steps:</p>	<p>presented to Trade Unions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People Strategy Presented to Leadership Team <p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward plan of all Member Briefings in place for next 3 sessions • Project plan for launch of One Team Framework- Update of programme containing all workstreams presented to Leadership team <p>August</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Team review of All Member briefings - Complete • Processes relating to employment of Chief Officers included in induction programme for committees at start of Municipal Year- Included in MDP • Approval of refreshed Member Development Programme for start of Municipal Year. Complete • Employee Recognition Scheme launched- Date tbc • Guidance in place for effective working with MPs- May 2024 • Social Media policy reviewed- August 2023 Complete

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Strategy to go to Cabinet in March • One Team Framework update to be provided to IPRM in February 2024 • Learning and Development offer soft launch will be shared in Directorate Live Events starting 25 January. Face to Face and Online sessions will be arranged to provide ongoing support. <p>Issues raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OC.A2.1- Workforce Strategy amber rated due to slippage on due date. Date to be amended at change control. Strategy on forward plan for March Cabinet with the aim for the Strategy to become effective April 2024 <p>Focus 2 Exceptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OC.A2.1 Workforce Strategy approved- Amber rated due to slippage due decision to obtain Cabinet approval. date to be amended on Change control Progress commentary: Decision to obtain Cabinet approval Scheduled 13 March 2024. On Forward plan and with Directors for Final consultation/comments. • OC.C4.2 Compile insight into the Member-Officer Relationship in preparation for Autumn sessions with LGA (Local Government Association) around the Member-Officer Relationship Due 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal for Employee Performance Review created with Values embedded • Feedback from launch and Share sessions fed back to leadership • Social Media Policy review complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Governance Development Programme Agreed – in Progress • Delivery of Corporate Governance Programme commences- Commenced

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	<p>November, Amber relating to slippage- date to be amended on Change control.</p> <p>Progress commentary: Member dynamics- all member survey and focus group (to understand case working and working relationships) this is intended to provide an evidence base for LGBCE boundary review but is also being used to provide a snapshot of members interactions with the council and its officer base and to identify areas of focus for improvement. Pre-council workshops showcasing a range of service areas - will complement this work by raising awareness for both members and officers and supporting the development of positive relationships. Survey will take place end of January and beginning February. Out turn report will go to full council and will support a wider range of work e.g.: customer. Will also look to align with member development programme and proposed member induction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OC.E2.4 Formal Employee Recognition Scheme - approach and resources identified- Red rated- date to be changed at change control Progress commentary: Values & behaviours Task & Finish Group on employee recognition gave positive feedback on proposed formal recognition scheme, based on celebrating examples of the council's Values & Behaviours in action. Next step is to take proposal to Leadership team for approval/adoption. Anticipated launch date is May 2024. • OC.G1.3 Governance Training and Development- Amber rated Due May 2024 		

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	<p>Progress commentary: Assistant Director Legal and Assurance and Assistant Chief Executive are working on a programme of training materials and supporting road show workshops for Officers on decision making requirements with a focus on improvement to report quality and content to support improvement to decision making.</p>		
<p>Corporate Oversight</p>	<p>Focus 1</p> <p><u>Customer Journey Programme</u></p> <p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme governance remains in place. Housing Solutions have carried out a number of process mapping workshops covering the areas highlighted- Adult Social Care, Borough Economy, Housing Options and Revenues and Benefits. A sharing event was carried out 23 August 2023. • Internal meetings have taken place led by CTO to agree and address the `quick wins` identified. These were presented to Customer Journey Board in November 2023. The methodology, resource, and timescales for Phase 2 of the process mapping, following the learning from the Phase 1 work, is being drafted by the CTO and is scheduled for approval at CJ (Customer Journey) Board in January. 	<p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appraisal process agreed and ready for launch from April 2024 • Ward Co-ordinator roles have been instrumental in supporting Members to tackle local Ward based issues and initial anecdotal feedback is that these roles are making a real difference. <p>November</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oracle- Discovery phase complete- Feb 23. Complete • Oracle- Modelling phase complete- June 23. Complete • Oracle Fusion implemented- July 24. On track • Corporate debt recovery processes reviewed- Complete April 23 • Sign off of 2020/21 accounts Complete • Sign off of 2021/22 accounts On track to submit to GT in January 24

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has collectively (including Housing, Regeneration, Borough Economy) been working to improve the response to cases on the member portal. <p>Progress this month:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings are continuing to be attended to feedback on the Cllr Portal. Further session will take place pre Full Council on the 30 January 2024, whereby Members can come along and discuss any cases/concerns with key service areas. Feedback from this session will be used to inform future sessions. Attendance at Town Members Board Meetings continued to take place throughout December & January to feed back the work that has been completed on resolving Member portal issues. The introduction of the Ward Co-ordinator roles has been instrumental in supporting Members to tackle local Ward based issues and initial anecdotal feedback is that these roles are making a real difference. Members of the Customer team are continuing to chase for feedback on overdue Cllr Portal cases. <p>Next steps:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q2 reporting to leadership 28th November <p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VERTO user acceptance testing complete <p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills gap analysis complete for financial services and a training programme is now complete and in place- delivery will take place over the next 6 months <p>August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft State of Borough report received from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformation PMO in place – Complete November 2023 Corporate PMO in place – Complete November 2023 Verto system implemented – Commenced Corporate Transformation Board operational-ToR and Membership to be re-set following Local Partnerships Review - Complete

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback in January 2024 Pre-Full Council Member event <p>Issues raised: SD.F1.0 - Customer Strategy development showing as Amber due to Risk relating to the action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions are ongoing around the wider piece of work that will run concurrently to procure a Strategic Partner/Provider to undertake a more in-depth Strategy across Customer taking into account co dependencies with ICT/Digital Strategies. The approach was taken to Customer Journey Board on the 30th of November and a deadline given of April 2024 for the 3-year strategy to be launch was agreed. Information is being pulled together to start to draft the Customer Journey strategy including work on Customer Standards. <p><u>Resolve Issues relating to the completion and sign-off of final accounts</u></p> <p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2020/21 accounts have been signed off by the auditor with no qualifications. 21/22 accounts – agreed with Grant Thornton that audit dates will be moved to early 2024 to allow more internal quality assurance process before external audit takes place 	<p>Economic Intelligence Unit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Planning Framework drafted 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government is looking at the approach for 2022/2023 accounts due to the national context of delays in local government audit. <p>Progress this month:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2021/22 accounts are drafted. Grant Thornton have allocated resources for the 2021/22 audit to be submitted January 2024 <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Await audit completion <p>Issues raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues raised <p><u>MTFP</u></p> <p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MTFP projects are being managed within the Corporate Transformation Programme and project management methodology and transformation design principles are being applied. Work to develop and review MTFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy) and MTFP for 2024/25 with members conducted 		

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	<p>over Summer and Autumn 2023, to develop achievable/deliverable savings and a balanced Budget for 2024/25.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of benchmarking information to inform services to include in future transformation activities. • MTFS Autumn Update approved by Cabinet on 15 November 2023 consultation carried out on savings options in train to feed into development of draft budget for 2024/25. Focus groups conducted with residents, VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) organisations and SHAPE Forum, and online survey was open until 2 January 2024. <p>Progress this month:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Budget taken to the Scrutiny session on 15 January 2024. • The Draft Budget will go for consideration at Cabinet in February 2024 before decision by Full Council on the 20 February 2024. <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Budget taken to Cabinet and Council in February 2024 <p>Issues raised:</p>		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Issues raised <p><u>Corporate Transformation</u></p> <p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformation Design Principles agreed. Review was held with Local Partnerships and the report has informed the establishment of Corporate PMO (Project Management Office). The Corporate Transformation Board's terms of reference have been revised and regular meetings scheduled. User acceptance of VERTO has been completed and the launch started. <p>Progress this month:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soft launch of VERTO in Corporate Transformation Office in December. Corporate Transformation Office will be moving to live site mid-January, R&G live in Feb. Work with Communications is currently underway regarding the soft launch communication. <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out of VERTO across other directorates 		

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	<p>Issues raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No issues raised <p>Focus 2 Exceptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO.B3.1 Develop a Continuous Improvement Framework –Red rated- revise delivery date at change control Progress commentary: Draft Continuous Improvement Framework developed based on best practice and aligned with transformation approach. Next step is to align with Leadership & Management development programme and develop proposal for 'good ideas' process for capturing staff ideas • CO.D3.4 Programme of end-to-end process reviews- Amber rated Progress commentary: This exercise remains paused pending review of the report and update to leadership • CO.D3.7 Develop Business case for Transactional Finance Unit - Amber rated- Progress commentary: This exercise remains paused pending review of the report and update to leadership 		

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Strategic Direction	<p>Focus 1- no focus 1 in this theme</p> <p>Focus 2 Exceptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SD.A5.3 Complete Full Business Cases for identified Business Steams in line with Commercial Project Plan approved by Leadership Team- Amber Rated Due October 23 Progress Commentary: Health and Safety – Skills gap analysis is complete. Next steps to be agreed at a workshop WC 5th Feb Neutral Vendor Phase approach agreed, reflective of new timeline and capacity in HR. Educational Services – Resource pressures easing with a new SIA post agreed. Further discussion required regarding ‘status’ of project i.e. transformational or service improvement. Meeting to be arranged in Feb to be discussed. Social Letting - Due to the announcement made by the Chancellor in the Autumn budget – an increase in LHA rate to the 2024 rates from April the project team must review the financial offer, margins and understand how this may influence landlords decision making in respect of the proposed model. 	<p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications and Corporate Affairs Strategy delivered as part of BAU <p>November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) update report went to leadership- 4 equality objectives approved <p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative workshops to conclude this month Commercial Project Officer recruited 	<p>Commercial Strategy Approved-Commercial Workstream included in 2023/24 Budget March 23</p> <p>Regeneration Pipeline: Strategic delivery partner in place- Cabinet report approved July 23</p> <p>Approval of Communications and Corporate Affairs Strategy- Complete</p> <p>ED&I Strategy Approved- September 2024. On track</p> <p>Regular Residents' Survey & Budget Consultation in Place – Complete.</p>

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	<p>Cashless – Activities agreed to inform next steps</p> <p>Educational Psychology – Finance partners updated and provided good insight. Next step to de-segregate statutory from opportunity but also consider the dependencies on the wider schools piece.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB.B1.14 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Assessment- Amber Rated Due July 2024 Progress Commentary: Work is currently underway to develop the EFLG (Equality Framework for Local Government) Audit Action plan, which will be presented to Leadership Team during March 2024. The team have also developed the 2nd PSED Service User Report for 2023-24 which will be published by March 2024 and ensure that the council is compliant and meeting its legal duties. Further work is being undertaken to support the 4 interim EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) Objectives and it proposed that updates will be presented to LT during Q1 (2024/25). The development of the EDI Strategy has slipped due to resources within the team. 	<p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative workshops held with LGA to inform communications approach • Corporate Procurement Strategy Action plan finalised <p>August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative workshops held with LGA to inform communications approach • Corporate Procurement Strategy Action plan finalised 	<p>Customer Journey Strategy Approved- On track for draft by March 2024</p> <p>Approval of Medium-Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy- 2023/24 MTFP Approved February 2023; 2024/25 MTFP on track for approval February 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRA 30-year Business Plan approved- Approved February 2023. Stock condition surveys being undertaken.
Decision Making	<p>Focus 1- no focus 1 in this theme</p> <p>Focus 2- no exceptions to report</p>	<p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny committee produced annual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader to confirm Executive's position on any further review

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		report- due at October council	relating to the Wragge and Cox reports – Complete-
Procurement & Commercial	<p>Focus 1- no focus 1 in this theme</p> <p>Focus 2 Exceptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC.C1.1- Performance Management System- Options appraisal- Red rated Due Oct 23 – Date change at change control Progress commentary: Engagement with service areas complete. Following discussion with Director Finance and AD ICT, further work required to further explore Oracle Fusion as a potential solution. Cross-council stakeholder group to be established for the project to ensure needs of the organisation are understood and explored. Initial meeting with procurement has taken place and the project is in the procurement pipeline for commencement at a future date if required. 	<p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Fleet vehicles have arrived as part of Serco Fleet replacement and are into service <p>November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste contract now on Intend- Go Live December <p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND3- Project team identified, launch meeting diarised and ToR agreed. <p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Phase 2 Tech forge complete <p>August</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste and Leisure Contracts added to In-tend contract management module- Steady progress. Waste contract on Intend. • Street Cleansing Recovery Plan implemented- Ongoing delivery Fleet replacement complete- Expected end 2023 • SEND Transport Contract Monitoring arrangements in place- On track • SEND3 procurement commences – Complete • Corporate Performance Management System in place-

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of recommendations for Waste contract complete- lessons learnt booked in following industrial action in June/July 2023 	<p>Options appraisal due October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lion Farm - Report to Cabinet on determination of position of developer- Transferred to 'business as usual' management • Arrangement in place for future delivery of leisure services- Complete • Phase 2 Tech Forge implemented- Complete
<p>Partnerships & Relationships</p>	<p>Focus 1- no Focus 1 in this theme</p> <p>Focus 2 Exceptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR.C1.1- Initiation of Project to review and remodel the pathway between children's and adults' services (preparing for adulthood project) Amber Rated. Progress commentary: The PfA (Preparing for Adulthood) Project Board meeting scheduled for November 2023 was cancelled due to 	<p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCT KPIS approved by DfE, SMBC and SCT, and will be reported through PMF (Performance Management Framework) effective Q1 2024/25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of SCT (Sandwell Children's Trust) Contract concludes- - complete. • Transitions Project Commences- Project commenced

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	<p>unforeseen circumstances. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 29th January 2024.</p> <p>Project activity continues in the Stage one / Prepare phase. Following submission of the PfA preparatory findings report in 2023, further analysis has been completed to fulfil next steps/actions in relation to case file audits and post age 17 referral analysis. These reports have now been submitted for review and comment. We continue to bring together and liaise with internal and external partners to identify project dependencies and required future collaborative working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PR.D1.3- Consultation on VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) Draft Strategy- On hold Progress commentary: Further work in progress to develop approach for wider VCS engagement and funding. 	<p>November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitions Projects: Benchmarking findings report complete for the project to review and remodel the pathway between children's and adult's. <p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarking findings report complete for the project to review and remodel the pathway between children's and adult's <p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing for Adulthood Project- Benchmarking meetings completed with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitions Project incorporated within Corporate Transformation Programme- date tbc VCS Strategy approved- On hold

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		<p>Dudley MBC and Birmingham City Council</p> <p>August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Initial findings report for Preparing for Adulthood Project shared with the Preparing For Adulthood Project Board in July	