

Annual Governance Statement

For the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025





Contents

- 1.** Introduction..... 3
- 2.** Opinion – Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025..... 5
- 3.** Governance at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council..... 6
 - 3.1.** Essential elements of governance..... 7
 - 3.2.** Governance Structure – Political Management Arrangements..... 10
 - 3.3.** Governance Structure – Community Board(s)..... 12
 - 3.4.** Governance Structure – Internal Organisation Governance..... 13
- 4.** Preparing the Annual Governance Statement..... 19
- 5.** Effectiveness of our governance in 2024/2025 – an Overview..... 20
- 6.** Action Plans..... 25
- 7.** Conclusion..... 25
 - Annex 1..... 26
 - Annex 2..... 28

1. Introduction

1.1. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to prepare an annual governance statement which is ratified by senior management and then approved by the Audit and Standards Committee, as those charged with governance.

1.2. Governance is about how an organisation is directed and controlled to achieve its objectives. It therefore comprises the systems, structures, and values that an organisation has in place to achieve those objectives.

1.3. Good governance:

a) requires that objectives be achieved not only efficiently and effectively but also ethically and in compliance with laws and recognised standards of conduct;

b) ensures that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk; and

c) comprises robust systems and sound structures together with effective leadership and high standards of behaviour.

1.4. Key Priorities:



Live	Work	Visit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote residents' health and wellbeing • Enable appropriate housing development • Sponsor a sustainable green approach • Prioritise community safety and empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow a strong and inclusive economy • Champion education skills • Embrace new and emerging technology • Support local businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create vibrant and diverse town centres • Stimulate regeneration • Celebrate and promote our heritage • Improve the physical environment

1.4.1. Whilst the Council had the key priorities as set out in its corporate plan (1.4), the Council has to deliver and provide statutory services to local residents and constituents. Examples of statutory services include but are not limited to:

- Rubbish collection
- Recycling
- Council tax and business rate collection
- Housing
- Planning applications and local plans
- Licensing (such as venues, premises and taxi license matters)
- Environmental health provision
- Leisure centre provision
- Electoral registration office.

Further information regarding the Council and Borough can be found in the Statement of Accounts which shall be located on the Council website: [Financial information 2024 to 2025 | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

1.5. Delivering the key priorities requires good governance - for our residents, employees, businesses, service users and councillors. Our Corporate Plan provides the building blocks to our success. Supporting the Plan are number of strategies and policies showing how we will deliver our ambitions, and our 'Local Code of Governance' sets out the seven principles of good governance. The Local Code of Corporate Governance is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (CIPFA/SOLACE) joint framework for delivering good governance in local government.

- Behaving with integrity and in accordance with our core values.
- Being open and ensuring effective engagement takes place.
- Working together to achieve our intended outcomes.
- Setting goals for economic, social, and environmental benefits and reaching them.
- Growing our capacity – including our leadership and the people who work with us.
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong financial management.

- Implementing good practice in transparency, reporting and audit – delivering effective waccountability.

1.6. With ongoing global emergencies and conflicts, persistent inflation, cost of living pressures and continued increased demand on our services, this has been an incredibly challenging year for Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. Along with other councils up and down the country, we have been operating in an extremely difficult economic environment which has forced us to take some tough decisions with regards to ensuring our financial sustainability.

1.7. Despite these undoubted challenges, we have demonstrated our commitment improve the borough and the services provided by the Council. Please see Section 5 - Effectiveness of our governance in 2024/2025 – an Overview

1.8. Please note, the 2024/2025 Annual Governance Statement is now in a different format to previous Annual Governance Statements prepared by the Council. This is to ensure the level of detail is relevant and set out in a clear way to assist any reader, whether that be a resident, tenant, a 3rd party to review and understand.



2. Opinion - Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025

We are pleased to confirm our opinion that the Council's governance arrangements in 2024/2025 were sound, reviewed and updated to provide a robust and effective platform for achieving the Council's priorities and challenges in 2024/2025.



Councillor Chris Watkins

Leader



Tom Shardlow

Chief Executive Officer

3. Governance at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Governance is defined¹ as the framework by which organisations are directed and controlled. It identifies who can make decisions, who has the authority to act on behalf of the organisation and who is accountable for how an organisation and its people behave and perform. It comprises of the systems and processes for the direction and control of the organisation and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with, and leads the community. It enables the organisation to monitor the achievements of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively, and economically.

We have a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to improve the delivery of local government services and to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way their functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

The governance framework set out below has been in place at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council for the year ending 31st March 2025.

¹ Source: Chartered Governance Institute – UK & Ireland



3.1. Essential elements of governance

- 1. Decision Making**
- 2. Scrutiny and Accountability**
- 3. Financial Management and external audit**
- 4. Managing risks through internal control and internal audit**
- 5. Senior Officers and Statutory Officers**
- 6. Member and Employee Code of Conduct**

1. Decision Making

The Local Government Act 2000 changes the basis of decision making in local authorities fundamentally. It requires the Council to record and keep up to date details of who has responsibility for which decisions, and to make this available to the public. The Council sets the budget and policy framework and the Executive, through the Cabinet, takes the key decisions within that framework unless reserved to a Committee or Officer.

Some decisions are for the Council to make or to delegate. The Council can delegate to Committees, Sub-Committees and officers, or to joint Committees, joint arrangements or other authorities. Those delegations must be recorded in the Council's Constitution which must be kept up to date.

Other decisions are for the Cabinet to make, and it is for the Cabinet to decide whether to delegate the power to make any of those decisions. Only the Cabinet may decide to delegate executive functions to Area Committees, joint arrangements or other local authorities. Where it does so, those delegations must also be recorded in the Cabinet's Scheme of Delegations in Part 3 of the Constitution. Though changes to the Constitution must be made by the Council, changes to the Scheme of Delegations are for the Leader and Cabinet to decide, and must be reported to the Full Council.

Where the power to take decisions is delegated by the Cabinet, the extent of the delegation must be recorded, as must any limitations on the delegated power. Details of the person, body or forum to which the decision is delegated must be recorded, as must the extent of delegation on to others from them.

The Council will issue and keep up to date a record of what part of the Council or individual has responsibility for particular types of decisions or decisions relating to particular areas or functions. This record is set out in Part 3 of the Constitution.

2. Scrutiny and Accountability

Scrutiny provides the legal power for elected members to look into issues of concern for residents or poor performance, holding decision-makers to account for the decisions they are making. Scrutiny is not decision making but acts as a check and balance to the executive, which takes the majority of key decisions on behalf of the Council. The Overview and Scrutiny Panels exist (see Governance Structure – Political Management Arrangements) to scrutinise, monitor and review performance as well as policy, Corporate Plan, Forward Plan, the Council's Strategic Risk Register and the development of the Council's annual budget and reviews.

From an internal perspective, the mechanisms in place as set out in Governance Structure – Internal Organisation Governance, provide means for internal organisation scrutiny and accountability.

3. Financial Management and external audit

Strong financial management is critical to ensuring the financial sustainability and future prosperity of the Council. The Constitution contains the Financial Procedure Rules which set the principles for managing the Council's financial affairs. A set of strategic documents form the second level of financial governance, with a third tier represented by detailed financial instructions to provide clear guidance on the operation of key financial processes. All documents are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they remain current and fit for purpose, reflecting changes in the external environment and also in the Council itself.

Strategic Documents include:

- Treasury Management Strategy
- Budget for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account
- Capital Budget
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Statement of Accounts

It is clear that not only is Local Government under significant pressure, the UK business and financial industry is as well. The impact of Covid, War in Ukraine, interest rates, national insurance rises and cuts to funding, international political uncertainty and poor management to name a few, are all challenges faced across the Local Government landscape. This has led to major failings in other councils widely known across the United Kingdom which presents an uncertain future.

The External Auditor is legally required to satisfy themselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. They would report to the Council, and specifically the Audit and Standards Committee, if any significant matters came to their attention.

4. Managing risks and internal audit

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks, both internal and external. It is therefore committed to maintaining robust risk management and business continuity arrangements that make a positive contribution towards the achievement of the Council's corporate aims and priorities and maximise the opportunities to achieve its vision.

The Council's aims with respect to risk management are as follows:-

- To embed risk management into the culture of the Council
- To adopt an effective and transparent corporate approach to risk management, which also applies to the Council's work with external partners and contractors
- To work with partners and stakeholders to identify and exploit opportunities that will contribute to corporate aims and priorities
- To integrate risk management into the operational and management practices of the Council
- To promote risk awareness throughout the Council and among our contractors and key partners
- To be responsive to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements, whilst effectively managing the related risks and opportunities.
- To undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of the risk management arrangements to support the Council's Annual Governance Statement.
- To promote risk awareness throughout the Council and among our contractors and key partners
- To be responsive to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements, whilst effectively managing the related risks and opportunities.
- To undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of the risk management arrangements to support the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

The Council has an adopted Risk Management Policy & Strategy which forms part of the Constitution. Central Midlands Audit Partnership (CMAP) undertakes the required annual self-assessment of the Council's Internal Audit function, against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. CMAP reports to the Audit and Governance Committee to approve the audit plan for each financial year, provide updates on progress against the agreed plan and to provide an assessment and opinion based upon audits undertaken. The move to CMAP was reported by the Audit and Standards Committee and approved by Cabinet to ensure resilience in the team but to also gain a wider network of public bodies to link with in terms of efficiency, best value and practice.

5. Senior Officers and Statutory Officers

The Council's management team – comprising the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Assistant Directors (including the three Statutory Officers) implement decisions made under the Political Management Arrangements, provides advice to Cabinet and the Council on the development of future policy and budgetary issues and lead service areas to provide services.

Please see section Governance Structure – Internal Organisation Governance below for further information.

There are regular meetings throughout the year of our three Statutory Officers otherwise known as the 'golden triangle' (the Chief Executive/ Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer (otherwise known as the Section 151 Officer) and Monitoring Officer) to review and monitor governance issues. The Chief Internal Auditor also attends to provide updates from an internal audit perspective.

5. Member and Employee Code of Conduct

The Constitution includes two codes of conduct:

a) Member Code of Conduct – designed to ensure behaviour is consistent with core principles to achieve best value for residents and maintain public confidence in the Council. The core principles include:

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness
6. Honesty
7. Leadership

b) Code of Conduct for Employees – designed to sets out standards of conduct expected from all employees of the Council. Employees must conduct themselves in a way that ensures a high standard of service is provided and, the reputation of the Council is protected.



3.2. Governance Structure – Political Management Arrangements

- a. Full Council** – comprised of 38 Democratically Elected Members and is the principal body for determining the Council’s budget and setting the Council’s Policy Framework. Core duties include:
1. Approval of the budget and policy framework of the Council, as well as any application to the Secretary of State in respect of any Housing Land Transfer.
 2. Approval of the Constitution.
 3. Approval of the Corporate Plan.
 4. Agreeing or amending the Terms of Reference for Committees, deciding on their composition and making appointments to them.

[Council | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

- b. Cabinet** – comprised of the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader and four Cabinet Members. Core duties include:
1. Main decision-making body of the Council.
 2. Cabinet functions are set out in the Executive arrangements adopted by the Council. The arrangements may provide for Executive functions to be discharged by:
 - a) the Cabinet as a whole;
 - b) an individual Member of the Cabinet;
 - c) an officer;
 - d) an Area Committee;
 - e) joint arrangements; or
 - f) another Local Authority.
1. Six portfolios exist (a) **Housing**, b) **Environment & Public Services**, c) **Resources & Customer Services**, d) **Planning & Enforcement**, e) **Business & Regeneration**, f) **Leisure, Communities & Health**.)

[Cabinet | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

- b. Overview and Scrutiny** – comprised of four panels each politically balanced who undertake the work scrutiny work, having regard to the Council’s Corporate Objectives. Each panel scrutinise, monitors and reviews performance, policy, Corporate Plan, Forward Plan, the Council’s Strategic Risk Register and the development of the Council’s annual budget and reviews. The four panels are as follows:
- a) Business, Regeneration and Planning Overview and Scrutiny Panel
 - b) Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel
 - c) Health and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel
 - d) Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

[Business, Regeneration and Planning Overview and Scrutiny | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

[Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

[Health and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

[Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

c. Audit and Standards Committee - comprised of a politically balanced committee membership. Core duties include:

1. Providing assurance to the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk and control.
2. Approves annual Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement.
3. Oversees the Council's Councillor Code of Conduct and the overall standards of conduct and ethics of Members.
4. Attended by the Chief Finance Officer (otherwise known as the Section 151 Officer), Monitoring Officer and Chief Auditor.

[Audit and Standards Committee | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

d. Planning Applications Committee - comprised of a politically balanced committee membership. The Committee consider and make decisions on functions relating to Town and Country Planning and Development Control' which cannot be discharged by Council or Cabinet. This includes planning related applications received as the statutory planning authority, unless as per the Constitution, the authority is with the Assistant Director – Planning.

[Planning Applications Committee | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

e. Licensing Committee - comprised of a politically balanced committee membership. The Committee consider and make decisions on applications submitted under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005. In addition, the Committee consider applications for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licenses.

[Licensing Committee | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

f. Shareholder Committee - comprised of a politically balanced committee membership. The committee is classified as a sub-committee of Cabinet. Core duties include:

1. Managing the shareholding interests in the Council's trading companies and joint ventures.
2. Appoints and removes directors to the companies, issues best practice guidance and arranges training.
3. Monitors the performance of the companies.

[Shareholder Committee | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

g. Appeals Committee – comprised of elected members who consider the determination of an appeal against any decision made by or on behalf of the organisation with the exception of Planning, Licensing and other such regulatory matters where there is a statutory right of appeal to a body outside the Council.

[Appeals Committee | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

h. Borough Plan Committee - comprised of a politically balanced committee membership, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Enforcement. Where applicable, the committee make recommendations to Cabinet as to the content and progress of the local plan.

[Borough Plan Committee | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

i. Civic Honours Sub-Committee - comprised of a pre-defined list of Elected Members as per the Constitution and chaired by the Leader of the Council. Core duties include:

1. Inviting nominations for Civic Honour awards
2. Agreeing the criteria for awarding Civic Honours
3. Consider and make recommendations to Cabinet and Council for awards

[Civic Honours Sub-Committee | Cabinet and committees | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)



3.3. Governance Structure – Community Board(s)

- a) Simplification Pathfinder Board** - Nuneaton is one of a small group of local authorities invited by the Department of Levelling up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to pilot a simplified approach to funding delivery, which includes funding from Future High Streets Fund, Towns Deal and Levelling up (round one only). Each of the local authorities involved in the simplification pathfinder pilot received funding from all three funding streams. It was agreed at Full Council that Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council will join DLUHCs Simplification Pathfinder Pilot at its meeting held on 6 September 2023, minute number CB39. The objective of the Fund(s) is to drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth through:
- a)** Urban regeneration, planning and land use: ensuring towns are thriving places for people to live and work, including by increasing density in town centres; strengthening local economic assets including local cultural assets; site acquisition, remediation, preparation, regeneration; and making full use of planning tools to bring strategic direction and change.
 - b)** Skills and enterprise infrastructure: driving private sector investment and ensuring towns have the space to support skills and small business development.
 - c)** Connectivity: developing local transport schemes that complement regional and national networks, as well as supporting the delivery of improved digital connectivity.

3.4. Governance Structure – Internal Organisation Governance

During the 2024/2025 Financial Year, the Council updated its internal Governance Structure to align with its internal officer structure. A table has been provided below to outline the structure at the start of the Financial Year vs the end of the Financial Year.

Up to end of October 2024	From November 2024
<p>Management Meetings:</p> <p>Management Team (MT) MT have corporate and strategic responsibilities for achieving the Council’s visions and strategies. Membership: Chief Executive Officer, Strategic Directors (one being the Chief Finance Officer/ Section 151 Officer), Monitoring Officer Administration: Corporate PA Weekly meeting except one week when EMT convened.</p> <p>Extended Management Team (EMT) MT have corporate and strategic responsibilities for achieving the Council’s visions and strategies. Membership: Chief Executive Officer, Strategic Directors (one being the Chief Finance Officer/ Section 151 Officer), Assistant Directors, Monitoring Officer Administration: Corporate PA Monthly meeting.</p> <p>Other meetings that took place between Strategic Directors, Assistant Directors and Service Managers took place but no formal structure.</p> <p>Informal Cabinet A meeting to facilitate discussions between MT and members of the Cabinet to discuss forthcoming matters and to provide updates on strategic and operational matters.</p> <p>Membership: Cabinet Members, Chief Executive Officer, Strategic Directors (one being the Chief Finance Officer/Section 151 Officer), Monitoring Officer Administration: Democratic Services Monthly meeting. Not a public meeting as it is not a formal Cabinet meeting and no executive decisions made. The meeting is to facilitate discussion and communication.</p>	<p>Management Meetings:</p> <p>Corporate Executive Team (CET) CET have corporate and strategic responsibilities for achieving the Council’s visions and strategies. CET form the highest level non-political board for decision-making. Membership: Chief Executive Officer, Strategic Directors (one being the Chief Finance Officer/ Section 151 Officer), Monitoring Officer Administration: Corporate PA Meet once per month.</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team (SLT) SLT will focus on delivery of strategic objectives as set by CET. SLT is designed to provide co-ordination across multiple directorates to ensure delivery of the Corporate Plan where work needs to cut across directorates. SLT will be the key decision-making body for operational changes within the Council, particularly where changes will affect teams across multiple directorates. The majority of business cases will be approved at SLT level. Membership: Chief Executive Officer (chair), Strategic Directors (one being the Chief Finance Officer/Section 151 Officer), Assistant Directors, Monitoring Officer Administration: Corporate PA Meet once per month.</p> <p>Directorate Management Team (DMT) DMT will focus on delivery of strategic and operational priorities within a directorate. DMT will be responsible for scrutinising performance within a directorate and communicating across teams within the directorate. DMT will serve as the first level of scrutiny for all plans ahead of submission to SLT, as well as making decisions around operational changes that will have no/little impact outside the directorate. Membership: Strategic Director and Assistant Directors (Direct Reports) Meet once per month.</p>

Senior Management Team (SMT)

SMT will focus on delivery of service level plans within a single sub-directorate. SMT should provide an environment to share information both up and down the chain, helping to further develop the Council's "sharing" culture.

Membership: Assistant Directors, Service Managers (Direct Reports)

Meet once per month.

Statutory Officer Meeting

*Commenced February 2025.

Statutory Officer meetings

Informal Cabinet

A meeting to facilitate discussions between CET and members of the Cabinet to discuss forthcoming matters and to provide updates on strategic and operational matters.

Membership: Cabinet Members, Chief Executive Officer, Strategic Directors (one being the Chief Finance Officer/Section 151 Officer), Monitoring Officer

Administration: Democratic Services

Monthly meeting. Not a public meeting as it is not a formal Cabinet meeting and no executive decisions made. The meeting is to facilitate discussion and communication.



Key Boards/Officer Working Groups (excludes partnerships):

Programme Management

Consisted of:

- Corporate Programmes Strategic Board (CPSB) which was the decision making forum to sign off Business Cases.
- Four primary programme boards each with a specific remit led by the Senior Responsible Officer to review, monitor and manage business cases pre and post approval. (Business Modernisation & ITC, Corporate Asset Management, Housing Revenue Account, Regeneration).

Corporate Governance Group

- To review the Local Corporate Governance Code and the Corporate Governance Framework
- To examine the appropriateness of policies and procedures
- To identify any gaps in corporate governance arrangements
- To oversee the production of the Annual Governance Statement
- Oversee the development of risk management procedures
- Promote a positive risk management culture

Membership: Assistant Director Democracy and Governance (chair), Assistant Directors, Internal Audit Manager, Data Protection Officer, Head of People and Culture

Key Boards/Officer Working Groups (excludes partnerships):

Corporate Programme Review Board (CPRB)

CPRB will provide scrutiny of projects/programmes once approved by SLT. SLT is now the decision making board for business cases and any key and substantial changes. The idea of the board is to monitor performance and ensure that projects stay on track against their stated aims and plans, changes to a project or any significant concerns will be referred back to SLT.

Membership: Assistant Director Finance (chair), Assistant Director Central Operations, Assistant Director Democracy & Governance, Transformation (PMO administration)

Administration: Transformation

Corporate Governance Group – No Change

- To review the Local Corporate Governance Code and the Corporate Governance Framework
- To examine the appropriateness of policies and procedures
- To identify any gaps in corporate governance arrangements
- To oversee the production of the Annual Governance Statement
- Oversee the development of risk management procedures
- Promote a positive risk management culture

Membership: Assistant Director Democracy and Governance (chair), Assistant Directors, Internal Audit Manager, Data Protection Officer, Head of People and Culture

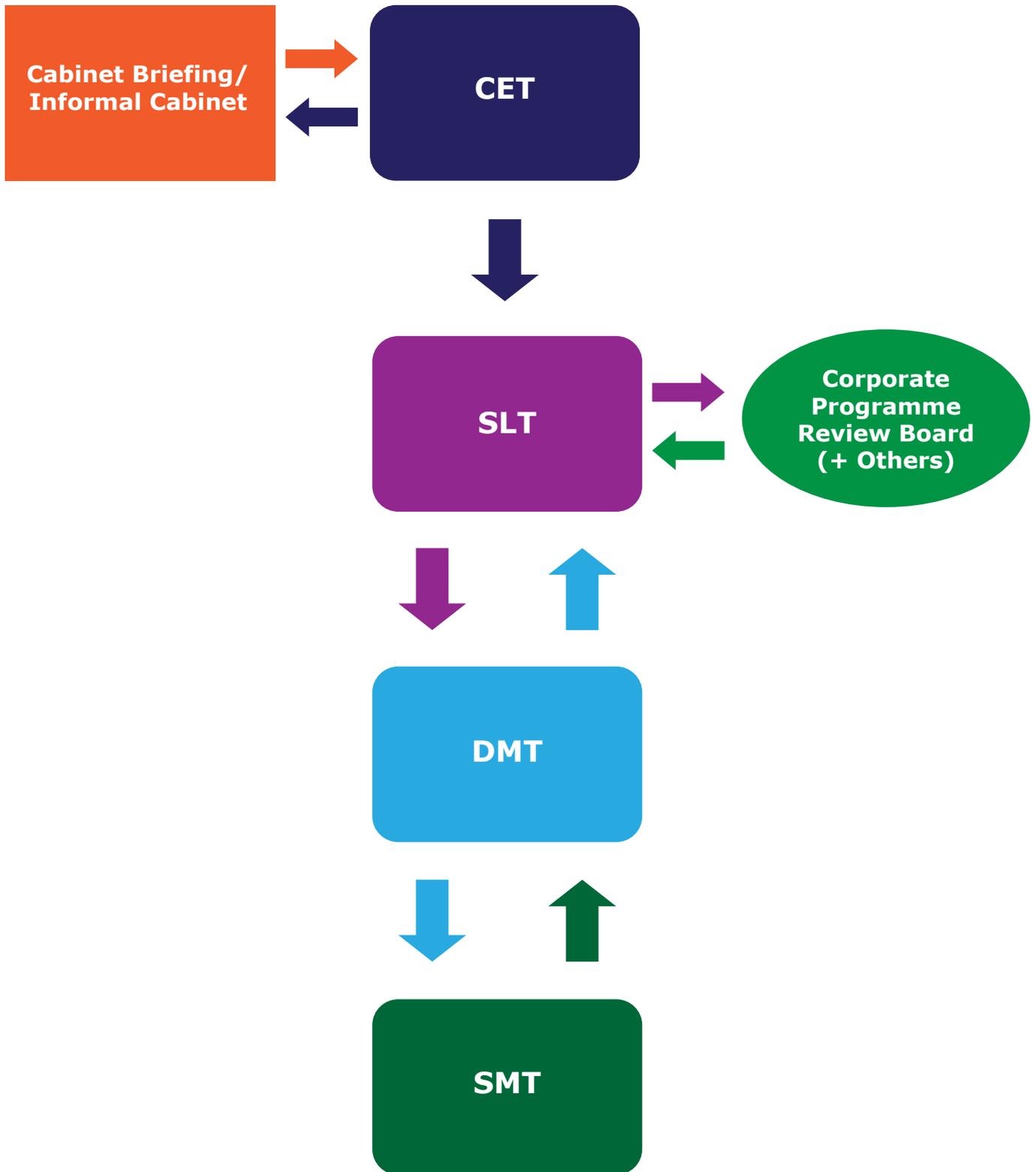
HASCOG (Health and Safety Coordinators Group)

To be accountable to Management Team for all matters pertaining to the effective management of Health & Safety within NBBC.

HASCOG (Health and Safety Coordinators Group) – No Change

To be accountable to Management Team for all matters pertaining to the effective management of Health & Safety within NBBC.

For the purposes of the column from November 2024, please see below diagram which sets out a visual graphic regarding the structure and flow of Management meetings.



Statutory Officers & Senior Officers:

Statutory Officers	Senior Officers
<p>Head of Paid Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the role of the Chief Executive, also known as the Head of Paid Service, to ensure that all the authority's functions are properly co-ordinated as well as organising staff and appointing appropriate management. <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer approved by Full Council February 2024 and taking full responsibility from June 2024. - Appointment of a new Deputy Chief Executive Officer approved by Full Council July 2024. 	<p>Strategic Directors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have full strategic and managerial responsibility for a designated Directorate. • To work with Elected Members, the Chief Executive, other Strategic Directors, Assistant Directors and key strategic partners to develop clear and achievable strategic aims for the Council and help ensure the strategic aims are delivered to the highest possible standards to customers, both internal and external • To ensure the Directorate's activities are carried out at all times in a lawful manner and in adherence with the Council's policies and standing orders.
<p>Section 151 Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring Lawfulness and Financial Prudence of Decision Making • Administration of Financial Affairs • Contributing to Corporate Management • Giving Financial Information <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no change of Section 151 Officer during the Financial Year. - The Council has a Deputy S151 Officer (Assistant Director – Finance). No Changes during the Financial Year. 	<p>Assistant Directors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal point of contact for Elected Members for the Service Unit unless business as usual in which case Member Enquiries process is used. • Work closely with the Strategic Director and relevant Cabinet Members to develop and appropriately review strategies and policies within the remit of the Service Unit. • Support the Strategic Director in developing innovative, resilient and sustainable Directorate and service wide strategic objectives, business and project plans (including those which may have wider Council application, including Corporate plans and strategy), ensuring their effective and seamless delivery.
<p>Monitoring Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the Constitution • Ensuring Lawfulness and Fairness of Decision-Making • Supporting the Audit and Standards Committee • Receiving Complaints about Councillor Conduct • Conducting Investigations • Advising whether Executive Decisions are within the Budget and Policy Framework <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - change of Monitoring Officer made in January 2025, approved by Full Council. - The Council has a Deputy Monitoring Officer (Election and Democratic Services Manager). No Changes during the Financial Year. 	<p>Service Managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for developing, maintaining, and implementing the Council's governance, risk, and control framework • Contribute to the effective corporate management and governance of the Council • Responsible for budgets within their control and managing employees within their service units.

Audit:

Internal Audit – led by the Central Midlands Audit Partnership following Cabinet approval in March 2024.

- Provides independent assurance and opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk management and control framework.
- Delivers an annual programme of risk-based audit activity, including counter fraud, investigation and assurance activity.
- Makes recommendations for improvements in the management of risk.
- Reports to the Audit and Standards Committee and provides an overall statement of assurance.

External Audit

Following the Public Sector Audit Appointments national procurement exercise which the Council opted into, Azets Audit Services are the Council's appointed external auditor. Previously, Grant Thornton LLP were the appointed Council external auditor.

- Audits / reviews and reports on the Council's financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement)
- Provides an opinion on the accounts and use of resources, including the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the use of resources (the value for money conclusion)
- Statutory duty to ensure that the Council has adequate arrangements in place for the prevention and detection of fraud, corruption & theft.



4. Preparing the Annual Governance Statement

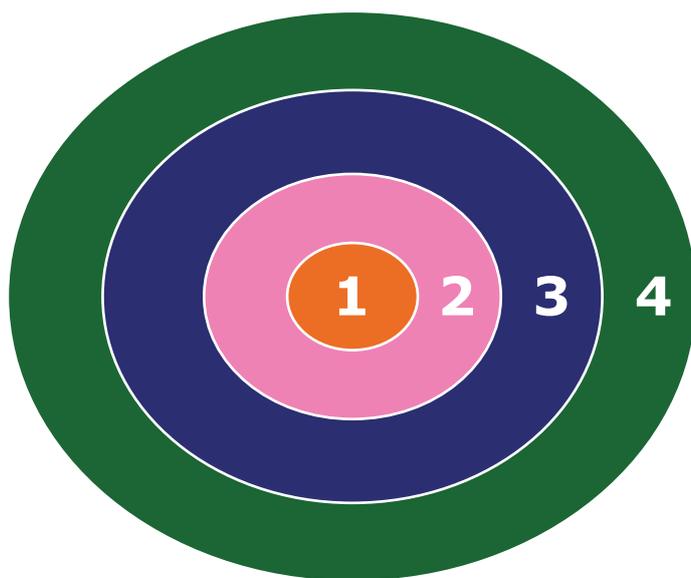
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control.

The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- the work of the internal auditors and the Annual Opinion Report.
- Strategic Directors and Assistant Directors within the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment; and
- comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

Assurance statements have been received from the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors setting out their confirmation that the control systems in place are adequate and that they are being complied with.

The review for the 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement has been carried out by Corporate Governance Group and the draft statement endorsed by Corporate Executive Team 3rd June 2025 for consideration by the Audit and Standards Committee in June 2025. It is then ratified, reviewed and scheduled for approval by the Audit and Standards Committee in September 2025.



1. Annual Governance Statement
2. Corporate Governance Group
3. Corporate Executive Team
4. Audit and Standards Committee

Where do we need assurance?

- a) Compliance
- b) Standards of conduct and behaviour
- c) Risk Management
- d) Financial Management
- e) Performance Management
- f) Service Delivery
- g) Effectiveness of internal controls

Where do we get assurance from?

- a) Constitution
- b) Political Management Arrangements (Committees and Scrutiny)
- c) Risk Management Policy & Strategy
- d) Performance Management Framework
- e) Complaints, counter fraud and whistleblowing
- f) Independent and external sources (e.g. CIPFA, Social Housing Regulator, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, external auditor).

5. Effectiveness of our governance in 2024/2025 – an Overview

a) Internal Audit – Annual Opinion

The purpose of the annual opinion is to provide an independent and objective assessment of the Council’s risk management, control and governance arrangements. It provides assurance to senior management and the Audit and Standards Committee on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements allowing the Audit and Standards Committee to assess the Council’s internal control environment. Internal Audit’s risk-based plan must take into account the requirement to produce an annual internal audit opinion. Accordingly, the Audit Plan must incorporate sufficient work to enable the Chief Audit Executive to give an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation’s framework of governance, risk management and control.

*Central Midlands Audit Partnership (CMAP) provided the following opinion for 2024/2025, as presented to the Audit and Standards Committee 9th September 2025: **Reasonable Assurance can be given that Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council’s framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.***

b) Statement of Accounts

During 2024/25, Central Government imposed legislative backstops in Autumn 2024 to address the outstanding unaudited accounts for financial year up to and including 2022/23 and 2023/24.

The deadline to complete external audits and approve statement of accounts for the financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23 was the **13th December 2024**. Shortly after, the backstop date of **28th February 2025** was imposed for completing the external audits in relation to the 2023/24 statement of accounts.

Please find table below key stages and timelines based on the above two deadlines:

2021/22 audit findings report was presented with an unqualified opinion in relation to the 2021/22 statement of accounts.	12th November 2024 Achieved prior to deadline (13th December 2024)
	
Audit findings report and statement of accounts for 2022/23 were presented to audit and standards committee with a disclaimed opinion due to the lack of audit work being able to be completed before the imposed backstop date.	3rd December 2024 Achieved prior to deadline (13th December 2024)
	
For the 2023/2024 financial year, a disclaimed audit opinion was approved again based on the limited amount of audit work being completed before this date. In the short term future the goal is to build back assurance working closely with our new external auditors (Azets) to get the opinions back to being unqualified.	25th February 2025 Achieved prior to deadline (28th February 2025)

c) Local Borough Council and preparation of Warwickshire County Council Elections

2024/25 was a significant year for local democracy across Nuneaton and Bedworth.

In May 2024, the Council experienced all out local elections across all wards as well as the Police and Crime Commissioner election. This was also significant because this was the first local election following the recently updated boundaries following the Local Government Boundary Commission review for the borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth. The local elections took place as planned, resulting in Labour taking control of the Council in May 2024. This resulted in a new administration, Cabinet, Mayor and Deputy Mayor, changing from a Conservative led Council. Labour held a majority until December 2024, when one Labour member deferred to the Conservative party resulting in the Council being in a position of no overall control. That said, the Council is still led by a Labour Administration, Leader and Cabinet as they hold more seats than any other party.

Shortly after the local elections in May 2024, the General Election was called taking place in July 2024. The Council undertook its duty to hold the General Election process across the borough of Nuneaton.

The remainder of the financial year then involved the closing of accounts, undertaking annual processes (such as the annual canvass) and preparing for the Warwickshire County Council elections scheduled May 2025.

d) Scrutiny (annual scrutiny report)

Each Overview and Scrutiny Panel (OSP) presented their annual report for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year to Full Council on 9th April 2025. At Full Council, each report was proposed, seconded and voted on. It was resolved that each report from each OSP be noted.

e) Social Housing Regulator new legislation, Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 strengthened the powers of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), and on 1st April 2024, a revised set of Consumer Standards were introduced. For Local Authority landlords, the relevant consumer standards are:

- Rent Standard
- Safety & Quality Standard
- Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard

These Standards set out the regulatory requirements for social landlords to ensure they meet the required outcomes for tenants. A further Governance and Viability Standard is applicable to non-Local Authority social housing landlords, however, Local Authority social housing landlords are expected to conform to the relevant Governance aspects of this Standard. These aspects are:

- a) Adhere to all relevant law**
- b) Comply with their governing documents and all regulatory requirements**
- c) Are accountable to the tenants, the regulator and relevant stakeholders**
- d) Have an effective risk management and internal controls assurance framework**
- e) Protect social housing assets**

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

In order to comply with requirements, the Landlord Service has:

- Reported the Tenant Satisfaction Measures to both Cabinet and Housing and Communities OSP.
- Reported a revised suite of KPI's to Housing and Communities OSP.
- Published an Annual Report to tenants and leaseholders detailing the outcomes of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- Established a monthly Strategic Safety and Compliance Board to review compliance against the Quality & Safety Standard.
- Procured an external auditor who undertook an audit of our gas operations, leading to a change in management and assurance processes.

- Procured Campbell Tickell who undertook an audit of the Council's compliance against the Consumer Standards. This has resulted in the development of a Compliance Plan which is in delivery.

Policy and Strategy Development

The following policy and strategy documents have been developed as a result of the new regulatory requirements:

- Implemented Administering Medication Policy
- Implemented Compensation Remedy Policy
- Implemented Decant Policy
- Implemented Dementia & Complex Needs Policy
- Implemented Garden Assistance Policy
- Implemented Aids & Adaptations Policy
- Implemented Vulnerable Persons Policy
- Implemented Domestic Abuse Policy
- Implemented Permit to Work Policy
- Implemented Pet Policy
- Implemented Succession Policy
- Implemented Void Management Policy

f) Housing Ombudsman

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a statutory code of practice relating to the procedures of qualifying social landlords, which came into force on 1st April 2024. It also placed a duty upon the Housing Ombudsman to monitor compliance with the Code.

The Council is required to produce a social housing Complaints Annual Performance and Service Improvement Report, which includes a self-assessment against the requirements of the Code. The Report must be presented to the Housing and Communities OSP and to the Cabinet, with both required to make comment on it. The Report was presented to the Housing and Communities OSP on 6th June 2024 and to the Cabinet on 19th June 2024.

g) Borough Plan Review

The Borough Plan Review along with its evidence base was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 12th February 2024. Two Planning Inspectors were appointed to lead an independent examination to determine whether the Borough Plan Review is sound and legally compliant, and whether it can be recommended for adoption.

The Planning Inspectors issued their 'Matters, Issues and Questions' on 22nd May 2024 which comprised of 181 questions. The Council were required to respond to these questions in advance of three blocks of hearing sessions. The hearing sessions took place between July and October 2024. Following these sessions, the Council received formal notification that the Plan could be found to be sound subject to Main Modifications being made as recommended by the Inspectors. The Council has been working with the Planning Inspectors to agree the Main Modifications and is due to consult on these between for 6 weeks starting in May 2025. It is expected the Borough Plan will be adopted by the Council during Autumn 2025.

Council Aim and theme: Aim 1 – Live Priority 2: Enable appropriate housing development

h) Introduced a co-mingled material recycling collection service, in line with the Material Recycling Facility (MRF) code of conduct and Resource and Waste Strategy.

The required changes to the collection service were implemented in October 2023, with a gradual transition to the use of the Sherbourne Recycling Facility for the processing of the material collected.

Council Aim and theme: Aim 1 – Live Priority – Sponsor a sustainable green approach

i) Adopt a Tenant Engagement Strategy

The Regulatory Social Housing Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard requires social housing landlords to take tenants' views into account in their decision-making about how landlords services are delivered and communicate how tenant's views have been considered.

In response to this, the Council has drafted a new Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy to ensure our tenants and leaseholders are able to shape, scrutinise, inform and improve the services we provide. A priority within the new strategy is to become accountable to our tenants and leaseholders, and then to move towards a model of shared accountability.

To assist with this aim, the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) has undertaken an audit of our approach to tenant engagement in preparation for application for accreditation. An action plan to achieve accreditation has been formulated and is in delivery.

Council Aim and theme: Aim 1 – Live Priority 4 – Prioritise Community Safety & Empowerment

j) National standard - ASB Service

The Council's Communities Team and the social housing ASB Team have successfully achieved the RESOLVE Standard, awarded by Resolve, a non-profit organisation that works closely with HM Government to develop best practice and national policy around ASB.

The RESOLVE Standard encompasses 6 overarching principles, these being:

- Victims and Communities
- Change
- Leadership, Culture and Resources
- Partnership
- Performance
- Professional Development

The RESOLVE Standard confirms that the Council offers a high quality ASB service and recognises the importance of making communities safer. It further confirms that the Council is committed to ensuring that victims and communities are at the centre of our approach, whilst also remaining focused upon the longer-term challenge and change of those causing ASB.

Council Aim and theme: Aim 1 – Live Priority 4 – Prioritise Community Safety & Empowerment

k) Continue the development of Bedworth Physical Activity Hub and procure a new Leisure Operator Management contract

The Bedworth Physical Activity Hub was identified as a priority project, due to its age and limited future life span for the existing facility. On 10th November 2021, Cabinet approved that RIBA Stages 4A and 4B be undertaken for the Bedworth Physical Activity Hub site, to progress to procurement stage. At cabinet on 6th September 2023 cabinet approved to take forward a revised building design that could be accommodated within the budget for the project and delegated authority was given to officers to agree RIBA Stages 5 onwards and contract terms for the delivery (with external consultants and the main contractor) of the new BPAH as per the descoped option,. The project commenced on site in early 2024 and delivery of the programme has been closely managed via the Council's appointed external Project Management team.

Alongside the delivery of the new facility, a Leisure Operator Procurement process began in October 2021 with soft market testing, a series of Member Workshops followed by the commencement of a three-stage procurement process, to appoint a Leisure operator to manage Borough Leisure facilities for up to a 15-year term, meeting the Councils key Leisure strategic outcomes, supporting residents with opportunities for improvements in their health and wellbeing. In line with the delivery timetable of the new Bedworth Physical Activity Hub the successful operator will be required to proceed with the fit out of the facility immediately following the award and appointment of the contract.

Council Aim and theme: Aim 1 – Live Priority 1 – Promote residents' health & wellbeing

l) Procurement Act 2023

For the last three years the Government has been developing a new procurement regime, reflected in the Procurement Act 2023. The legislative process was concluded earlier in 2024 and the new requirements effective February 2025. The new regime increases the transparency requirements and creates a simpler and more flexible commercial system.

The Council has been making active preparations over 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. Processes have been updated, training undertaken by key officers. The Council adopted updated Contract Procedure Rules in February 2025 in time for the go live date late February 2025. The Council is pleased to confirm it is operating under the new regime.

Council Aim and theme: Aim 2 – Work Priority 4 – Support Local Businesses

m) Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government – Local Funding and Investment Division – Pathfinder - Second line of defence deep dive exercise (regeneration)

The purpose of a second line of defence (deep dive) is to provide assurance on behalf of the of Housing Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) through a series of checks, that Local Authorities have effective controls and governance systems in place to manage risks, safeguard public funds and maintain transparent governance.

The outcome of the report concluded that the assurance level is satisfactory, demonstrating the Councils commitment to maintain expected standards.

Council Aim and theme: Aim 2 – Work Priority 1 – Grow a strong & inclusive economy



6. Action Plans

Annex 1 – includes update on previous action plans up to and including the 2024/2025 Annual Governance Statement

Annex 2 – Includes the Annual Governance Statement action plan for 2025/2026.

7. Conclusion

The Council has produced an accurate Annual Governance Statement for the 2024/2025 Financial Year Period, outlining the governance mechanisms that were in place during the reporting period. We confirm our commitment to implementation of actions to address issues and/or gaps in governance identified throughout the 2025/2026 financial year. Furthermore, the Council will monitor and seek assurances in response of the Action Plan and will continue to ensure suitable and sufficient governance mechanisms exist.



Annex 1

An update on the action plan for 2022/23 is shown in the table below:

Table 1

Action	Responsible Officer/ Group	Planned Completion Date	Status
Implement a Corporate Document Retention Policy	Data Protection Officer	Rolled over to 2023/24	Outstanding. Draft policy stage

An update on the action plan for 2023/24 is shown in the table below:

Table 2

Action	Responsible Officer/ Group	Planned Completion Date	Status
Implement a Corporate Document Retention Policy	Data Protection Officer	Rolled over to 2023/24	Outstanding. Draft policy stage.
Cyber essentials assessment undertaken and certified. PSN compliance obtained	*Strategic Director – Corporate Resources	Assessment completed and remedial work identified. Revised assessment to be undertaken - 2023/24 Cyber Essentials accreditation is not possible due to some legacy systems. These are in scope for change/renewal in 2024/25. Revised target 2024/2025 or 2025/2026.	Revised target 2027/2028 Progress has been made but due to the interdependences with other systems and software contracts, it has not been possible to obtain this accreditation at this point. Still in progress.
Ensure staff recruitment and retention is linked to the People Strategy and underlying policies	*Strategic Director – Corporate Resources	Linked to employment committee work. Tabled for 2022/23	Delayed. People Strategy from 2026.
Asset review, especially use of the Town Hall	*Strategic Director – Corporate Resources	Ongoing but the Council is in Negotiations to lease part of the Town Hall to a public sector partner.	In progress. Rolled over to 2024/2025.
Consider the effective and consistent use of appropriate data to inform decision making	Management Team	Ongoing	Done. New measures approved. System setup in progress. See other target further down.
Complete the development of some of the key strategies e.g. Economic Development Strategy, Town Centre Strategy	*Strategic Director – Place and Economy	December 2022 Draft documents being consulted upon. Adoption in 2023/24	In progress. Rolled over to 2024/2025.

Local Code of Corporate Governance, Anti-Fraud and Bribery Strategy and Fraud Response Plan.	*Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance, Assistant Director – Finance and Strategic Director – Corporate Resources	March 2023.	Rolled over to 2024/2025 Sickness in team caused delay, followed by transfer to CMAP. This is now in progress to be finalised first half of 2025/2026 Financial Year noting these require Political approval (committee/cabinet)
Identify and implement a replacement for the previously titled TEN Performance Management System	*Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance	Scope and Procurement – 2023/2024 Implementation 2024/2025	In progress and near completion. Aiming end of June 2025 for full completion of entire project, including IT system setup.
To update the Operational Risk Registers and bring in line with a revised format. Similarly, this will enable the Strategic Risk Register to be refined and to focus wholly on corporate strategic risks.	Corporate Governance Group	March 2025	Completed.
Fundamental review of the Performance Management data, metrics and format.	Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance, all Strategic Directors and Assistant Directors	March 2025	Completed. But please note, remaining point regarding above (ref TEN system). IT System and PowerBi in progress. Aiming for end of June 2025.
Revise the Corporate Plan as existing Corporate Plan expires March 2025	All Strategic Directors and Assistant Directors	March 2025	Completed.
Constitution to be updated to ensure that it captures changes made in the previous 12 month period.	Monitoring Officer	September 2024	Completed – March 2025.

*Change of job title from previous Action Plan due to staff changes.

Annex 2

The review of the governance framework during 2024/25 has identified the following issues to be addressed in 2025/26, notwithstanding any outstanding items from the previous action plan as per table 2 above .

Action	Responsible Officer/Group	Planned Completion Date
Implement a Corporate Document Retention Policy	Data Protection Officer	September 2025
Identify and implement a replacement for the previously titled TEN Performance Management System	Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance	June 2025
Complete the development of some of the key strategies e.g. Economic Development Strategy, Town Centre Strategy	Strategic Director – Place & Economy Assistant Director – Economy & Regeneration	March 2026
Local Code of Corporate Governance, Anti-Fraud and Bribery Strategy and Fraud Response Plan.	Strategic Director – Corporate Resources Assistant Director – Finance Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance	September 2025
Asset review, especially use of the Town Hall	Strategic Director – Place & Economy Assistant Director – Economy & Regeneration	March 2026
Review, consider and implement mitigations identified in the Commissioners report associated to Birmingham City Council as a lesson learnt for Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council	SLT	March 2026
A need for the Shareholder Committee to receive reports from all wholly owned and jointly owned subsidiaries to have more oversight and scrutiny of Council owned and jointly owner subsidiaries (NABCEL, Sherbourne Recycling Ltd), Grayson Place (NBBC) Limited	Shareholder Committee CET	March 2026
Statement of Accounts for 2024/2025 to be prepared and signed off	Strategic Director – Corporate Resources Assistant Director – Finance	September 2025
Implement Action Plan following assessment findings following the Regulator of Social Housing	Strategic Director – Housing & Community Safety Assistant Director – Social Housing and Community Safety Assistant Director – Strategic Housing	Ongoing

Following decision that County elections to proceed in May 2025, prepare and deliver County Elections. Prepare for Borough Elections in May 2026.	Chief Executive Officer (Returning Officer) Elections and Democratic Services Manager	May 2025 May 2026
Review and update of both the Performance Management Framework as well as the Risk Management Strategy & Framework.	Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance	October 2025
Implement revised Service Business Plans following adoption of new Corporate Plan 2025 – 2029	SLT	June 2025
Update templates and report writing guidance for committee reports, cabinet reports and delegated officers decisions to ensure reports are sufficiently detailed and accurate for decision making	Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance	June 2025
Produce and approve the Modern Slavery Statement for 2023/2024 and 2024/2025	Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance SLT	September 2025
RIPA Training for officers, authorising officers, Senior Responsible Officer (and Deputy) and co-ordinators where required.	Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance & CET	October 2025
Adoption of the Borough Plan	Strategic Director – Place and Economy Assistant Director - Planning	October 2025
Approval of a new Local Development Scheme later in 2025	Strategic Director – Place and Economy Assistant Director - Planning	December 2025
Adoption of updated Supplementary Planning Documents	Strategic Director – Place and Economy Assistant Director - Planning	March 2026
Adoption of Heritage SPD and Local List (to be taken with SPDs)	Strategic Director – Place and Economy Assistant Director - Planning	March 2026
Implementation of the Employee Rights Bill (Employment Act 2025), and updating relevant policies.	Assistant Director – Central Operations and People Services Manager	April 2026
Implementation of the new Corporate Complaints Policy and associated Compensation Policy following Local Government Social Care Ombudsman and Regulator of Social Housing changes.	SLT Data Protection Officer	September 2025