

Improvement Plan

Completed/in place
On track
Not started

Strategic Direction				
Outcome: Establish a clear strategic direction and values for the Council, providing a basis for performance management and continuous improvement				
Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Para	Owner
1. Coordinate all improvement activity relating to the themes of this Corporate Improvement Plan, including all SOLACE report's recommendations.	1.1 Draft an improvement plan, for which the Chief Executive and CMB will be accountable.	Completed	6.2, 6.8	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	1.2 Corporate Governance and Standards Committee to scrutinise the Plan and Full Council to adopt plan, with progress reported to Council six monthly for three years.	CGS Committee 15 May Full Council 13 June	6.8	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	1.3 Appoint a Head of Business Improvement to lead on developing and coordinating actions at pace to deliver the plan.	Joining 13 May	6.8	Head of Business Improvement, Laura Froshaug
2. Develop a corporate approach to continuous improvement to ensure it is resourced and treated as business as usual by all services.	2.1 Appoint an Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel to provide a critical friend function.	Completed, subject to council agreement	6.9	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	2.2 Carry out an initial restructure of JMT to address governance and finance capacity and capability.	Completed	4.4, 7.14	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	2.3 Propose new structures to be agreed by Executive as part of 2025/26 Budget process following options appraisal of capacity and capability.	Budget to be approved February 2025	4.4, 7.14	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	2.4 Arrange a peer review for 2025/26	Agreed with LGA that a Peer Review will take place in May 2025	6.3	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	2.5 Carry out peer review	May 2025	6.3	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	2.6 Create a refreshed Annual Governance Statement template to ensure it is used as an improvement document. Provide training for staff developing the statement.	August 2024	6.4	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	2.7 Annual Governance Statement to be prepared by Finance, consulted on with Executive and O&S and owned by CMB, prior to formally being taken to Corporate Governance and Standards Committee for adoption and review mid-year.	Draft AGS by September 2024	6.4	Statutory officers: Richard Bates, Susan Sale, Pedro Wrobel
3. Produce and embed a strategic framework (including strategies, policies, risk and performance management approaches) and set of values that articulate the Council's vision and priorities, and provide a	3.1 Develop and publish corporate strategy	Strategy to go to: O&S on 4 June Executive on 11 July Full Council on 23 July	7.13i 7.13ii	Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor
	3.2 Develop and publish corporate values	Adopt May 2024	7.13iii, 9.12	Executive Head of Organisational

golden thread through service delivery and performance management				Development, Robin Taylor
	3.3 Communicate the new strategy, values, challenges of the Council and the Improvement Plan.	To be completed by the end of July 2024	7.16	Executive Head Communications and Customer Service, Nicola Haymes
	3.4 Review the range of strategies and policies, identify gaps, clarify timescales and ensure resources in place, starting with people strategy, IT strategy and procurement strategy.	Kick off review July 2024	7.15	Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor
Value for money				
Outcome: Ensure we provide the best value for money by embedding effective finance practices with sufficient capacity, and alignment between the organisation's priorities and its use of resources, including procurement and contract management.				
Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Para	Owner
4. Establish and embed effective finance and budget policies and procedures with sufficient permanent capacity and resource to create accountability of budget holders.	4.1 Redesignate the S151 officer as a Strategic Director, reporting to the Chief Executive.	Completed	7.4	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	4.2 Appoint a permanent Section 151 Officer, reporting directly to the Chief Executive	Completed	7.3	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	4.3 Revised and implement financial and budget policies and procedures for consistency and clear ownership, with a clear plan for regular review.	Completed	7.5 10.3 10.11	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	4.4 Ensure capacity and capability of the finance team through recruitment of permanent staff. Recruitment of permanent staff launched, to replace some of the interims.	Ongoing	10.11	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	4.5 Finalise the Budget book and implement to improve finance knowledge and ensure ownership by the budget holders. Relaunch Budget monitoring reporting processes. Finalise all budgets and ensure sign off by s151 officer.	Budget book issued Expenditure report to be published May 2024	10.3 10.11	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	4.6 Implement improved budget planning and processes that are documented and reviewed regularly.	Completed and ongoing	10.3 10.11	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	4.7 Regular review of approved and provisional capital programme to ensure continued relevance and prioritisation of spend	First iteration completed Autumn 2023, now ongoing.	10.7	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
5. Ensure accountability to the public purse through revised contract award and management controls, and alignment with the priorities of the Council.	5.1 Renew Procurement Strategy and pipelines	New Procurement Strategy in Summer 2024	7.15	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	5.2 Implement appropriate controls around contract awards and management, with robust monitoring and a new reporting regime.	New reporting being developed	8.12 9.11	Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates

	5.3 Recruit Head of Procurement.	Underway Spring 2024	7.15	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	5.4 Emphasise accountability to the public purse, and value for money, through the Corporate Values.	Corporate Values to be adopted May 2024	9.9 10.12	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	5.5 Commence Budget and MTFP processes in the summer. This will align with the Corporate Strategy, which is being developed.	MTFP review to start in July 2024	9.9 10.12	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	5.6 Put together service review programme with in-depth reviews into services which procure large contracts in order to identify any issues that might exist.	September 2024	11.10	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
6	Implement regular reviews and reporting arrangements which ensure value for money and best use of public money.	6.1 Corporate Governance and Standards Committee to consider formal action and/or a formal response to the External Auditors in respect of the Value for Money matters it raised in September 2023. The issues raised have been addressed through the Financial Recovery Plan.	Formal response to be presented at CG&S Cttee meeting June 2024	10.13 Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	6.2 Ensure regular review of arrangements for managing the property portfolio and report to committee.	Review to be commissioned Summer 2025	10.7	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates Strategic Director – Place, Dawn Hudd
Governance				
Outcome: Implement effective governance across the organisation, so decisions are made at the right level, with accountabilities and responsibilities clear. Decision-making will be open and transparent, supported by evidence and a committee system that provides constructive challenge.				
Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Para	Owner
7	Increase officer and member awareness of the Best Value Duty , and improve quality of challenge between members and officers.	7.1 Member and officer development programmes to be revised and relaunched	September 2024	6.7, 8.18 Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale
	7.2 Briefing session on Best Value duty to be carried out for all staff and all members	June 2024	6.7	Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale
	7.3 MO briefing note on Best Value duty will follow the briefing sessions.	June 2024	6.7	Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale
	7.4 Finance training to be provided to all members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee in advance of budget scrutiny	January 2025	9.3	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
8	Ensure decision-making happens in the right places with clear accountability .	8.1 Review and update the Council's constitution through JCRG, underpinned by a programme of training, followed by regular monitoring. (The Joint Constitutions Review Group is in operation, reviewing and updating the constitutions.)	Complete Constitution review by September 2025	9.13 Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale

	8.2 Joint Constitutions Review Group to include review of scheme of delegations, followed by regular review of schemes of delegation and decision-making protocols.	June 2024	8.20	Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale
	8.3 Ensure process of monitoring the exercise of officers' delegations.	Develop process by July 2024	8.12	Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale
	8.5 Ensure that all decisions are evidenced and recorded following good principles of public law. The development of the new Corporate Values emphasises the importance of evidence-based decisions, and cost-benefit analysis to deliver value for money.	Corporate Values adopted May 2024	9.14	Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	8.5 Implement revised and ongoing member and officer development programmes, training for officers on decision-making. Review capacity and training to ensure cost-benefit analyses underpin decisions.	Development programme relaunch September 2024	6.7	Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale
	8.6 Implement regular meetings of statutory officers with appropriate agendas and minutes, focusing on strategic issues, performance and risks, rather than on operational matters, including regular meetings with external auditors.	Completed	8.7 8.9	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	8.7 Officer decision-making will be reviewed to ensure decisions are made at the right level, with a decision hierarchy, compatible terms of reference, agendas and minutes.	Completion September 2024	8.19i 8.8	Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale
9 Undertake the Governance Work Programme to revise the constitution and ensure the Council uses best practice governance processes and procedures .	9.1 Reviewed Council Procedure Rules to be adopted	Completed	7.15	Strategic Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale
	9.2 Review the way Committees operate and plan their work, to ensure that council services are appropriately scrutinised.	Ongoing (see below)	8.17i 8.3 8.4	Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale
	9.3 Review terms of reference of all Committees	May 2025	8.17	
	9.4 Review matters reserved to full Council and local choice functions	May 2025	8.17i	
	9.5 Give consideration to a dedicated Committee to be responsible for the statutory audit function of the Council	May 2025	8.17iii	
	9.6 Review operation of Executive, including agenda planning and decision-making	May 2025	8.17i 8.3	
	9.7 Review the way the Executive operates through the Executive Procedure Rules, bring the protocol to Full Council	May 2025	8.17i	
	9.8 Review the effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny function, considering abolishing the Executive Advisory Boards and creating an additional Overview & Scrutiny Committee.	Underway May 2024	8.17ii 8.4	
	9.9 Review the arrangements and operation of the Executive Shareholder and Trustee committee to ensure good governance practice, and that the Committee has oversight and responsibility for the Council's shareholder relationships.	January 2025	10.14	
Culture Outcome: Embed a public service culture, outward-facing, innovative, building partnerships, listening to and working with our communities and businesses to deliver effective services that are value for money				
Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Para	Owner

10 Embed a positive culture of sharing information , whilst respecting the duty of confidentiality. We listen and respond to colleagues, residents and businesses.	10.1 Review, adopt and promote new whistleblowing policy.	Completed January 2024	8.13	Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale
	10.2 Review officer code of conduct and HR policies.	Review officer code of conduct April – Jun 2024 and Communicate to all staff by Summer 2024 Kick off review of all key HR policies Summer 2024	8.19iii 8.13 8.14	Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor
	10.3 Training for all of JMT by HR specialist on how to conduct employment investigations.	Summer 2024		Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor
	10.4 Increase and improve communication between services, colleagues and stakeholders. Establish new weekly staff engagement forum has been to encourage a more open, collaborative culture.	Ongoing Complete	9.8	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	10.5 Ensure CMB explicitly takes a more open approach, including Member briefings on contentious issues, supported by clear confidentiality duty. All-Member briefing in May 2024 to take Members through this report and improvement plan.	Ongoing All-member briefing May 2024	9.8	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	10.6 Briefing for members and councillors on exempt and confidential information	Summer 2024	9.4	Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services, Susan Sale
	10.7 Share this report with Waverley Borough Council to discuss implications with WBC Members. Report shared with WBC, and members briefed.	Report shared with WBC executive, WBC group leaders briefed, and will go to the Joint Governance Committee in June	4.4 12.14	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
11 Embrace opportunities for innovative working , including through partnerships .	11.1 Waverley Borough Council to consider carrying out a similar review.	WBC have commissioned a review from SOLACE, date to be confirmed.	12.14	Chief Executive, Pedro Wrobel
	11.2 Establish effectiveness of the collaborative working arrangements, including benefits. (£700k of financial savings delivered so far, with an additional £400k between both authorities budgeted for 24/25.)	Full cost benefit analysis of collaboration to be produced over Summer 2024	12.11 12.5	Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	11.3 Review the: aims; short and long term priorities; programme governance arrangements; and current and future resourcing, of the Transformation and Collaboration Programme.	July 2024	11.12 12.11 12.15	Executive Head of Organisational

			12.8 10.9	Development, Robin Taylor Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	11.4 Develop a plan for spend on the Transformation and Collaboration Programme to access flexible use of capital receipts regime.	May 2024	10.9 11.12	Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	11.5 Undertake a gap analysis between revised Transformation and Collaboration Programme and current resource and capability levels.	July 2024	12.15 12.8 10.9 11.12	Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor
Service delivery				
Outcome: Ensure effective service delivery, focused on achieving the right outcomes for residents and businesses, and supported by an effective performance reporting, risk-management, monitoring and audit regime				
Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Para	Owner
12 Review current arrangements for service delivery , ensuring the right processes are achieving the right outcomes.	12.1 Review the operation of the generic back-office team handling a range of different processes, and its relationship with front line services.	Autumn 2024	11.11	Executive Head of Communications and Customer Service, Nicola Haymes
13 Ensure effective service delivery through monitoring, reporting, management and auditing of performance and risks , so that relevant service risks and outcomes are identified and measured, KPIs are strategically aligned, risks are analysed and mitigated and areas of underperformance are addressed. Ensure that performance and risk frameworks are meaningful and visible to Members.	13.1 Review internal audit plan quarterly as risks and issues emerge to ensure a more robust plan and review process	IA Plan reviewed May 2024. Quarterly	8.15	Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
	13.2 Review performance and risk management frameworks to ensure there is a clear golden thread between strategic goals and performance monitoring. Ensure regular performance monitoring, ensure it is visible and informs decision-making.	July 2024	8.10	CMB and Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor
	13.3 Promote the existing Performance Agreement Process (PAM), guidance and documentation. Review PAM process in line with the newly developed corporate strategy and values once those are agreed and published.	Promote PAMs April – Align with strategy and values Summer 2024.	8.11 8.19ii	Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor
	13.4 Revise quarterly performance reporting format with changes to format of risk registers to include high level Red, Amber, Green dashboard and quarter-to-quarter direction of travel.	May 2024	8.19ii 8.10 8.11	Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor
	13.5 Corporate risk register to be reviewed and updated by CMB and Executive Head of Organisational Development on a quarterly basis.	Completed 26 March 2024. Quarterly reviews will now take place.	8.10	CMB and Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor
	13.6 Ensure service risks are reviewed by JMT members at quarterly risk management group meetings, with any key matters escalated to CMB.	Quarterly reviews by JMT	8.10	Executive Head of Organisational

				Development, Robin Taylor
	13.7 Corporate and enterprise portfolio risk registers to be reviewed at least quarterly by CMB.	Quarterly review by CMB	8.10	CMB
	13.8 Implement a system for the consistent design and approval of service plans and their associated budgets, providing clear accountability and reflecting the scheme of delegations approved by the Council. Revised service plan design with section for budgets, awaiting JMT approval.	New service plan design and finalise documents July 2024	8.11 11.9 10.3	Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor
	13.9 Continue collaborative working between Finance and Organisational Development to produce service plans with accurate budget information	New service plan design and finalise documents July 2024	8.11 11.9	Executive Head of Organisational Development, Robin Taylor Strategic Director of Finance (S151), Richard Bates
Housing				
Outcome: Ensure that housing services are effective, value for money, and recognise the vital importance of providing a safe and secure home				
Objectives	Actions and status	By when?	SOLACE Para	Owner
14 Ensure robust governance and assurance controls are in place for Housing Services	14.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive action plan to address the findings and recommendations of the SOLACE governance review of housing	Completed	Hsg review	Strategic Director Housing & Environment, Julian Higson
15 Ensure that landlord services are compliant with legislative requirements, including building safety and the four Consumer Standards	15.1 Commission an external expert assessment against the new Consumer Standards, to include a gap analysis and recommendations for action	Commissioned	Hsg Review	Executive Head of Housing, Annalisa Howson
16 Deliver high quality value for money housing services	16.1 Implement a transformation programme for housing services to achieve best in sector outcomes for residents, building on the findings of the SOLACE review and external assessment.	July 2024		Strategic Director of Housing & Environment, Julian Higson