BH0

# Dudley MBC Improvement Plan (DMBC-IP)

30th January 2025
Version 1

**Slide 1**

**BH0** We need to put MBC after Dudley.  Residents outside of Dudley town often feel left out, etc

Balvinder Heran, 2025-01-12T09:21:00.854

IM(DO0

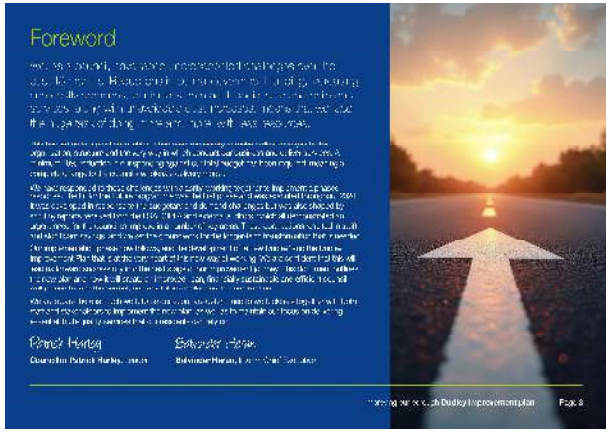
# Contents

**IM(DO0** Update contents once pack complete

Isobel Monaghan (Programme Deli, 2025-01-15T13:26:59.696

# Dudley MBC Improvement Plan Brochure

- Public document
- Overview of Plan and how it is structured
- Content as per this presentation – example of design as below
- This version is text heavy, but the brochure is enhanced with photos and figures and is designed to be easily read


# Brochure Content

Dudley
Metropolitan Borough Council

Working as One Council in
the historic capital of the Black Country

# Foreword

Welcome to our  Dudley MBC Improvement Plan (DMBCIP) which sets out key improvement activities that will ensure we are  a council focussed on:

*delivering high quality, value for money services to our communities, continually striving to improve our partnership and community working.*

We  continue to face unprecedented challenges. Reductions in central government funding, increasing and costly demand, along with unavoidable cost increases, means that we face the huge task of doing more, with less resources.

We are determined to make radical changes to the organisation, structure and the way in which we do business and deliver services.

We are responding to these challenges at pace, working together to implement a phased response to sustained improvement across all key services and to the business operating model of the council. The Fit for the Future programme was the first phase in 2024 in response to the budgetary and demand challenges and to respond to the scrutiny reports received from the LGA, CIPFA and external auditors which set out an urgent need for improvements. It resulted in swift and significant savings being identified, and set the groundwork for the longer-term transformation of the Council.

We are now developing ‘a new Dudley borough’ and our improvement plan is at the heart of this new way of working. For the first time we have a single integrated plan and are confident this will lead us forward successfully into the next stage of our improvement journey. This document outlines our new plan and how it will create an improved, lean, financially sustainable and efficient council, well placed to face the current, and any future challenges.

There’s still a lot to do, but we will work closely with staff and stakeholders to implement and continually review the new plan, while delivering essential, high-quality services that our residents can rely on.

Councillor Patrick Harley, Leader  Balvinder Heran, Interim Chief Executive

# Introduction to the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

Dudley is a diverse borough formed in 1974 and made up of vibrant communities, with distinct characteristics.

Whilst the borough has witnessed significant changes over recent years, including recovery from a global pandemic, a changing face of the high street, cultural changes, as well as economic shifts, its regeneration is well underway, and investment continues with positive developments and exciting opportunities. Significant investment has been attracted into the borough including £40million to improve transport and connectivity through the Levelling Up Fund, and a £10million investment from Sterling to increase process development and manufacturing capacity.

Improvements to connectivity, transport and the visitor economy are all well underway. Work is currently in progress on the new Dudley transport interchange - this £24 million investment will help people access the best education, training and employment opportunities. The first phase of the Metro extension from Dudley to Wednesbury is expected to be up and running this year, offering another means of connecting to neighbouring areas. The second phase should then follow to extend the line to Brierley Hill.

To build a reputation as a hub for employment in the health and wellbeing sector, the council is working with Worcester University to bring a new university campus to Dudley town centre on Castle Hill. This development will help create jobs and improve education in the borough, following on from the opening of the Black Country and Marches Institute of Technology in the town. A new entertainment quarter located in Dudley town centre will boost the visitor economy, bringing more people into the town to support local traders. In addition, there are many planned redevelopment brownfield sites which will bring new homes, along with the infrastructure required.

# Introduction - continued

These new developments provide a platform from which a reshaped council will be well placed to flourish and where local people can be proud of their borough, have better paid jobs, increased skills and plenty of opportunities.

It is firmly acknowledged that for a number of years the council has faced significant issues, which include governance, member/officer working, a poor culture, silo working and performance concerns. There has also been a reliance on windfalls and grants and diminishing reserves to help close the gap between income and expenditure, without having robust plans in place to address the root causes of the shortfall. Since 2022/23 reserves reduced to a critical level, resulting in the high risk of the Director of Finance and Legal issuing a s114 report notifying the council that it will exceed its available resources.

Three external reviews commissioned by the council in 2024 helped highlight the significant issues and priority areas for improvement and it is now time to move forward as a new Dudley. The council recognises that the early action taken to address its weaknesses did not go far enough, was not enacted swiftly, and that a more radical approach is needed. In response the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan has now been formulated and the implementation phase of our recovery journey is well underway.

At the heart of the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan is the recognition that the council has had systemic leadership, cultural and governance issues. By putting in place actions to address these weaknesses, the plan looks to transform the council into a financially sustainable organisation, very much focused on delivering essential services to residents, and communities, without distractions, or conflict.

# Communication and Engagement

Central to the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan is the council's desire to ensure that service delivery is focused on the needs of our communities and residents and supports the local economy.

We recognise that good communication helps us deliver good services. As the council continues its improvement journey we will communicate our progress to our residents, staff, partners, businesses and stakeholders.

Early on in our improvement journey, a Communications and Engagement working group was established with responsibility for ensuring staff, partners and elected members understand the part they have to play in successfully delivering change, as well as ensuring partners and residents have their needs understood and responded to in a timely and effective way.

Our approach - *Staff*

We are committed to keeping all colleagues informed of updates around the programme by using the full range of internal communication channels including our intranet site Connect, emailing staff directly, and publishing regular bulletins. All managers have a key role in cascading news and information through their team meetings.

The Communication and Engagement working group facilitate a programme of engagement events to connect leaders across the council, encourage co-production in improvement planning, and elicit feedback to help shape future engagement.

Regular pulse surveys are used to gauge organisational engagement and understand employee feelings about the transformation programme,  working for the council during this period of change, and their perceptions of well-being at work. This allows messages to be tailored in response to workforce feeling, and appropriate support mechanisms to be established.

# Communication and Engagement – cont.

With over 4500 employees, all staff 'express briefings' are held regularly to allow for single, consistent messaging throughout all tiers of the council with an open forum Q&A session a key part of all sessions. They are recorded and made available for all who cannot attend a face-to-face event, and responses to questions published.

**Two-way conversation is critical in informing and co-designing our improvement plan.**

## Our approach – *residents*

Understanding resident needs lies at the heart of the Improvement Plan, and the council recognises that better use of business intelligence is crucial in understanding the demand for its services. The annual budget consultation process invites residents to identify their priorities for spending, and it will be augmented by an in-depth residents' survey which will help shape the new Community Vision and Council Plan (2026-2031) and ensure that we are focused on shaping our offer around resident needs and developing an improved customer experience with reduced duplication and waste.

## Our approach – *Partners and Stakeholders*

In 2022, the council published its 2022-2025 Communications Strategy with an overarching corporate narrative:

"We are proud to be the 'historic capital of the Black Country' and Dudley Council is committed to delivering the borough vision to 'Forge a Future for all'.

Working to be fit for the future, we are ambitious in our plans to make the borough a destination of choice, creating opportunities for all to thrive in a safe and healthy environment."

# Communications and Engagement – cont.

Our Improvement Plan aligns our corporate strategies with this ambition, seeking to ensure a 'one Dudley' focus on a shared vision for the local area which is co-produced with partners, businesses and communities to maximise resources and ensure best value across all service areas.

Key to delivering this successfully is resident engagement - helping the council understand what good service delivery looks like; and partnership engagement - planning and delivery of services to meet customer requirements. We are keen to increase this engagement and the new Community Vision will be co-designed with our communities, their representatives and doing all we can to reach out to those that historically are unrepresented.

As we review the way we operate, existing partnership arrangements may change and new partnerships forged, ensuring we provide the best possible service for our communities through engagement with community and voluntary sector organisations, and promoting neighbourhood models for service delivery.

# Programme Governance and Assurance

- Our Improvement Plan will drive customer focussed, sustainable change and provide greater transparency during our transformation journey. Robust governance and scrutiny will underpin the programme and focus on the essential changes required to effectively address opportunities and challenges facing the council as 'One Dudley'. The overarching plan will be Council led, with our new Improvement Panel providing support, guidance and assurance that improvement activity across the authority is effectively managed and monitored. Governance arrangements have been strengthened to provide elected members and officers mechanisms to ensure efficient delivery of the plan, and that necessary outcomes are achieved.

- Key responsibilities and accountabilities aligned to the governance arrangements in place, are outlined in the governance diagram below, more information is available in the Appendix – Improvement Plan Governance Arrangements.

**Overview and Scrutiny**

- Overview and Scrutiny is a function which ensures the Borough's residents receive the best possible services from the Council. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have statutory powers to scrutinise Cabinet decisions and provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge, amplify the voices and concerns of the public, and drive improvement in public services and strategic decision-making. Work is ongoing with the LGA and other bodies to improve our approach to scrutiny including training and peer support for elected members on scrutiny committees.

**Ownership and Accountability**

- It is essential to the success of our Improvement Plan to ensure collective ownership and responsibility across officers and members, as this will contribute to the cultural change necessary for sustainable improvement; therefore, the Plan has been co-designed by Officers of various levels, with regular elected member engagement throughout the process and going forward key elements will be co-designed with our partners and wider communities

- This Plan has seven themes, each with clear tranches of work. Underneath each tranche sits detailed activities, milestones, objectives and deliverables, each with identified responsible roles, timescales and measures of success. The Improvement plan sets out which external recommendations each activity addresses, enabling more efficient monitoring by stakeholders, including staff, members, partners, residents and businesses.

**Reporting Mechanisms**

Ensuring senior political and officer leadership are united in their approach to overseeing delivery of the Improvement Plan is key to the success of our improvement journey. The Dudley MBC Improvement Panel and the Corporate Management Team (CMT), will receive monthly progress updates, starting March 2025.

Members will have oversight of progress through formal reporting to the Cabinet monthly and will have the opportunity for informal involvement with planned activity through the Member Engagement Group, which will meet monthly. Member-led committees will be used for decision making and to maintain oversight of implementation of the actions within the Improvement Plan. These include the Fit for the Future (FfTF)/ Council Sustainability Select Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which will undertake scrutiny on progress of the plan twice yearly.

Whilst this Improvement Plan has been developed to address specific recommendations, the Plan will evolve over time to address areas of improvement that are yet to be identified. Amendments to the Improvement Plan will be monitored through internal monthly reporting and approved by Cabinet.

We will continue to improve how the council communicates progress with stakeholders and recognise that communication should be in the right format for the various audiences and at the appropriate time to provide meaningful information. Therefore, we will be sharing progress against the key milestones, deliverables and outcomes in this Improvement Plan on a regular basis.

As our Plan evolves, it will be expanded to incorporate specific service improvement plans as they are developed. This will ensure visibility of all council improvement activity as a whole and enable interdependencies between functions to be managed, highlighting areas that could benefit from sharing best practice and lessons learned.

**Community Vision 2026-2031 and Council Plan**

In February 2024, the Council made the decision to suspend the existing 3-year Council Plan as the Council faced significant budget challenges and the priorities contained within it were no longer affordable or deliverable.

A one-year rolling plan was launched with a focus on those priorities and projects that support the overall sustainability of the Council, delivery of the improvement plan and key services to our residents. This one-year plan will continue in 2025/26 so that work can be done to implement the community vision.

A new 5-year Corporate Plan, will underpin development of the vision for the Borough, developed with our partners and communities to replace the existing aspirational Dudley Borough Vision 2030.

**External Assurance**

The Dudley MBC Improvement Panel will meet monthly and provide external assurance and challenge on progress with delivering the Improvement Plan and associated outcomes. An external strategic advisor to the Council will chair this meeting to have up-to-date insight into the council's progress in achieving the milestones and deliverables set out in this Plan and to advise accordingly.

Member-led committees currently receive progress reports on the work delivered by the Fit for the Future Programme, and this will continue for the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan.

To provide a level of assurance on our progress in achieving the objectives of this Improvement Plan, Grant Thornton, CIPFA and the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Team will continue to be provided updates and will be invited back to Dudley MBC to monitor our progress on addressing the recommendations of their reviews.

# Programme Management Approach

- A dedicated team has been established to manage the development and delivery of the plan. The Corporate Programme Team responsible for driving the Improvement Programme across the organisation, consists of the Corporate Portfolio Management Office and Programme Delivery Office. The Corporate Programme Team will provide assurance that the Plan is being delivered and reported as agreed, and work with lead officers to ensure activity is progressed and mitigating action is identified and implemented as appropriate.

- The Corporate Programme Team will utilise key skills and expertise across the organisation as necessary, such as communications, organisational development, employee & resident engagement, democratic services, financial management, risk management and internal audit. The team itself will need to expand and develop to effectively support delivery, reporting and assurance of the Plan, in addition to upskilling in transformation, change and business modernisation, as mentioned earlier in the document.

# Risk and Issue Management

**Risk approach**

A risk register relating to the delivery of the Improvement Plan has been established. This will be kept under regular review to ensure it is capturing the key risks and mitigating actions.

**Risk monitoring**

Risk monitoring will be incorporated into monthly reporting of the Dudley MBC Improvement plan. As outlined earlier in the document, monthly reporting will be made to the Dudley MBC Improvement Panel, the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet, starting March 2025. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) will carry out regular scrutiny on progress, on-going updates to the Improvement Plan, risks and risk mitigation. In addition to member led committees, members will be able to feed into the risk register during less formal meetings such as the Member Engagement Group.  Audit and Standards Committee will ensure that risk management processes continue to be effective.

# Key risks

| Risk | Description |
|---|---|
| Leadership | If the existing structure doesn't align with the current budget saving proposals or the new operating model it could prevent the council from being able to make the necessary changes. To mitigate this a senior leadership review is underway to ensure that the council is structured to best meet the challenges going forwards. |
| Organisational Culture | If the organisational culture doesn't change, this will limit the improvements that can be made. The Plan focuses on improvements to organisational culture, including Officer and Member relations, and embedding sustainable positive changes to allow the new culture to thrive. |
| Governance | Existing culture undermines good governance and DMBC governance was criticised in the LGA Peer Review and external Auditors Report. The Fit for the Future Programme made improvements in this area and with sufficient organisational capacity and sponsorship, activity identified in the Improvement Plan will be delivered, ensuring the council's objectives are achieved, high standards met, and decisions made legally. |
| Resources | If resources aren't identified to effectively deliver the plan, improvements will be limited. As detailed within this document, resource plans will be developed, and following Council approval, these plans will be implemented. Identification of adequate resources will ensure the Improvement Plan is delivered and the improvements sustainable. |
| Workforce | We have a dedicated and committed workforce who are eager to address the challenges and make improvements. The transformation process will equip our employees with transferable skills and structured career pathways. However, there is a risk that the organisation will lose valuable employees if the wellbeing offer doesn't support workforce resilience or recognise remaining colleagues will need support during an extended period of change. |
| Communication | Our communications approach is set out within this document and a detailed communication plan, with detailed actions and assigned owners, will be developed to ensure effective and timely communication with stakeholders. |
| Progress monitoring and risk approach | Accurate and realistic assessment of progress will not be possible if optimism-bias is not managed. Assurance mechanisms and transparent reporting introduced during the Fit for the Future Programme will be enhanced to ensure an accurate view of progress is maintained. |
| Pace | Dudley MBC mobilised at pace following the LGA Peer Review and External Auditor's Report with the introduction of improvement and transformation programmes and the new Operating Model. With the Improvement Plan being broader, delivery at pace is a risk until sufficient resources are identified. |

# Resourcing the Plan

- It is necessary to ensure the right resources are in place to deliver the Improvement Plan successfully. Not only do the necessary changes need to be implemented, but an on-going commitment is required to embed the new ways of working.
- When developing the delivery plans, it must be determined whether existing resources can be redirected to the Improvement Plan, or whether investment is required where skills gaps exist.
- It is important to recognise that the council needs to invest in some key areas to make rapid and sustainable improvements, and external support will be necessary to help implement the new operating model and shape the future council. There will be a need to expand and develop the Corporate Portfolio Management Office and Programme Delivery Office to support delivery, reporting and assurance of the Improvement Plan; as well as upskilling in transformation, change and business modernisation to enable the council to constantly strive for efficiencies and make continuous improvement a business-as-usual activity.
- Resource plans will be developed with appropriate levels of funding identified, and following Council approval, these plans will be implemented.

# The Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Overview

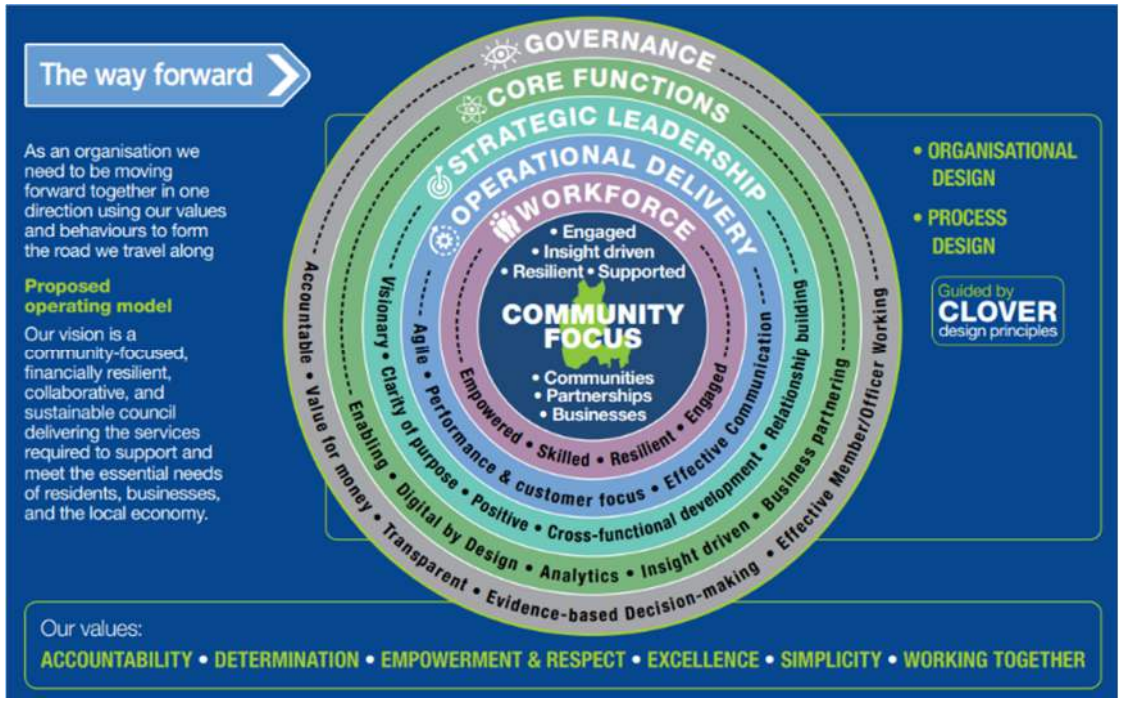
- Initial improvement efforts under the Fit for the Future programme, made progress towards addressing the financial shortfall and review recommendations with respect to governance and organisational culture.

- The governance workstream has made progress with improvements to Corporate governance arrangements, with the corporate management team, Cabinet Policy Group (CPG) and Cabinet Strategy Group (CSG) being stood up, to ensure meetings are focused and aligned to the challenges faced by the council, and members and officers work as one team and model the values and behaviours expected in line with good governance. Increased capacity in Democratic Services, through efficiencies, providing the opportunity for Democratic Services to play an enhanced role in advocating and upholding high standards of governance, ethics and integrity across the Council. Revised Overview and Scrutiny arrangements, approved and implemented with effect from the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15th May, 2025, will further support the future standing of Democratic Services. An enhanced member training and development programme has been introduced, ensuring members are better able to support the Council with decision making. A series of workshops and surveys have been undertaken to understand the challenges to support a culture reset. Steps have been taken to create a culture where escalating concerns about governance are encouraged, and officers feel supported.

- We are in the process of procuring a rewrite of the constitution, to ensure it is fit for purpose and reflects the new target operating model.

- Early achievements with respect to organisational culture include the design and launch of a new Employee Value Proposition and improved performance appraisal system ‘Our Dudley Conversations’ creating a golden thread to a new one year Council Plan. A set of design principles were agreed for a new target operating model, and these were followed to produce the new operating model blueprint which was agreed in July 2024. Work progresses to implement the operating model with the first stage being an analysis of the dispersal of core functions across the organisation with a view to bringing them together where practicable. In parallel, a senior management review has commenced to align the structure to the operating model to deliver the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan by improved joint working and ensure focus on the key priorities of the Council. Whilst the proposed new structure will deliver financial savings, it is primarily designed to ensure the organisation is structured in the best way to meet the challenges it faces, with clarity around senior management roles and decision-making accountability, and optimal spans of control.

- The Dudley MBC Improvement Plan takes a broader and deeper view, and seeks to implement the new operating model and encompass all improvement activity across the council (e.g. Housing, Adult's, Children's), enabling interdependencies and risks to be managed at the programme level, and allowing improved cross-functional working and the sharing of best practice and lessons learned.



# Building the Plan

The Plan follows a co-design principle where the leadership from across multiple levels of the organisation are involved in its development, with Sponsors and Leads identified to work collaboratively with individuals from across the council to co-produce the plans for the various themes and tranches.

Cross-council working and collective ownership is seen as critical in ensuring the successful delivery of the transformation programme.

The Dudley MBC Improvement Plan is based upon the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) Best Value Standards for local authorities. The statutory guidance on the Best Value Duty sets out 7 overlapping themes of good practice, against which we have mapped the various recommendations from external reviews.

The Best Value Framework provides the structure for the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan and provides clarity around 'what good looks like' for a well-functioning authority, as well as potential indicators of poor performance.

# Co-design of the plan with the leadership

## Inputs

- Projects
- Ideas e.g. functional area deep dives
- Internal audit recommendations
- Corporate Management Team
- Cabinet
- Wider Senior Leadership Team
- DMBC Strategic Advisor

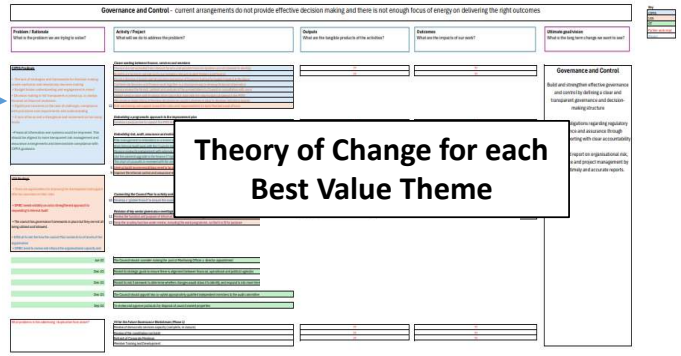
Recommendations from internal sources

Supported by:

Grant Thornton

CIPFA | Local Government Association

Recommendations from external advisors




## Outputs

High-level plan

7 themes

- Key Milestones
- Key Deliverables
- Success Measures

## Next steps

- Resourcing the plan
- Implementing grip
- Monitoring and reporting
- Assuring the plan

# High level outcomes summary

## Leadership

**People** – Capable and stable leadership team

**Process** – Improved financial, risk and planning skills

**Council Plan** – Progress reviewed / future vision defined

## Culture

**People** – Desired values and behaviours embedded

**Process** – Employees engaged and listened to

**Member** – Councillors supported to lead the Council

## Governance

**People** – Improved Member and Officer behaviours

**Process** – Clear and transparent decision making

**Information** – Effective reports to inform decision makers

**Risk** – Improved risk management & audit resolution

## Use of resources

**Planning** – Balanced budget, MTFS & adequate reserves

**Control** – Budget monitoring and expenditure/income grip

**Performance** – Oversight of Council performance

**Projects** – Council-wide change visibility and grip

## Service delivery

**Planning** – Service plans linked to Council Plan / MTFS

**Management** – Timely/accurate data to inform decisions

**Feedback** – Service informed by resident/user feedback

**Reviews** – Visibility of all outstanding regulatory actions

## Partnerships & community

**Vision** – A shared vision for the local area

**Planning** – Co-produced delivery plans to deliver vision

**Delivery** – Joined up governance to enable delivery

## Improvement

**Processes** – Council approach to continuous improvement

**Benchmarking** – Outward looking and collaborative Council

**PM of Staff** – Aligned to Council Plan and Service Plan delivery

**Reviews** – Visibility of all outstanding non-regulatory actions

# High level deliverables summary

## Leadership

**People** – New structure, leadership development, succession plans

**Process** – Relaunch Financial, Risk and Council Planning processes

**Council Plan** – 24/25 progress report and 25/26 plan for the future

## Culture

**People** – Culture development programme and embedding appraisals

**Process** – Employee surveys and up to date people policies

**Member** – Member development programme

## Governance

**People** – Charter, codes of conduct, standards arrangements

**Process** – Revised decision-making forums and processes

**Information** – Revised constitution & code of corporate governance

**Risk** – Revised risk management and internal audit approach

## Use of resources

**Planning** – Budget and MTFS approved by Full Council

**Control** – Improved processes for controlling spend and income

**Performance** – Corporate performance framework and processes

**Projects** – Programme Delivery Office and PMO

## Service delivery

**Planning** – Annual review and update of service plans

**Management** – Council wide automated performance dashboard

**Feedback** – Resident and user surveys

**Reviews** – Regulatory improvement programme

## Partnerships & community

**Vision** – Relaunch of the Dudley Borough Vision

**Planning** – Partnerships and Community programme

**Delivery** – Borough stakeholder performance monitoring group

## Improvement

**Processes** – Continuous improvement programme

**Benchmarking** – Capability working with other Councils

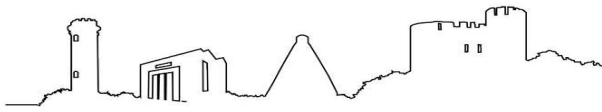
**PM of Staff** – My Year appraisal completed and aligned to Council Plans

**Reviews** – Visibility of all outstanding non-regulatory actions

# The Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

Dudley
Metropolitan Borough Council

Working as One Council in
the historic capital of the Black Country



# Theme 1 – Leadership

- Effective leadership is crucial to the authority's overall culture and governance. Members will set a clearly articulated, achievable and prioritised vision for officers to follow, and the senior leadership team will have the capacity and capability to provide effective strategic direction.

- A well-functioning authority is evidenced by strong financial management and reporting, a commitment to leadership and member development, and effective succession planning to ensure organisational resilience.

- The findings of the external reviews commissioned by the council highlighted the need for improvements with respect to alignment between the council plan, medium term financial strategy and service strategies. In addition, there is a need to review the organisational structure to better utilise resources in accordance with the revised corporate strategy.

- In order to effectively address the recommendations within the Leadership theme, the activities have been split into 3 tranches of work -

    - Leadership people development
    - Build Leadership processes
    - Leadership agreed Council

# Leadership - Development of people, processes and the Council Plan

## 1) Leadership people development

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Senior Leadership structure implemented | June-25 |
| P&I Organisational Development Strategy approved | June-25 |
| Leadership and Management Development programme launched | June-25 |
| Leadership training for statutory roles launched | TBC |
| Succession plan developed | Dec-25 |
| Relationship building training programme launched | Dec-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| New Senior Leadership structure implemented, positions appointed and communicated | Senior officers have the capacity and capability to provide the authority with effective strategic direction. |
| P&I Organisational Development Strategy | A demonstrable commitment to leadership and member development, including specialist training for key roles |
| Leadership and Management Development Programme | |
| MO Job Evaluation and position filled | The Monitoring Officer is sufficiently supported and protected to allow them to enforce regulations and codes of conduct without fear |
| Statutory Leadership training for CEO, S151 and MO | Members and officers, particularly those with statutory responsibility, including the Head of Paid Service, Section 151 and Monitoring Officer, uphold their duties and speak truth to power. |
| Succession Plan to ensure there is capacity and capability resilience | Effective succession planning, with the recruitment and development of officers with the necessary skills, ensures organisational resilience. |
| Relationship building training programme for officers and members | Members and senior officers maintain constructive relationships and engage effectively with external stakeholders and the wider local community.<br><br>Effective and timely responses to issues with acceptance of the need to make changes and without a culture of blame. |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Leadership - Development of people, processes and the Council Plan

## 2) Build Leadership processes

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Financial management and reporting improvements implemented | TBC |
| Risk management improvements implemented | TBC |
| Council vision development process agreed and implemented | March-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Report outlining the agreed actions to take to implement strong financial management and reporting | Strong financial management and reporting, in accordance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code, runs throughout the whole organisation |
| Implement improvements to financial management and reporting including training to embed the change | |
| Report outlining the agreed actions to take to implement strong risk management | Robust systems are in place and owned by members for identifying, reporting, mitigating and regularly reviewing risk |
| Implement improvements to risk management including training to embed the change | |
| Report outlining the agreed actions to take to implement a process for developing the vision | Members provide quality leadership by setting a clearly articulated, achievable and prioritised vision for officers to follow that puts place and local people at its heart |
| Implement improvements to process for developing a Council vision including training to embed the change | |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Leadership - Development of people, processes and the Council Plan

## 3) Leadership agreed Council Plan linked to activity and resources and performance managed

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Council Plan 2024/25 progress report | March-25 |
| Council Plan for 2025/26 | March-25 |
| Council Plan for 2026/27 and beyond | March-26 |
| All key service strategies are up to date | June-26 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Council Plan progress report to include Annual Report | Senior leaders able to performance manage progress against meeting strategic targets and allow members and the public to keep track of progress |
| 2025/26 plan. Extend 2024/25 plan for one more transition year and publish Council Plan (2025/26). Align to the MTFS & improvement programme | The authority's corporate plan is evidence based, current, realistic and enables the whole organisation's performance to be measured and held to account |
| 2026/27 - 2028/29 vision, strategy and plan. Develop and implement community focused 3-year plan that reflects a vision and strategy that reflects resident input and political priorities | |
| Up to date service strategies that can inform and be informed by the Council Plan | The authority's financial strategy and delivery arrangements are aligned with priorities in the corporate plan, and respond appropriately to local need, including the plans of partners and stakeholders |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Theme 2 – Culture

- The culture of a local authority is determined by an agreed set of shared values, ethics and beliefs, how decisions are made, as well as how elected members and officers behave, interact and carry out their roles with each other, and wider stakeholders.

- The recommendations in this area from the external bodies focus on the need to improve relationships and clarity of roles and responsibilities between members and officers, a refresh of organisational values and the implementation of revised people processes and policies.

- The council needs to be acting as one, rather than in siloes,- as it has previously - with a cohesive sense of one authority running though all operations.

- The aim will be a well-functioning authority with members and officers who promote and demonstrate high ethical standards and appropriate working behaviours through shared values and ways of working. There should be a culture of cooperation, respect and trust and a commitment to transparent decision-making, information sharing and transparency in general. Decision-making will be taken at the right level, with staff empowered and trusted to do their jobs and managers engage openly and honestly with staff.

- Work which underpins the plan has highlighted the need for improvements across three key cultural areas:

    - Develop the right culture with people
    - Build supportive processes to enable the desired culture
    - Develop positive relationships across the council

# Culture - Development of people, processes and member development

## 1) Develop the right culture with our people

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Shared set of values and behaviours agreed and communicated | June-25 |
| Culture development programme launched | Sept-25 |
| Embedding the appraisal process and tools | March-25 |
| Officer and member liaison development programme launched | March-25 |
| Self assessment tools implemented and monitored | March-27 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Document setting out the desired organisational culture - 'Our Values: Our Behaviours' | Members and officers promote and demonstrate the highest ethical standards and appropriate working behaviours through established shared values and ways of working |
| Culture Development Training for managers, teams and Members | A culture of cooperation, respect and trust between members and officers, and between departments exists, along with a commitment to transparent decision-making |
| Appraisals training and tools (Our Dudley Conversations) | A culture of robust performance management and compliance with our values, ways of working, legislation, strategies, policies and procedures throughout the organisation. |
| Officer and Member liaison Development Training Programme | Respect for a councillor's need to know and enquire and for officers and members to engage and collaborate to achieve the needs of both |
| Gap analysis between current state and what good looks like | A comprehensive self assessment exercise against 'good-enough' to provide a solid baseline, a source of continuous improvement and targeted action |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Culture - Development of people, processes and member development

## 2) Build supportive processes to enable our desired culture

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Plan implemented | March-27 |
| Harassment and Bullying policy and process agreed | Sept-25 |
| Whistleblowing policy and process agreed | March-25 |
| Corporate Health PIs published online | TBC |
| Employee Engagement Survey results published (ongoing basis) | March-27 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Updated key People documentation to reflect new values and culture | Processes updated to support the embedding of the new culture and health and wellbeing interventions are making a positive difference |
| Updated people policies and processes e.g. harassment & bullying | Appropriate processes are in place to address issues such as harassment and bullying |
| Updated Whistleblowing policy and process | An accessible whistleblowing policy, of which there is wide awareness and confidence that it will work |
| Online reporting of the corporate health Performance Indicators | Development of corporate health performance indicators building on the approach to HR monitoring |
| Employee Engagement Survey and feedback from the EDI network | Managers demonstrating expected behaviours (via employee engagement survey results) |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

## Culture - Development of people, processes and member development

### 3) Member development programme

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| 'Refreshed' Member Development Programme launched | Completed |
| Member development strategy agreed | June-25 |
| Member development pathway and programme agreed | Sept-25 |
| 'Targeted' Member Development Programme launched | Dec-25 |
| Working sessions and forums to develop relationships completed | March-27 |
| Changes to Cabinet financial reporting agreed | TBC |
| Gap analysis between current state and 'good-enough' completed | March-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Refreshed Member training programme delivered and all new members briefed on the financial challenge | Cabinet are supported to fulfil their roles, responsibilities and statutory requirements for training. |
| A clear strategy on member training and development | Increased knowledge and skills of Members in key areas relating to their roles and responsibilities. |
| Delivery of 12 month targeted Member Training and Development Programme. | Demonstrable steps to engage openly and honestly with staff |
| Completed Member and Officer self-assessments to inform capability gaps that need to be resolved | Appropriate financial, commercial, legal and other specialist expertise is obtained, including from external sources, and due diligence completed on any important or novel decision |
| Programme of development for officers and members who need to deal with managing settings where proposals are challenged | The existence of a proactive and welcoming attitude to external challenge and scrutiny |
| Report outlining the agreed cabinet reporting actions to take based on the recommendations and a self assessment - implemented | There are regular financial reports to Cabinet and training is available for all members on finance |
| Gap analysis between current state and what good looks like | A comprehensive self assessment exercise against 'good-enough' to provide a solid baseline and a source of more targeted action |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Theme 3 – Governance

- Governance in local government is the way in which a council ensures that it is acting in the right way, for the right people, and in a timely, open, honest, and accountable manner. It involves the systems, processes, cultures, and values that direct and control the council and ensures intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.

- Going forward we will be ensuring clear and robust governance and scrutiny arrangements are in place that are fit for purpose and appropriate. The new operating model for the council recognises that good, effective governance is at the heart of the very best local authorities. We will be aiming for accountability, transparency, evidence-based decision making and effective relationships across all levels and roles.

- Decision-making processes, will be transparent, lawful, regularly reviewed, clearly followed and understood, enabling decision-makers to be held to account effectively. There will also be clear codes of conduct and HR processes, along with effective support for whistle-blowers.

- The external bodies' recommendations highlighted weaknesses in the council's ability to identify and respond to risk in a timely manner, and a need to improve the internal control and assurance environment, with a greater emphasis on addressing internal audit recommendations.

- Work which underpins the plan has highlighted the need for improvements across four key areas of governance:

    - Governance people development
    - Refresh governance processes
    - Providing Information to inform governance
    - Managing risk through governance

# Governance - Development of people, processes and provision of information to inform transparent decision making

## 1) Governance people development

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Process for learning from complaints agreed and communicated | March-25 |
| Nolan Principles communicated | June-25 |
| Officer Member Charter revised and launched | June-25 |
| Member Code of Conduct revised and launched | March-26 |
| Standard Arrangements revised and launched | March-26 |
| Cross party group leader working sessions delivered | March-25 |
| New independent members join the audit committee | Completed |
| Self assessment recommendations for audit committee agreed | TBC |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Process for learning lessons from complaints regarding governance | A learning and improvement mindset for Governance e.g. Lessons are learned from complaints |
| Officer Member Charter, Member Code of Conduct, Nolan Principles, Standard Arrangements | Up to date standards that have been communicated, understood and embedded |
| Working session to draw out challenges and identify how these should be resolved | Civil working relationships (and communication) between Group Leaders despite political disagreements. |
| Co-opted qualified independent members appointed to audit committee | Continuity outside the political cycle, brining a new non-political view and approach to committee discussions. |
| Report outlining the agreed Audit Committee actions to take based on the recommendations and a self assessment - implemented | The Audit Committee has the knowledge, skills and independent expertise to provide robust challenge and ensures effective controls are in place and issues addressed |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Governance - Development of people, processes and provision of information to inform transparent decision making

## 2) Refresh Governance processes

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Work programme for Srutiny and Internal Audit agreed | June-25 |
| Council governance arrangements revised | March-26 |
| Corporate/Officer governance arrangements revised | March-26 |
| LA company and partnership governance arrangements revised | March-25 |
| Asset disposals governance revised | Completed |
| Timely publishing of decision-making documents achieved | TBC |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Scrutiny and Internal Audit Work Programme | Scrutiny and internal audit functions are challenging, robust, valued and contribute to the efficient delivery of public services<br>The authority's scrutiny function is challenging, robust and contributes to the efficient delivery of services |
| Revised governance forums and processes. Improved business cases. Clarity on how approval should be evidenced. | Full Council, alongside the Audit Committee, reviews governance arrangements and takes an effective overview of the systems of control, audit and governance |
| Clear Terms of Reference for corporate / officer meetings identifying the appropriate membership | Decision-making is taken at the right level, with staff empowered to do their jobs consistent with the scheme of delegation |
| Clear Terms of Reference identifying the appropriate membership to ensure the Council's interests are protected. Establish principals for governance over partnerships and Council owned companies. | Proper member oversight (as shareholders) of companies and partnership bodies, in accordance with the Local Authority Company Review Guidance, and their existence is regularly and independently reviewed<br><br>The purposes of companies are carefully considered and regularly reviewed, with effective governance and oversight arrangements in place |
| Revised Sale of Land and Buildings Protocol | Ensure the appropriate due diligence is carried out on the disposal of assets |
| Key decision-making documents shared publicly | A commitment to promoting transparency and sharing information with the public |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Governance - Development of people, processes and provision of information to inform transparent decision making

## 3) Providing Information to inform Governance

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Capacity, processes and formats to brief Members implemented | March-26 |
| Revised Constitution agreed | March-26 |
| Revised Code of Corporate Governance agreed | TBC |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Report to agree clear processes and formats for briefing members on the information to inform decision making | Committees and individuals charged with governance have the appropriate information, support, experience and expertise to perform their role |
| New Constitution to define clear cycles for when performance and quality assurance information will be shared and with which committees | Performance management and quality assurance information effectively measures outcomes and is frequently interrogated |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Governance - Development of people, processes and provision of information to inform transparent decision making

## 4) Managing Risk through Governance

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Risk Management improvements implemented | Dec-25 |
| Audit action management improvements implemented | June-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Revised approach to risk management approved and implemented | Risk awareness and management informs every decision |
| Revised approach to audit action review and resolution approved and implemented | Public reporting on value for money, performance and the stewardship of resources is completed in a timely and understandable way, with transparent responses to recommendations from internal and external audit, and regulators |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Theme 4 – Use of Resources

- A good local authority must have solid financial management, reporting and regulation arrangements in place, to govern the management of its investments, funding, assets and companies. This includes ensuring it has the appropriate skills and capacity in place, using specialist expertise when needed. Excessive risks should not be taken when making investments and borrowing decisions and there should be scrutiny and transparency.

- Going forward the council will be ensuring that financial management and reporting is supported by robust financial systems, record keeping and quality assurance, with the use of specialist expertise and independent assurance when needed. The council's financial strategy and budgets will be clearly aligned with strategic priorities and robust process for reviewing and setting the budget will be in place.

- The recommendations in this area underline the need for increased corporate challenge regarding savings delivery plans, review of the finance system to improve quantity and quality of data, improved contract management, and establishing effective performance and project management to enhance decision making and delivery of savings.

- There are four core areas of focus here for us:

    - Financial planning of resources
    - Financial control of resources
    - Performance management of resources
    - Project management of resources

# Use of resources - Financial planning and control supported by performance and project management

## 1) Financial planning of resources

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Balanced budget approved | March-25 |
| 3 Year MTFS approved | March-25 |
| Future process for budget setting and MTFS agreed | June-25 |
| Star Chamber action closure process launched | March-25 |
| Reserves policy approved | March-25 |
| 30-year HRA Business Plan approved | March-25 |
| DSG Management Plan continually kept up to date | March-26 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| A balanced budget for 2025/26 approved by Council | Budget approved by Members with plans to increase the level of reserves<br><br>Compliance with the Prudential Framework, a clearly presented Investment Strategy, Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy exists. |
| 3 year financial forecast and MTFS showing forecast expenditure & income, how the budget will be balanced and restoration of reserves to an adequate level | Approved Financial Strategy - A clear strategy exists to maintain adequate reserves. |
| Documented annual budget and MTFS process with clear timeline to develop, challenge, review and consult on the proposals. Process to ensure that Services show links to statutory requirements and demonstrate VFM | The financial strategy and budgets are clearly aligned with strategic priorities and there is a robust process for reviewing and setting the budget<br>There is collective accountability for the budget and medium-term financial plan, rather than a siloed approach to management |
| A document detailing the closed star chamber actions, those that will be tracked via the Financial Control tranche and those to include within the Dudley Improvement Plan | All of the Star Chamber budget setting actions are either closed or tracked via the Financial Control Tranche or within the Dudley Improvement Plan itself |
| Reserves policy produced and risk based assessment of reserves undertaken | Reserves restored to an adequate level |
| Updated and balanced 30 year HRA Business plan | Balanced 30 year HRA Business plan |
| Updated DSG forecast, mitigations and monitoring arrangements | Clear plan of mitigations and robust reporting arrangements |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Use of resources - Financial planning and control supported by performance and project management

## 2) Financial control of resources

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Improvements to financial controls and reporting implemented | TBC |
| Comparison of current state versus CIPFA FM Model completed | March-25 |
| Improvements to budget monitoring implemented | June-25 |
| Financial regulations updated and approved | March-25 |
| Finance system improvements implemented | TBC |
| Contract Management improvements implemented | TBC |
| Corporate Operating Model implemented | TBC |
| Capital Programme Board established | June-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Financial controls | Financial controls |
| Gap analysis between current state and what good looks like in the CIPFA FM Model | A comprehensive self assessment exercise against 'good-enough' to provide a solid baseline and a source of more targeted action |
| Report outlining the agreed budget monitoring actions to take based on the recommendations and a self assessment - implemented | Regular reporting to Cabinet and Scrutiny highlighting financial risks, delivery of savings, key financial indicators, mitigations and actions. |
| Updated financial regulations based upon best practice | New financial regulations approved and training/briefings carried out |
| Up to date flexible finance system that meets user needs | Chart of accounts reviewed, improved financial reporting and increased use of Purchase Orders (POs) |
| Report outlining the agreed contract management actions to take based on the recommendations and a self assessment – implemented. An agreed target. PowerBI report to report monthly on or off contract spend and assess performance v target | A consistent approach to contract management leading to the delivery of savings |
| Corporate Operating Model approved and implemented | Sustainable corporate functions including procurement and IT which deliver value for money. |
| Capital Programme board established, improved capital programme monitoring arrangements and capital projects prioritised and linked to corporate strategy | Improved monitoring of the capital programme, key milestones established, projects linked to Council's priorities and better cashflow projections |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

**Use of resources - Financial planning and control supported by performance and project management**

## 3) Performance management of resources

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Corporate Performance Framework for 25/26 implemented | June-25 |
| Corporate Asset Management System implemented | TBC |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Performance management framework | The workforce (Service) are managed efficiently and effectively, with clear and credible strategies demonstrating how services will be delivered in the future, with an effective system for performance management.<br>Corporate performance dashboard that enables the leadership to monitor and take action when indicated by the KPIs |
| Asset Management System | The fixed assets are managed efficiently and effectively, with clear and credible strategies demonstrating how services will be delivered in the future, with an effective system for performance management. |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

## Use of resources - Financial planning and control supported by performance and project management

### 4) Project management of resources

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| PMO & Programme/Project Management approach agreed | June-25 |
| PMO and PDO Service Charter agreed | March-25 |
| Capacity and Capability within PMO and PDO established | March-25 |
| Standardised method of project delivery rolled | TBC |
| Standardised governance and reporting rolled out | March-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Embed a project management approach across the directorates – Introduce a PM role into the new TOM | Effective project management of projects to enhance governance and effective use of resources. |
| PMO and PDO Charter with defined objectives to meet Councils needs - roles recruited to as part of TOM | Capability and capacity introduced with a clear remit for PMO & Project delivery with Senior buy in. |
| Standardised method for managing projects implemented. Deliver training on project management to team managers | Increased PM capability and consistency in delivery across the Council |
| Standardised reporting framework with dashboards. Put in place a governance structure for reporting and monitoring projects and programmes. Communication and training plan to embed | Clear accountability and decision making through project lifecycle with transparent monitoring of project performance. Improved project oversight and control |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Theme 5 – Service Delivery

- All well run local services are customer focused, and meet the needs of diverse communities. They should improve outcomes for the people who use them and achieve a balance of cost and quality. We recognise that this is the aim for all of the services that we as a council manage and deliver. In the new council operating model, operational delivery is central and looks to be outcome focused, community led and vitally enabling, transparent and accountable.

- The improvement plan looks to ensure that all service plans are clearly aligned to the council's priorities and longer term plans. Services will be shaped and influenced by residents, communities and stakeholders to ensure the council is delivering what local people want and need. Future joined up working, and the move away from silo working will help ensure that effective connections between services are made, ensuring a reduction in missed opportunities and more efficient operation.

- We will also ensure that there are clear and effective mechanisms for scrutinising and reporting performance across all service areas. Fresh and innovative approaches when considering how services will be designed and delivered in the future will also be a real focal point.

- The external bodies' recommendations included the need to align the finance information in service plans to that contained in the medium term financial strategy, the importance of differentiating between investment and commercialisation, and the need to transform services in order to release savings. Additionally, specific recommendations were made to resolve the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing.

- The plan looks at four areas relating to service delivery:

    - Service delivery planning
    - Service delivery management
    - Service delivery user feedback
    - Service delivery external reviews (regulators)

# Service delivery - Planning, management, listening to users and external advice

## 1) Service delivery planning

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Gap analysis between current state and 'good-enough' completed | March-25 |
| Annual Service Delivery Planning process agreed / implemented | March-25 |
| BI report provided to inform service delivery planning | March-25 |
| Training on developing SMART service delivery plans completed | March-25 |
| Action plan for cross directorate service planning established | March-25 |
| SCL forward plan for events established | March-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Robust understanding of current position, gaps and required activity to be 'good-enough' at service delivery planning | A comprehensive self assessment exercise against 'good-enough' to provide a solid baseline and a source of more targeted action |
| Defined annual service planning process agreed and disseminated | Service plans are clearly linked to a local authority's priorities, strategic plans and longer-term planning – a golden thread that runs through to individual objectives and accountability.<br><br>The authority achieves the best balance of cost and quality, considering the resources available, in delivering services, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. |
| Business Intelligence report to inform service delivery planning | Service delivery is evidence-based, customer and citizen focused, and meet the needs of different groups within the community. |
| Training developed and delivered to support the SMART service planning and delivery process | Clearly evidenced progress to provide asurance on performance, delivery and outcomes |
| Agreed action plan and leads for cross-directorate initiatives to reduce duplication | Efficient and collaborative service delivery resulting in improved outcomes and customer experience |
| Forward plan for SCL information and engagement on service delivery learning and good practice | A high performing, informed leadership team who learn from good pratice and collaborate to problem solve and improve |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

## Service delivery - Planning, management, listening to users and external advice

## 2) Service delivery management

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Gap analysis between current state and 'good-enough' completed | March-25 |
| 25/26 Performance management reporting implemented | March-25 |
| Procurement process improvements implemented | TBC |
| Performance reports provided online for public | March-25 |
| Council-wide performance dashboard approved | March-25 |
| Resident Communications Strategy approved | June-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Robust understanding of current position, gaps and required activity to be 'good-enough' at service delivery management | A comprehensive self assessment exercise against 'good-enough' to provide a solid baseline and a source of more targeted action |
| Performance management reports utilising the Spectrum system | The authority has complete, timely and accurate data, and the skills to interpret it, to inform decisions. There are clear and effective mechanisms for scrutinising performance across all service areas. |
| Action Plan for compliance with the Procurement Act | Procurement processes ensure economic, efficient and effective outcomes of contract procurement and management |
| Process and timelines agreed by CMT and disseminated for publishing Council performance to residents | Residents are able to access timely and robust information about how the council is performing |
| Council-wide performance dashboard | A balanced performance dashboard that evidences service delivery performance and provides Councillors, stakeholders and residents with clear, robust and meaningful information |
| Revised Resident Communications Strategy | Clear and consistent approach to communications with residents |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

## Service delivery - Planning, management, listening to users and external advice

### 3) Service delivery user feedback

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Gap analysis between current state and 'good-enough' completed | March-25 |
| Report outlining all resident involvement activity | June-25 |
| Resident communication strategy and plan implemented | June-26 |
| Revised Complaints policy implemented | June-25 |
| Feedback from complaints process fed into service delivery | June-25 |
| Audit of the informing sharing with residents | Sept-25 |
| Plan to ensure information sharing with residents is up to date | Sept-25 |
| Approach to Resident Engagement agreed | June-25 |
| Process for receiving and responding to feedback implemented | Sept-25 |
| Sources of intelligence for informing service planning agreed | Sept-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Robust understanding of current position, gaps and required activity to be 'good-enough' at service delivery user feedback | A comprehensive self assessment exercise against 'good-enough' to provide a solid baseline and a source of more targeted action |
| Document setting out all current resident involvement activity | Clear understanding of how we engage with residents and identification of gaps and/or duplication |
| Revised Resident Communications Strategy that includes the council's approach to resident surveys and associated delivery plan | Clear and consistent approach to residents surveys that maximises contact opportunities and ensures effective feedback<br>Users are satisfied with the level and quality of services provided |
| Revised Complaints Policy that is compliant with the LGO and Housing Ombudsman codes of practice | The authority has an effective and accessible complaints process and provides appropriate redress<br>Robust and compliant response to complaints that improves customer experience and informs service delivery and improvements |
| Clear understanding of the information we are sharing, any gaps and required improvements to access to and quality of information | High quality, easy to access information that encourages self-service and improves customer experience |
| Plan setting our clear responsibilities and timelines for the reviewing, updating and sharing of information | |
| Defined and agreed approach to resident engagement | A clear and consistent approach to engaging with residents which adds value to the council and ensures that residents feel that their voice is heard and listened to |
| Clear procedures in place for receiving and responding to feedback in a meaningful and timely way | |
| Identified list of soruces of intelligence that can be used to inform service planning | Opportunity to learn from groups and individuals who may be hard to reach or outside usual resident engagement mechanisms |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

## Service delivery - Planning, management, listening to users and external advice

### 4) Service delivery external reviews (regulators)

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Gap analysis between current state and 'good-enough' completed | March-25 |
| Full understanding of all the regulatory requirements | March-25 |
| Regulatory Improvement Programme Plan developed | March-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Robust understanding of current position, gaps and required activity to be 'good-enough' at Service delivery external reviews (regulators) | A comprehensive self assessment exercise against 'good-enough' to provide a solid baseline and a source of more targeted action |
| Clear and complete list of all regulatory standards and requirements that DMBC (and partners where appropriate) need to adhere to and report upon | A robust understanding of regulatory requirements, reflected and prioritised as appropriate in service and financial planning.<br>Evidence of decision making being driven by an understanding of regulatory requirements |
| A Regulatory Improvement programme plan with projects prioritised and sequenced and aligned to the resource plan to deliver | Service improvements recommended by regulators and the Ombudsman are implemented at the earliest opportunity<br>A clear plan for achieving and maintaining regulatory compliance to inform service and financial planning |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Theme 6 – Partnerships and Community Engagement

- Effective partnerships, collaborative working with local communities, residents and stakeholders should be at the heart of everything a local authority does. They are especially vital to supporting local regeneration and economic growth, promoting strong relationships and connections in local communities and ensuring services effectively meet local wants and needs.

- We fully recognise the importance of and benefits to be gained from effective collaborative working with local partners and community engagement. Community focus sits at the centre of the council's new operating model, where we seek to become engaged, insight driven, more resilient and supported by communities. We will be working towards a shared vison for the borough, key to the improvement plan.

- We recognise that meaningful engagement means a true understanding of local needs and committed conversations, involving often difficult conversations, a willingness to take different views on board, participative decision making and codesign and coproduction in their true forms.

- The recommendations with respect to this theme are primarily associated with the development of delivery plans for the Borough's vision, finalisation of the estates strategy and adoption of the Economic and Regeneration Strategy.

- There are three core areas that we will be focusing upon:

    - Developing a Borough vision with partners and the community
    - Partnership planning
    - Partnership delivery

# Partnerships and Community Engagement - Developing a vision and following through with planning and delivery

## 1) Developing a Borough vision with partners and the community

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Dudley Borough Vision relaunched with a commitment to deliver | June-25 |
| | |

| Key deliverables | Success Measures |
|---|---|
| Relaunch of the Dudley Borough Vision | There is a shared vision for the local area which has been co-produced with partners, businesses and communities to maximise resources and ensure best value across service areas |
| | |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Partnerships and Community Engagement - Developing a vision and following through with planning and delivery

## 2) Partnership planning

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Partnerships & Community Programme Plan developed | June-25 |
| Sessions to secure Council wide buy-in delivered | June-25 |
| Gap analysis between current state and 'good-enough' completed | June-25 |

| Key deliverables | Success Measures |
|---|---|
| A programme of change focused on delivering the 'Forging a Future for All' vision and seven aspirations | There is early and meaningful engagement and effective collaboration with communities to identify and understand local needs and assets, and in decisions that affect the planning and delivery of services. In some cases, this involves the co-design and/or co-production of services |
| Working sessions with each directorate to increase their understanding of partnership working and to encourage involvement in the delivery plans | An organisational culture exists that recognises the value of working with public sector systems and local partners to improve policy development, local economic growth and investment, better services, and customer-focused outcomes. |
| Gap analysis between current state and what good looks like | A comprehensive self assessment exercise against 'good-enough' to provide a solid baseline and a source of more targeted action |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Partnerships and Community Engagement - Developing a vision and following through with planning and delivery

## 3) Partnership delivery

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Partnership Governance implemented and operational | TBC |
| Performance monitoring and tracking implemented | TBC |
| Strategic Council approach to consider community impact agreed | TBC |
| Gap analysis between current state and 'good-enough' completed | TBC |

| Key deliverables | Success Measures |
|---|---|
| A governance structure that enables the delivery of the vision and seven aspirations | Evidence of joint planning, funding, investment and use of resources to demonstrate effective service delivery, but transparent and subject to rigorous oversight |
| Performance management approach and tool for monitoring and tracking improvements | Partners and local residents are involved in developing indicators and targets, and monitoring and managing lack of performance. The authority may be beginning to experiment with more participative forms of decision-making. |
| Strategy for ensuring the Council always considers how it will benefit the local borough community when transacting the Council business | The authority drives social and environmental value in their place through mechanisms like procurement and employment |
| Gap analysis between current state and what good looks like | A comprehensive self assessment exercise against 'good-enough' to provide a solid baseline and a source of more targeted action |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Theme 7 – Continuous Improvement

- Of course, continuous improvement across all areas of business and operation must be central to the improvement plan. There will be processes put in place for external reviews, peer challenges, as well as internal reviews, benchmarking and assessments. We cannot stand still and the improvement journey will be an evolving one, involving continuous development.

- No specific recommendations have been made pertaining to this theme, but continuous improvement is the outcome of all the themes working effectively together, and making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance and outcomes is a core requirement for achieving best value.

- The improvement plan will focus upon four crucial areas here:

    - Embed Continuous improvement processes
    - Continuous improvement benchmarking with other LAs
    - Performance management of staff to enable continuous improvement
    - Continuous improvement through implementation of external review findings (non-regulatory)

# Continuous Improvement - Processes, benchmarking, staff performance and external review findings

## 1) Embed Continuous improvement processes

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Dudley Improvement Plan Phase 1 approved | March-25 |
| Dudley Improvement Plan Phase 2 approved | June-25 |
| Continuous Improvement strategy and approach approved | June-25 |
| Continuous Improvement tools and techniques agreed | June-25 |
| Benchmarking of other LAs approaches shared | March-25 |
| Capacity and capability within the Council baselined | March-25 |
| Continuous Improvement Programme approved | June-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| A Phase 1 detailed improvement plan ("Dudley Improvement Plan") with outline activity for defining Phase 2. | A single view that enables Dudley to prioritise its resources in phase 1 focused on addressing the key immediate challenges and completing the Discovery to inform improvement in Phase 2 |
| A Phase 2 detailed improvement plan ("Dudley Improvement Plan") including the detailed change projects to deliver the Council Plan | An updated plan translating the vision into delivery |
| Document of agreed Continuous Improvement strategy and how it should be implemented | Consistency and common understanding and cascaded message of Continuous Improvement strategy |
| Coherent set of information that guides ways of Continuous Improvement working that illustrates the agreed process for integrating risk management | Well governed programme delivering value based on strategic priorities<br>Innovation is encouraged and supported within the context of a mature approach to risk management. |
| Necessary learning and insight into comparable resources to assist building up the Continuous Improvement capability | Information informs budget and skill requirements for a successful programme that can be leveraged against benefits delivery |
| Identified spead of Continuous Improvement capability and capacity across directorates | Information informs organisational level training needs and external recruitment needs |
| A programme of change to include all the appropriate activity from the Star Chambers, Functional Reviews, Internal Audit, non-regulatory reports, existing Verto projects and other sources | An organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement, driven by an established transformation function or programme, with frequent monitoring, performance reporting and updating of the corporate and improvement plans. |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley MBC Improvement Plan

# Continuous Improvement - Processes, benchmarking, staff performance and external review findings

## 2) Continuous improvement benchmarking with other LAs

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Benchmarking capability launched | June-25 |
| Dudley engaged with the WMCA and sharing good practice ideas | TBC |
| Dudley engaged with Oflog and presented good practice ideas | TBC |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the Council to regularly deliver benchmarking for the LA | The use of performance indicators and Oflog's Local Authority Data Explorer to manage risk and to benchmark against similar authorities and manage risk |
| A programme of work between 'change leaders' from across WMCA LAs with a commitment to sharing improvement ideas | The authority shares a sense of collective responsibility for the sector's performance and supports other authorities to improve. |
| Examples of Dudley's national profile showcasing the good work of the council | Participation in Oflog's programme of webinars to share best practice between local authorities, to help improve performance, productivity and value for money. |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley Improvement Plan

## Continuous Improvement - Processes, benchmarking, staff performance and external review findings

### 3) Performance management of staff to enable continuous improvement

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| 24/25 Performance Management for Staff completed | June-25 |
| People processes and documents updated to reflect CI | Dec-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Performance Management System | Professional development and appraisal at all staff levels is built into day-to-day work, with poor performance identified, monitored and effectively addressed, and good performance recognised |
| Updated processes and documents to reflect importance of continuous improvement | Professional development and appraisal at all staff levels is built into day-to-day work, with poor performance identified, monitored and effectively addressed, and good performance recognised |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deliverables) is available within the Dudley Improvement Plan

# Continuous Improvement - Processes, benchmarking, staff performance and external review findings

## 4) Continuous improvement through implementation of external review findings (non-regulatory)

| Key Milestones | Target Qtr |
|---|---|
| Initiatives/ Projects to be included within CI programme agreed | March-25 |
| Review of outstanding reports completed, and projects initiated | Dec-25 |

| Key deliverables | Evidence of success |
|---|---|
| Report of the projects and initiatives that can be used to populate and prioritise the Continuous Improvement programme and evidence commitment to learning from external feedback | The authority arranges a corporate or finance peer challenge at least every five years, acts promptly on any recommendations given, and publishes the report of that review and progress updates |
| Compiled list of external reviews and services involved including key observations and recommendations | The authority arranges a corporate or finance peer challenge at least every five years, acts promptly on any recommendations given, and publishes the report of that review and progress updates<br>The authority acts promptly on any recommendations and publishes the report of that review and progress updates.<br>The authority is willing to work with other external advisors to proactively identify areas for improvement and responds promptly and effectively to recommendations |

All target dates subject to review during detailed planning phase



**Note**. Further detail (detailed deiverables) is available within the Dudley Improvement Plan

# Appendices

- Appendix A
  - External recommendations by theme

- Appendix B
  - Improvement Plan Governance Arrangements

# Appendix A

## Recommendations by Theme

# Recommendations – Leadership

| Source | Ref | Shorthand Recommendation | Tranche |
|---|---|---|---|
| CIPFA | A1 | Address the lack of trust and confidence across senior management and between Officers and Members | Leadership people development |
| CIPFA | B1 | Make a statement on the future political & officer leadership and the need for transparent decision making | Leadership people development |
| CIPFA | Y1 | Finance develop a formal and structured programme of financial training for budget holders & Members | Build Leadership processes |
| CIPFA | C2 | The revenue implications of Member decisions on capital schemes is clear in decision-informing reports | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | L2 | Renew effort to ensure that there is a common and consistent understanding of where the organisation is headed | Leadership agreed Council Plan linked to activity and resources and performance managed |
| CIPFA | M2 | Develop a stronger political strategy to take the risk decisions which have previously been avoided | Leadership agreed Council Plan linked to activity and resources and performance managed |
| LGA | 4 | Consider the alignment of the council Plan to the Medium Term Financial Strategy | Leadership agreed Council Plan linked to activity and resources and performance managed |
| LGA | 10 | Develop a 'golden thread' to ensure the council plan is reflected in service strategies and team plans | Leadership agreed Council Plan linked to activity and resources and performance managed |
| LGA | 12 | Roll-out training and support around the roles and responsibilities for both Members and officers | Leadership people development |
| LGA | 14 | Review the organisational structure and how to better utilise the resources to deliver the golden thread | Leadership people development<br>Service delivery planning |
| GT | x | The Council should consider making the post of Monitoring Officer a director appointment | Leadership people development |
| GT | xi | Revisit its strategic goals to ensure there is alignment between financial, operational and political agendas | Leadership agreed Council Plan linked to activity and resources and performance managed |

# Recommendations – Culture

| Source | Ref | Shorthand Recommendation | Tranche |
|---|---|---|---|
| LGA | 16 | Development of corporate health performance indicators building on the approach to HR monitoring | Build supportive processes to enable our desired culture |
| LGA | 17 | Refresh the organisational values and reset the expectations | Develop the right culture with our people |
| GT | xv | Reset relationships between officers and members, where poor conduct will not be tolerated. | Develop positive relationships across the Council |

# Recommendations – Governance

| Source | Ref | Shorthand Recommendation | Tranche |
|---|---|---|---|
| CIPFA | C1 | Address allegations and investigations raised as a result of historic decisions reinforce constitutional rules | Refresh Governance processes |
| CIPFA | E1 | Clarify the governance for identifying, delivering and monitoring savings and budget growth | Providing Information to inform Governance<br>Financial control of resources |
| CIPFA | A2 | Finance review the format, content and analysis of the presentations to Council in consultation with users | Providing Information to inform Governance |
| CIPFA | E2 | Risk management is embedded as a means of providing assurance and not seen as a tick based exercise | Managing Risk through Governance |
| CIPFA | F2 | Align Internal Audit work with the Councils risk areas | Managing Risk through Governance |
| LGA | 5 | Internal Audit recommendations need to be addressed | Managing Risk through Governance |
| LGA | 9 | Improve the internal control and assurance environment | Managing Risk through Governance |
| LGA | 11 | Review the function and purpose of Informal Cabinet and the Strategic Executive Board | Refresh Governance processes |
| LGA | 13 | Keep the scrutiny function under review, including the work programme, so that it is fit for purpose | Refresh Governance processes |
| GT | xii | Revisit its risk framework to determine whether changes would allow it to identify and respond to risk more timely | Managing Risk through Governance |
| GT | xiii | The Council should appoint two co-opted appropriately qualified independent members to the audit committee | Refresh Governance processes |
| GT | xiv | To review and approve protocols for disposal of council-owned properties | Refresh Governance processes<br>Financial control of resources |

# Recommendations – Use of resources (p1/2)

| Source | Ref | Shorthand Recommendation | Tranche |
|---|---|---|---|
| CIPFA | D1 | Ensure the MTFS and savings plans are linked to Council strategies | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | E1 | Clarify the governance for identifying, delivering and monitoring savings and budget growth | Providing Information to inform Governance<br>Financial control of resources |
| CIPFA | F1 | Develop a culture of more corporate challenge over delivery of savings | Financial planning of resources<br>Financial control of resources |
| CIPFA | G1 | Develop processes to achieve greater consistency in RAG ratings across the Council | Financial control of resources |
| CIPFA | H1 | Review the treatment of CHC income as a test example | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | I1 | Develop a programme to improve contract management across the Council | Financial control of resources |
| CIPFA | J1 | Establish targets and associated monitoring of on or off contract spend | Financial control of resources |
| CIPFA | K1 | ASC - Business Case development for savings proposals and addressing the CHC Gap | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | L1 | ASC - Review the scope for increasing savings in the MTFS for 25-26 and 26-27 | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | M1 | ASC - Improve performance reporting to show financial and activity analysis | Financial planning of resources<br>Financial control of resources |
| CIPFA | N1 | ASC - Align the Dudley Market Sustainability Plan and the MTFS | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | O1 | ASC - Explore opportunities to share training and recruitment strategies with NHS or Partners | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | P1 | CSC - Consider whether the planned reduction in growth pressure in 25-26 and 26-27 is realistic | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | Q1 | CSC - Monitor the capacity and recruitment in early help and support teams | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | R1 | CSC - Review with partners the performance and costs of the regional adoption centre | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | S1 | CSC - Review wider areas for opportunities to review policies and practices to deliver savings | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | T1 | PH - Benchmark payments and monies made from the ICS to neighbouring council | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | U1 | PH - Engage early with nascent regional government | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | V1 | PH - Look at new opportunities to engage and develop programmes in partnership | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | W1 | Finance are not excluded from relevant forums and parallel financial systems are not allowed to develop | Financial planning of resources<br>Financial control of resources |

# Recommendations – Use of resources (p2/2)

| Source | Ref | Shorthand Recommendation | Tranche |
|---|---|---|---|
| CIPFA | X1 | Budgets are formerly agreed each year between relevant budget holders and Finance | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | Z1 | Commercial Services and Finance work together in a structured way to develop financial information | Financial control of resources |
| CIPFA | D2 | Develop a programme to support the PMO in improving project management across the Council | Project management of resources |
| CIPFA | H2 | Use the planned upgrade to the finance IT system to increase the quantity and quality of information | Financial control of resources |
| CIPFA | I2 | The chart of accounts is reviewed with the aim of reducing the number of cost centres | Financial control of resources |
| CIPFA | J2 | Develop its detailed 2025-26 budget plans including detailed savings plans, as a matter of urgency | Financial planning of resources |
| CIPFA | K2 | Recognise the need for some difficult decision making and then sticking to those decisions | Financial planning of resources |
| LGA | 1 | Develop a financial strategy, and engage with DLUHC, for long term sustainability | Financial planning of resources |
| LGA | 2 | Engage across the organisation as 'One Dudley', at all levels, to address financial sustainability | Financial planning of resources |
| LGA | 3 | Consider external strategic support to turn around the short-term and medium-term financial position | Financial control of resources |
| LGA | 21 | Development of the approach to the council's corporate performance to 'tell the story' | Performance management of resources |
| GT | i | Maximise the opportunity for positive movement in the 2023/24 final outturn and 2024/25 budget | Financial planning of resources<br>Financial control of resources |
| GT | ii | Create a prudent centrally-held contingency, which the S151 officer can deploy as necessary | Financial control of resources |
| GT | iii | Identify and develop additional expenditure reduction and income generation proposals for 2024/25 | Financial planning of resources |
| GT | iv | Implement the steps as if the S151 officer was to issue a S114 notice | Financial control of resources |
| GT | v | To monitor progress in managing the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit. | Financial planning of resources |
| GT | vii | The Council should review and evaluate how it sets it capital budget. | Financial planning of resources |
| GT | viii | To implement CIPFAs recommendations, particularly regarding improvements to budget monitoring | Financial control of resources |
| GT | ix | To explore linking the finance system to the procurement system | Financial control of resources |
| GT | xiv | To review and approve protocols for disposal of council-owned properties | Refresh Governance processes<br>Financial control of resources |

# Recommendations – Service delivery

| Source | Ref | Shorthand Recommendation | Tranche |
|---|---|---|---|
| CIPFA | B2 | Update service plans with financial information that align with the information contained in the MTFS | Service delivery planning |
| CIPFA | G2 | Finance review its engagement with external advice to ensure it engages best practice on Building control and the HRA | Service delivery external reviews (regulators) |
| LGA | 8 | Clearly differentiate between investment and commercialisation | Service delivery management |
| LGA | 14 | Review the organisational structure and how to better utilise the resources to deliver the golden thread | Leadership people development<br>Service delivery planning |
| LGA | 15 | Transform to release savings and invest in key services | Service delivery planning |
| LGA | 20 | Consider the value in undertaking a regular Residents' Survey. | Service delivery user feedback |
| GT | vi | To settle the requirements of the Regulatory Notice issued by the Regulator of Social Housing (RoSH) | Service delivery external reviews (regulators) |

# Recommendations – Partnerships & Community Engagement

| Source | Ref | Shorthand Recommendation | Tranche |
|---|---|---|---|
| LGA | 6 | Completion and adoption of the Economic and Regeneration Strategy | Partnership planning |
| LGA | 7 | Finalise the Estates Strategy with a delivery plan and timescales | Partnership planning |
| LGA | 18 | Development of delivery plans for Dudley Borough's Vision, Forging a Future for All | Partnership planning |
| LGA | 19 | Develop a place marketing approach for the visitor economy. | Developing a Borough vision with partners and the community |

# Recommendations – Continuous improvement

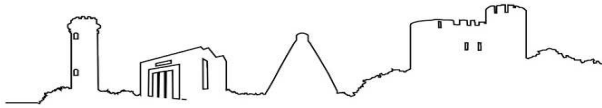
- No specific recommendations were made

# Appendix B

## Improvement Plan Governance Arrangements

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Working as One Council in
the historic capital of the Black Country



# Improvement Plan Governance Arrangements

***Council***

*Council will be provided with an update on the progress of the strategy and improvement work to date.*

***Cabinet***

*Cabinet will agree the plan and any changes to the plan moving forward. They are responsible for overseeing the plan, ensuring that progress is made in accordance with the plan and for resource allocation.*

***Dudley MBC Improvement Panel***

*Dudley MBC Improvement Panel (D-MIP) is an Internal body overseeing the implementation of the improvement plan, seeking to ensure that progress is being made and escalating concerns to the Chief Executive and Cabinet. D-MIP includes external experts, to ensure the Council is supported and held to account for delivery of programme objectives. The Panel can make strategic and decisive recommendations about the direction and delivery of the Plan and will provide more formalised reporting and assurance to the LGA and MHCLG.*

***Cabinet Strategy Group***

*Cabinet Strategy Group (CSG) focus on big ticket discussions around future financial sustainability, key priorities and improved governance. It will focus on developing strategy themes to provide guidance to CMT in advance of going through the formal governance arrangements.*

# Improvement Plan Governance Arrangements

***Overview & Scrutiny Committee***

*The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will take a lead role in scrutinising the governance and process of the plan and ensure continuous improvement is being achieved.*

***Fit for the Future (FfTF)/ Council Sustainability Select Committee***

*The FfTF Select Committee will undertake specific scrutiny reviews and inquiries where possible on a 'task-finish' basis and contribute to policy development by making reports and recommendations to the Council, the Cabinet or relevant decision makers in relation to items that are included in the Work Programme.*

***Corporate Management Team***

*Directors, as part of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) will report into the Improvement Panel, and manage the detail of Programme delivery, at a Strategic Level. They will provide a check and balance to the plan, ensuring alignment with the Council's strategic direction and decision making in line with the Council's constitution, and be advised of progress.*

*Supported by the Programme Delivery Office and it will also ensure each theme is managed using project controls, proportionate to the level of risk, and benefits are tracked and measured.*

***Operational Groups***

*Operational Groups have been developed to allow project teams an opportunity to discuss current activity and ensure co-dependencies, risks and issues are managed effectively and efficiently.*

# Improvement Plan Governance Arrangements

***Value for Money Panels***

*Spend Control measures were introduced for staff recruitment and larger procurement contracts to address the financial position of the Council. Those measures were further enhanced through the establishment of Value for Money Spending Controls and Panels. which review all non-pay expenditure over £1,000 excluding VAT. Adult Social Care and Children's Services form part of a separate Value for Money Panel.*

***Pay Cost Control Board***

The Pay Cost Control Board (PCCB) is the single review and approval board for all recruitment and pay arrangement proposals.

***Senior Change Leaders***

*Consisting of senior executives, non-exec directors and heads of service. The group discuss key change activities, build connections across the group and ensure a two-way sharing of information between senior change leaders and their teams.*

***Member Engagement Group***

*The Member Engagement Group (MEG) is a non-decision-making group of Councillors, designed to assist the authority with the Improvement Plan programme of work. The group will engage with and support officers by providing feedback on various activity within the plan, utilising their knowledge of the Council and their skills and experience developed outside of this role.*