

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN 2024/25



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Notes and key

Each action in the plan is marked with a 'traffic light' as follows:

Green	On target
Amber	Off target but action being taken to ensure delivery (where this results in a reviewed target date, this is made clear in the table)
Red	Off target and no action has yet been agreed to resolve the situation
Complete	Action has been completed

Completed actions are marked as such in the 'Date' column and are shaded grey

This action plan contains actions from the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 which are coordinated and monitored by the WODC Management Team.

Key to officers:

Accountable officer (AO)

CEO - Chief Executive: Giles Hughes

CFO - Chief Finance (S.151) Officer: Madhu Richards

DG – Director of Governance: Andrea McCaskie

Publica Responsible officer (RO)

BM Gov - Business Manager - Business Continuity, Risk and Governance: Cheryl Sloan

BP Proc - Senior Procurement Business Partner: Ciaran O'Kane

	Key Area of Focus	Planned Actions	Update	Responsible Officer / Date
1	Freedom of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve response times to Freedom of Information requests to ensure compliance with the relevant Act • Publish a greater range of information to reduce the need to respond to regularly made Freedom of Information requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review undertaken and now performing above 90% • Work underway to further develop website and internal guidance for Managers 	BM Gov 31/03/25
2	Complaints Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a revised customer complaints process which aligns to the new Customer Complaints Code issued by the Local Governance following a two rather than three stage process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New complaint process approved and ready for implementation on 1 April 2025 	BM Gov 31/03/25
3	New service delivery models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclude the review of future service delivery options to make sure the solutions needed for the council to achieve financial stability can be achieved, given the MTFS shortfall over the years ahead • Insource services back from Publica and examine the priorities for a new service delivery model • Implement options for efficiency and transformation • Develop new values and behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 successfully transferred on 1 November 2024 • Phase 2 recommendation being presented at Overview & Scrutiny, Exec and Council in March. • Phase 2 transfer date, if approved, 1 July 2025 • Decision to 'pause' following phase 2 due to Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation • New values and behaviours under development with WODC employees. 	CEO 31/03/25
4	Council Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a full review of the Council's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation to reflect the new service delivery model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council constitution has been reviewed following the transfer of services under phase 1. • This action will carry over into next financial year, as a further review will need to be completed when the phase 2 transition of services is complete. 	DG 31/03/25

5	Emergency Planning and Business Continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Council has resilience and can respond effectively in the event of a significant local incident under the new service delivery model • Further develop business continuity plans to ensure they are robust and fit for purpose under the new service delivery model • To test the business-critical Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) in 2024-25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locality on-call, response team and rest teams now in place. • On-call by locality will commence from 1 April 2025 • Employees who hold a role in Emergency Planning have all been trained and ongoing training is in place. • BCPs have been reviewed annually and services which have transferred have reviewed their BCPs for any changes. • BCP process being reviewed inline with best practice and any changed will be implemented over the next 12-18 months. 	BM Gov 31/03/25
6	Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review the Risk Management Policy • To complete a risk maturity self-assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Policy is currently being reviewed. • Risk maturity self-assessment will be considered next financial year. 	BM Gov 31/03/25
7	Review of Audit and Governance Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To appoint two independent persons to Audit and Governance Committee • Restrict membership to Non-Executive members reducing the number on committee from 17 to 11 with up to two independent persons recruited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A&G Committee has a reduced number of Cllrs, 11, with membership restricted to Non-Executive Members • Two Independent Persons have been recruited to A&G for a 4-year term 	DG & CFO 31/03/25
8	Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review the financial procedure rules and financial processes to be completed in against the CIPFA Financial Management Code. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial Rules and processes are currently in the process of being reviewed in advance of being submitted to the Constitution Working Group (CWG) and Council for approval in the next financial year. 	CFO 31/03/25

9	Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 and subsequent revision of contract procedure rules• To train officers as required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The act is now live and contract procurement rules will be presented to CWG and Council for approval in March.• Training is scheduled for the new Financial Year.• A toolkit is being developed for use by officers who undertake procurement	BP Proc 31/03/25
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