

<b>Statutory Recommendations : Governance - significant weaknesses in the arrangements to support statutory financial reporting requirements</b>		
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Update</b>
<b>Finance Function Workflow Review:</b> Conduct a comprehensive review of the finance function workflow to identify bottlenecks in the flow of information and the completion of key finance tasks. Use the findings to redefine roles and responsibilities within the finance team, ensuring an equitable distribution of workload and preventing any single individual from being overburdened.	On-Going	A review of the finance team structure is currently underway, aimed at reducing dependency on specific individuals and addressing operational bottlenecks. Input has been provided by the Interim CFO (in March), the newly appointed CFO, and the current Interim Group Accountant to inform the process with insights into effective working practices and structures from comparable authorities. The distribution of roles and responsibilities is being clarified within the proposed structure.
<b>Quality Assurance Function Review:</b> Implement a thorough review of the quality assurance process for draft accounts and underlying workpapers. Establish clear timelines for the closedown process, ensuring appropriate segregation of duties between those preparing and those reviewing the draft accounts and workpapers. Monitor adherence to this process and report performance to the Audit and Governance Committee.	On-Going	<p>The quality assurance process has commenced. The 2023/24 and 2024/25 Statement of Accounts have been reviewed by the new Chief Finance Officer, with queries raised and addresses. A timetable for the 2025/26 closedown process is in place and will be reviewed by the end of January to ensure it remains fit for purpose.</p> <p>Further enhancements to the review process are being considered, including the introduction of formal review checks to ensure appropriate segregation of duties - specifically, that working papers prepared by one individual are independently reviewed by another. Weekly meetings will be held through the closedown period to monitor progress and maintain oversight.</p>
<b>Finance Team Capacity:</b> Re-assess roles, responsibilities and resource requirements for financial reporting across the Council, including an assessment of the support required from other functions within the organisation for the financial reporting function to meet its objectives and to restore timely financial reporting in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024	On-Going	<p>Monthly meetings have been established between the Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, and the Leadership Team to focus on the Council's financial requirements. Roles within the Finance Team are currently under review as part of a broader restructure. This review aims to distribute workload more evenly across the team and ensure that high-risk areas are appropriately resourced, allowing sufficient capacity to concentrate on key priorities during critical periods.</p> <p>The draft Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 was published by the statutory deadline. Financial monitoring for Quarter 1 has been presented to Members during the September/October cycle.</p>