

Management Action Plan

Financial Resilience/Compliance with CIPFA Financial Management Code — 2022/23

	COUNTER MEASURE	
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Ref	Concern	Risk	Finding	Treat	Tolerate	Transfer	Terminate	Counter Measure Action / Explanation	Responsible Officer	Target Date
1 167	<p>Without access to the right reports/tools and training, there is a risk that appropriate staff will not carry out their financial responsibilities effectively. This may impact on the council's ability to identify and address emerging risks to its budget strategy and financial sustainability.</p> <p>There may be non-compliance with Standard E of CIPFA's FM Code if those individuals with specific responsibility for aspects of the authority's governance and financial management have the appropriate training to fulfil their responsibilities.</p>	Area for Improvement (Medium)	The current training arrangements are informal and provided as required/identified. There is no formal finance training programme/framework in place for appropriate staff, including budget holders, members of Corporate Leadership Team excluding the Chief Finance Officer and Council Members and the training currently given does not include specifically the area of value for money.	√				<p>Further resources are now in place within the finance team to bolster ongoing support across the organisation.</p> <p>A formal training programme, including on-line support is planned to be introduced in 2023/24.</p> <p>This work is slightly delayed due to resource issues. The trainer led Budget Management & Procurement training is part of the condensed and re-vamped leadership training proposed for all budget managers. This will be delivered for December 2023 but the e-learning module will be delivered by the end February 2024.</p>	Assistant Director of Finance/ Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development	30/9/23

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168	<p>2 Staff may not be qualified in accordance with the recommended best practice with CIPFA's FM Code.</p> <p>The promotion of financial literacy throughout the authority, including championing training and the development of relevant skills at all levels. The responsibility for learning and development amongst finance staff, in order to ensure that both current and likely future finance skills needs may not be addressed.</p>	Area for Improvement (Medium)	There is no central record held within Finance of qualifications and continual professional development for appropriate finance staff.	√				<p>Individual managers ensure all staff in the finance service have the appropriate skills, experience and formal qualifications. This allows both formal qualifications and work experience to be considered alongside performance in setting supporting staff and agreeing individual development plans.</p> <p>The HR team have loaded all the current members of Finance qualifications which is all reportable. Going forward a 'how to guide will be shared and team members can add the information themselves via self-service. This item is now complete.</p>	Assistant Director of Finance/ Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development	31/7/23
	<p>3 The Council will not be espousing high standards of governance and internal control as stated in CIPFA's FM Code</p>	Area for Improvement (Medium)	There is no checking and assurance element for the register of interests for senior management in place.	√				We have identified the opportunity to improve the checking and assurance element of the register of interests and this will be put in place this year – through	Assistant Director, Governance	31/3/23

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								<p>the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) process.</p> <p>The above process was put in place for the production of the 22/23 AGS and is embedded for future years – action complete.</p>		
4 169	<p>CIPFA's FM Code states the following: In CIPFA's view, an assessment of an authority's financial management style can best be undertaken by means of peer review.</p> <p>The CIPFA FM Code sets out that, having carried out a finance resilience assessment, the authority should demonstrate how the risks identified have informed the development of its longer-term financial strategy. The authority should, furthermore, report the implications of these risks on its future financial sustainability to its leadership team, including its elected members.</p>	Area for Improvement (Medium)	There has not been a recent supplementary financial resilience assessment exercise undertaken including consideration as to how this is undertaken to ensure that a report is completed and presented on the long-term financial sustainability of the Council to the Corporate Leadership Team and Council Members.	√				<p>The council regularly monitors its position in the CIPFA resilience index and indicators continue to be strong across the board. In 2019/20 MJ published data showing Wokingham Borough Council to be in the top 20 most resilient upper tier Councils.</p> <p>As that specific exercise has not been repeated, we have utilised further analysis and ongoing tools and benchmarking to measure and continually update our position going forward. An updated understanding has been provided and will be incorporated into the Chief Financial Officers letter, to</p>	Assistant Director of Finance	31/10/23

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								<p>be presented to members in early 2023.</p> <p>Officers have also specifically presented a detailed report on reserves to Overview & Scrutiny as part of the budget setting process</p>		
5 170	<p>The authority has a clear governance structure, with well-defined roles for all members of the Leadership Team.</p> <p>The Leadership Team and managers can discharge their financial management responsibilities, alongside their wider responsibilities in relation to risk and performance management.</p>	Area for Improvement (Medium)	The Director's Job Description states within its management responsibilities to participate and collaborate as a member of CLT to ensure Council plans and targets are achieved which the financial plans and targets could be included in this. However, there is no specific mention with the Director's Job Description of specific financial responsibilities.	√				<p>Whilst we are comfortable Job Descriptions include reference to financial responsibilities as part of the wider roles, as job descriptions are reviewed going forward we will work with Human Resources to ensure more specific reference to financial responsibilities are included in Job Descriptions. Financial responsibilities are further clarified in the constitution and budget managers protocols.</p> <p>Revised and more specific financial responsibilities have been added to Job Descriptions for Directors roles in recent recruitment</p>	Assistant Director of Finance/ Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development	31/3/24

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171								and all Director job descriptions will be updated so they are all consistent. Staff responsible for recruitment have been advised that all job descriptions are to have updated with financial responsibilities as part of recruitment process.		
6	Internal Control and Corporate Governance findings through Internal Audit reports will not be included in the risk management process which could lead to risks not being managed effectively.	Area for Improvement (Medium)	The results of internal audits are not fed back into the risk management process.	√				This has been picked up as part of the remit of the officer Risk Management Group which meets monthly – action complete.	Assistant Director, Governance	31/3/23
7	'The Role of the Asset Management Plan in the MTFP' section of the CIPFA FM Code may not be complied with.	Areas for Improvement (Medium)	There is not currently an up-to-date asset management plan. There is one in draft form that is currently being worked through, but it's been delayed on a couple	√				The next version of the Asset Management Plan will be informed by on-going work to identify opportunities for the future	Assistant Director, Commercial Property	31/12/23

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172			of occasions due to the pandemic and then the political and organisational changes the Council has gone through over the last few years. An up-to-date asset management plan needs to be aligned with the capital programme and longer-term finance planning to ensure asset need is aligned to financial sustainability, including future revenue budgets and identified savings.					management and rationalisation of our property portfolio to deliver financial efficiencies by reducing the financial burden of maintaining the property portfolio and align assets to future business need. Other inputs into the Asset Management Plan will be the Executive decisions of September 2023 which (1) identified WBC owned sites to be promoted for development to the Local Plan and (2) agreed in principle changes to the Council's own office accommodation. Taking into account these inputs, the next version of the Asset Management Plan will be in place for 01 April 2024.		
8	While equity is a relatively recent addition to the concept of value for money, there are nevertheless things that the authority could do to ensure that its services are accessible to all those who could benefit from them.	Area for Improvement (Medium)	The Revenues Business Case template does not contain a specific section for Equality Impact Considerations.	√				All service changes require the appropriate equalities assessment – this will be included in specific service reports and is also covered both as a blanket review and individually in the	Assistant Director of Finance	31/5/23

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173								<p>MTFP and budget setting. We will consider how we further include information in the business case document itself.</p> <p>The Equalities team are sighted on all proposed bids, and as those are and have been taken forward they will support equalities input. This is part of a wider engagement across the MTFP process which as last year will result in a specific equalities update as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan</p>		
9	Progress against the action plans will not be monitored and thus agreed actions may not be implemented.	Area for Improvement (Medium)	There is no action plan, that includes target dates and responsible officer in place to record and monitor the areas of improvement and enhancement that are detailed in the FM self-assessment. This should include target dates and responsible officers.	√				<p>This initial assessment against the code will inform and set an ongoing improvement plan, which will be monitored and reported appropriately.</p> <p>This report (to Audit Committee) provides an update on actions and overall rating. Actions are progressing steadily and those will delays have appropriate revised plans in place</p>	Assistant Director of Finance	31/3/23

