



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025

Executive summary

Manchester City Council (“the Council”) operates in a complex financial, policy and legislative environment, where the role, responsibilities and funding models of local government continue to be in a period of rapid transition.

Alongside its partners and residents, the Council continues to deliver an ambitious vision for the city, Our Manchester. In the past year, the Council has prepared its next ten-year plan - Our Manchester 2025-2035 - which will tackle systemic inequalities in health, skills and opportunity.

The Council has a legal responsibility to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including systems of internal control. This Annual Governance Statement (AGS) outlines its responsibilities under the framework and evidence supporting its delivery. The changes taking place in our city present both opportunities and challenges. In response, the Council continues to engage in a broad programme of system-wide innovation and reform work so that it can maintain services for residents which are efficient, effective and deliver value for money using available resources. This document explains the governance mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate oversight of this work.

Opinion: After conducting this review, the Council has assurance that its governance arrangements and systems of control are robust and reflect the principles of the Code of Corporate Governance.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement provides an overview of how the Council's governance arrangements operate, including how they are reviewed annually to ensure they remain effective. Governance comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the Council is directed and controlled, and through which it is accountable to, engages with and leads the community.
- 1.2 Sections 2 and 3 outline the scope of the AGS and how it is aligned to the Council's Code of Corporate Governance framework. Section 4 provides evidence against the principles contained in the Code of Corporate Governance. Section 5 gives a summary of how governance arrangements are monitored through the year. In Section 6, a summary of significant governance challenges facing the Council is given, alongside an explanation of what actions have been taken to bring about required improvements, and what work is still to be done. This provides transparency and gives assurance that the Council is committed to continuously improve the way in which it functions. Section 7 provides a list of identified governance challenges for the forthcoming year. More detail on particular topics can be accessed via hyperlinks, which are underlined throughout the document.
- 1.3 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out its priority actions for delivering the strategy for the city. Key challenges for the Council and the city include tackling health inequalities and supporting residents who are impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. Effective leadership and governance of the response to these challenges is critical.
- 1.4 Ongoing changes to the Integrated Care System (ICS) arrangements at Greater Manchester level continue to drive the next phase of health and social care integration. The operating model for Manchester's health and social care integration is key to enabling further progress towards achievement of the city's priorities. These ambitions are for the city to significantly improve health outcomes, tackle the wider determinants of health inequalities and develop a financially and clinically sustainable system.
- 1.5 In this Annual Governance Statement (AGS), governance structures, evidence and challenges are only referenced as they relate to the Council. However, partners may be involved in the development and implementation of the strategies and partnerships referenced in this governance framework, as we work together to achieve the ambitions set out in the Our Manchester Strategy. These partners will also retain their own independent governance frameworks and risk assurance, which are not included here.

2. Scope of Responsibility

- 2.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. It is also responsible for ensuring that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised.
- 2.2 In discharging these responsibilities, the Council must put in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Council first adopted a Code of Corporate Governance in 2008, which was most recently updated in November 2024. The Code of Corporate Governance sets out the Council's governance standards. These standards ensure the Council is doing the right things, in the right way, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest, and accountable manner. Some of these standards are required by law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose.
- 2.3 The Council's approach to the production of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is reviewed annually to ensure that it remains consistent with the principles of the most recent Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (CIPFA/SOLACE) Joint Framework for delivering good governance in local government. CIPFA issued an update to the Framework in 2016, which has informed the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) from 2016/17 onwards. Additionally, the Local Government Association's Improvement and Assurance Framework from 2024 states that 'All members have a responsibility to oversee effective governance, and all officers have a duty to comply with good governance and provide information to demonstrate that compliance.'
- 2.4 The AGS explains how the Council has complied with the Code of Corporate Governance. The AGS also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 regulation 6(1), which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an Annual Governance Statement.

3. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

- 3.1 Corporate governance provides structure for how organisations direct and control what they do. The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the Council is directed and controlled, and through which it is accountable to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of the city's strategic objectives as set out in the Our Manchester Strategy, and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.
- 3.2 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out the Council's contribution to the Our Manchester vision. The priorities in the Our Manchester Strategy and our Corporate Plan are underpinned by the five Our Manchester behaviours:
- We are proud and passionate about Manchester
 - We take time to listen and understand
 - We own it and are not afraid to try new things
 - We work together and trust each other
 - We show that we value our differences and treat people fairly
- 3.3 The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve the Council's aims and objectives, and therefore cannot provide absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control identifies and prioritises risks, evaluates the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and aims to manage them efficiently, effectively, and economically.

4. The Governance Framework

- 4.1 The Council operates to a Code of Corporate Governance. The Code is updated when appropriate to ensure it reflects the Council's current governance arrangements. It was most recently updated in 2024 and reviewed by Audit Committee in 2025.
- 4.2 There are seven core principles of good governance in the public sector, which are incorporated into the Council's Code and are set out below (principles 'A' through to 'G'). Each core governance principle has a set of sub-principles beneath it. This section of the AGS lists key examples of how the Council has met the commitments set out in the Code.
- 4.3 The Council has a broad range of strategies and policies in place, and therefore this is not intended to be an exhaustive list. There is a particular focus in this statement on 'first tier' strategies which deliver on the five key themes of the current Our Manchester Strategy. More detail about particular areas of interest can be found on the Council's website manchester.gov.uk. The updated Our Manchester Strategy 2025-2035, launched in April 2025 and structured around 12 priorities for the city, will be referenced in future Annual Governance Statements.

Principle A - Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

A1 - Behaving with Integrity

- The Council's 'Our Manchester' approach includes five behaviours that demonstrate the attitude and ways of working to achieve the Our Manchester Strategy:
 - We are proud and passionate about Manchester
 - We take time to listen and understand
 - We own it and are not afraid to try new things
 - We work together and trust each other
 - We show that we value our differences and treat people fairlyThese behaviours represent how we should do things, how we should treat others, what we should say, and how we should say it. Council officers also comply with a Code of Conduct, annual declaration of interest requirements and gifts and hospitality records.
- We're prioritising workforce equality and diversity by creating a more inclusive Council, through delivering the Workforce Strategy.
 - [Workforce Strategy Update - November 2024](#)
- The Council maintains clear policies and arrangements in respect of counter-fraud and anti-corruption. These are the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Anti-Money Laundering Policy and the Anti-Bribery Policy.

A2 - Demonstrating Strong Commitment to Ethical Values

The Standards Committee champion high standards of ethical governance from elected members and the Council as a whole.

- A summary of its work is included in its Annual Report
 - The Members Code of Conduct is available on the Standards Committee webpage
 - As reported in the most recent Annual Report to Standards Committee, the number of complaints about members of the Council received during the annual reporting period ending 31 January 2025 was nine. This was a similar figure to that for the preceding reporting period ending 31 January 2024 (eight complaints) and substantially less than that for the reporting period ending 31 January 2023 (seventeen complaints). The low number of complaints received about members evidences the high level of compliance with the Members' Code of Conduct.
- The Procurement Act 2023 is now in force; it sets new legislative requirements for how public authorities procure and contract.
 - Social Value and Ethical Procurement report to Executive, July 2024

A3 - Respecting the Rule of Law

- The Council's City Solicitor undertakes the role of Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer ensures that Council decisions are taken in a lawful and fair way, correct procedures are followed, and that all applicable laws and regulations are complied with. The City Solicitor is also responsible for reporting any actual or potential breaches of the law or maladministration to the full Council and/or to the Executive, and for ensuring that procedures for recording and reporting key decisions are operating effectively.
 - Our Constitution - article 12.3(b)
- The Chief Finance Officer (City Treasurer) has statutory reporting duties in respect of unlawful and financially imprudent decision making.
 - Our Constitution - article 12.4(a).
- The Council ensures that it complies with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government (2016) and gives due regard to the SOLACE/CIPFA/Lawyers in Local Government Code of Practice on Good Governance for Local Authority Statutory Officers (2024).

Principle B - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

B1 - Ensuring Openness

- The Council's website is set out in a clear and easily accessible way, using infographics and plain language. The information which residents use most, such as about council tax, benefits or waste and recycling, can be accessed quickly and easily from the main page. Design of the site has considered and incorporated understanding of the needs of people with accessibility

requirements and is partially compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.2 AA standard.

- Manchester City Council website
- Website accessibility statement
- All Council and Committee meetings are held in public (other than in limited circumstances where consideration of confidential or exempt information means that the public are excluded), with each agenda and supporting reports available on the Council's website, as well as minutes. Live-streamed webcasts of Council, Executive and Scrutiny committee meetings are available online, as well as in an archive which can be accessed on-demand.
 - Meeting agendas and reports
 - Webcasts of Council and Committee meetings
 - Descriptions of planned decisions can be found on the Register of Key Decisions

B2 - Engaging Comprehensively with Institutional Stakeholders

- The Our Manchester Forum supports development of effective relationships across leaders of the city's key private, public, voluntary and community sector organisations and our residents. The Forum benefits the city by driving forward the priorities set out in the Our Manchester Strategy to put Manchester in the top-flight of world class cities by 2025.
 - Our Manchester Forum Information - The Manchester Partnership
- The Council maintains a list of major partnerships in a Register of Significant Partnerships. This contains an assessment of the level of assurance for the governance arrangements of each partnership, shining a light on areas where improvements may be required so that these can then be addressed.
 - Register of Significant Partnerships 2024
- The Council is a party to various companies, Joint Ventures and charities and ensures effective monitoring via an annual report on activities delivered through these arrangements to the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee.
 - Annual Commercial Activity, Investments and Governance report

B3 - Engaging with Individual Citizens and Service Users Effectively

- The Council ensures that community engagement is an integral part of how we work with residents and communities. Public consultation continues to be an integral part of the annual budget-setting process. Engagement activity has been key in the development of recent plans and strategies, for example:
 - Major public engagement was undertaken to develop the new Our Manchester Strategy via a series of events, targeted engagement and online/in-person surveys.
 - Always Everywhere, the city's new cultural strategy, was developed this year; engagement included 1300 survey responses, over 50 meetings with stakeholders and in-depth interviews with funders, practitioners and partners.
 - Making Manchester Fairer, the city's action plan to tackle the social determinants of health inequalities, works alongside a Community

Forum and Anti-Poverty Insight Group, to ensure that resident voice is central to their work.

- Community consultation and involvement is delivered in accordance with the Campaigning Engagement Framework (CEF).
- The Council's ambition to become recognised as a UNICEF Child Friendly City will include ensuring that the voices, needs and priorities of children are an integral part of decision making processes influencing their lives.
- To promote transparency and wider engagement with Council decisions, residents can sign up for email newsletters on a variety of topics and use social media to interact with the Council.
 - E-bulletins and social media
- The Council records all complaints according to local government regulations and reports on this annually
 - 2023/24 Complaints report to Audit Committee - November 2024

Principle C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

C1 - Defining Outcomes

- The Our Manchester Strategy 2016-2025 included a new approach to working across the whole organisation and with residents, partners and other key stakeholders. The five themes for Manchester for this period were:
 - Thriving and Sustainable – vibrant with a cutting-edge economy involving and fairly rewarding all our people.
 - Highly Skilled – work-ready, well-educated young people and all residents supported to take up opportunities.
 - Progressive and Equitable – so all can thrive, with better joined-up support, care and health services.
 - Liveable and Zero-Carbon – safe, enjoyable neighbourhoods with affordable housing, zero-carbon by 2038 using green growth and design, energy, and more climate-resilience.
 - Connected – more walking, cycling and green transport, and accessible digital technology used by and working for everyone.
- The Council's annual Corporate Plan sets out the Council's contribution to the Our Manchester strategic vision. Its priorities are:
 - Inclusive economy where every resident benefits
 - Tackling climate change and create a healthy, green, socially just city where everyone can thrive
 - Advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion
 - Children and young people enjoy a safe, happy, healthy, active and successful future.
 - Improving health and wellbeing for all
 - Good quality, affordable homes
 - Inclusive communities, thriving neighbourhoods

- Well-managed Council
- The Council will help to deliver these priorities through our ways of working and by demonstrating the Our Manchester Behaviours. All services develop annual Service Plans which contribute to delivering the Corporate Plan priorities.

C2 - Sustainable Economic, Social, Equality and Environmental Benefits

- The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and developed a Climate Change Action Plan which was approved by Executive in March 2020. Quarterly reports are provided on the progress that has been made in delivering the Plan.
 - Climate Change Action Plan - Progress Report 2023/24
- Manchester is working towards UNICEF Child Friendly City status for the city, undertaking a programme that aims ensure all children have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives.
 - The Manchester Child Friendly City website
 - Progress report - March 2025
- Making Manchester Fairer is the city's action plan to tackle the social determinants of health inequalities – the preventable gaps between people with the worst health and people with the best health – over five years (2022-27), and with a view to the long-term. The plan is based on what Manchester's residents and staff from a range of organisations and agencies have told the Council in recent years, as well as the evidence of what works from research and experts on health inequalities.
 - Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan
 - Progress report - November 2024
- The Anti-Poverty Strategy draws upon evidence from residents, organisations, and national research to produce evidenced based recommendations to tackle poverty, its causes, and consequences.
 - Making Manchester Fairer: Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-2027
 - Anti-poverty budget update – December 2024
- The Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 are monitored through the annual reporting against the Public Sector Equality Duty, which focused in 2024/25 on the key areas of work undertaken to meet the Year 1 Delivery Plan for the Council's Equalities Objectives 2024-2028.
 - Public Sector Equality Duty report, March 2025
- In 2024, the Council adopted the socio-economic duty, which aims to address socio-economic inequalities through requiring services to consider these inequalities in any service change or decision-making process.
 - Formal adoption of the duty - report to Executive, October 2024
- Manchester's economic strategy, 'Investing in Success' was launched in November 2023. The strategy has five priority themes (Use investment and development to drive inclusive growth; Nurture thriving, productive and

innovative sectors; Develop world class infrastructure, places and talent; Transition to a zero carbon and resilient economy; Include more people in economic opportunity).

- Investing in Success: An Economic Strategy for Manchester
- The Housing Strategy explains how the Council will ensure provision of homes that residents want and need, while also considering the role of housing in the context of the Our Manchester Strategy, its contribution to the economic recovery of the city, and zero-carbon objectives.
 - Manchester Housing Strategy (2022-2032)
 - Progress report – July 2024
- Our Work and Skills Strategy sets out how we will use learning and employment to meet the Our Manchester Strategy vision of being a more highly skilled city, and how we will help to create a more inclusive and low-carbon economy in Manchester, where more of our residents are connected to the city's success. A public consultation on the new strategy ran until 9 May 2022.
 - Work and Skills Strategy 2022-27
 - Progress report – October 2024

Principle D - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

D1 - Determining Interventions

- Decision makers receive accurate, relevant, and timely performance and intelligence to support them with objective and rigorous analysis of options, covering intended outcomes, financial impact and associated risks informing efficient service delivery. This can take the form of regular performance reporting, or bespoke reports.
 - Executive Reports
- The Our Transformation programme has a workstream focused on Digital, Data and Insights which includes projects on data management to address data quality challenges. This will ensure all data initiatives follow a well-defined approach to enable uniformity and consistency across systems and solutions and improving insights for decision makers. A key part of this is the Resident and Business Digital Experience Programme (RBDxP).
 - RBDXP Progress update - September 2024

D2 - Planning Interventions

- The Council plans its activity at a strategic level through its budget and business planning cycle. The planning is conducted in consultation with internal and external stakeholders to ensure services delivered across different parts of the organisations and partners complement each other and avoid duplication.
 - Council Budget 2025/26
- The Council Budget and Business Plan are underpinned by individual service plans which set out the core priorities and activities for each service. The service plans also include a service improvement plan, workforce plan and

active contributions to the corporate priorities of Tackling Climate Change, Advancing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and a Place-Based approach. Service Plans were further strengthened for 2024/25 onwards with the inclusion of a Risk and Resilience section, and a section explaining how services will support work to achieve the Council's ambition to become recognised as a UNICEF Child Friendly City. Service Plans are published internally to give all staff the opportunity to understand the priorities and responsibilities of other services within the Council.

D3 - Optimising Achievement of Intended Outcomes

- The Council integrates and balances service priorities, affordability, and other resource constraints, supporting it to take into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term, including both revenue and capital spend budgets. This includes a medium-term financial plan. The report sets out the Framework for the Our Manchester Strategy and Corporate Plan priorities which provide the strategic context for the 2025/26 Budget.
 - Medium Term Financial Strategy
- The Council has also enhanced the ways it embeds social value principles and practices into procurement and commissioning processes.
 - Social Value Policy 2025

Principle E - Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

E1 - Developing the Organisation's Capacity

- The Council's Organisation Development Plan 2023-2025 (OD Plan) is the way in which we embed Our Manchester. It builds on existing work to transform the culture of the organisation to deliver against the Our Manchester Strategy. The refreshed OD plan 2023-25 is one of the four elements of the Workforce Strategy and drives work to embed the Our Manchester behaviours, focusing on leadership capabilities, supporting effective decision making, meaningful recognition and staff voice, and further work in supporting line managers with performance development.
- The Our Transformation - Enabling Success for the Council programme is reshaping how Manchester delivers services both internally and externally, by using new technologies, ways of working and new delivery models. It is an organisation-wide initiative, bringing together several programmes designed to strengthen our ability to deliver the Our Manchester Strategy.
 - Progress update - September 2024

E2 - Developing the Capability of the Organisation's Leadership and Other Individuals

- Immediately following local elections, new Council members receive an induction into the work of the Council and their role as local members, which is also open for existing members to attend. The format and content are reviewed annually with members. Members are also provided with a programme of ongoing development and training.

- Member Development and Training report 2025
- 'Our Conversation' is the Council's approach to performance and development. Developed with staff, 'Our Conversation' provides a framework for meaningful regular discussions between staff and their line manager, covering wellbeing, performance and development.
- The Council asks staff to complete an annual gauge of employee satisfaction via the Staff Survey. Results from this are disseminated to heads of service for information and action planning.
- The Council delivers a comprehensive programme of leadership and management development, which all managers can access. Progress and support with a manager's development is monitored through the Our Conversation process. The programme is underpinned by the provision of a Manager's Hub on the intranet, together with a Good Manager's Guide. Together these provide a comprehensive resource for managers.
- The Council is committed to promoting the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the workforce through both specific interventions and opportunities and as a central part of the role of all managers, through delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The strategy is one of the four elements of the overall Workforce Strategy. There is a dedicated intranet page with a wide range of support and guidance for staff and their managers covering a wide range of health and wellbeing topics and a 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme (phone line) providing a range of support.

Principle F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

F1 – Managing Risk

- The Council operates a risk management framework that aids decision making in pursuit of the organisation's strategic objectives, protects the Council's reputation and other assets and is compliant with statutory and regulatory obligations. The Corporate Risk Register is part of this framework and is an articulation of the key risks impacting the Council. It is used to inform decision making, provide assurance over actions being taken to manage key risks and to inform directorate level risk management planning and mitigation activities.
 - Risks are reported publicly in the annual Corporate Risk Register.
- In early 2024, the Council published a revised Risk Management Strategy which aims to strengthen the review process, involve the use of risk appetite statements and introduce new formats of reporting for 2024/25 onwards. Progress and risk updates are provided to CMT and Audit Committee throughout the year.
- Staff are appropriately trained to ensure that they manage risk effectively using appropriate methodologies and aligned approaches, for example for

Manchester Local Care Organisation. Safeguarding risks are managed in line with professional standards.

F2 – Managing Performance

- The Council puts in place Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor service delivery whether services are internal or through external providers. A Corporate Plan Monitor report is provided to Corporate Management Team (CMT) four times a year. This brings together analysis of performance, finance, Corporate Plan priority delivery highlights, and risk - to support effective resource allocation, and to shine a light on any challenges so that they can be addressed.

F3 – Effective Overview and Scrutiny

- The Council has six Scrutiny Committees, which hold decision makers to account and play a key role in ensuring that public services are delivered in the way that residents want. The agenda, reports and minutes are publicly available on the Council's website
 - [Scrutiny Committees information](#)

F4 – Robust Internal Control

- The Council has robust internal control processes in place, which support the achievement of its objectives while managing risks. The Council's approach is set out in detail in both the latest Annual Corporate Risk Management report, and its Internal Audit Plan.
 - [Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 \(Item 11\)](#)
 - [Internal Audit Assurance Update – February 2025](#)
- The Council has an Audit Committee, in line with CIPFA's 'Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police (2018)', which provides an independent and high-level resource to support good governance and strong public financial management. The Committee has two Independent Co-opted Members and provides a mechanism for effective assurance regarding risk management and the internal control environment.
 - [Audit Committee webpage](#)
- The Council maintains clear policies and arrangements in respect of counter fraud and anti-corruption. These are the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy; Whistleblowing Policy; Anti Money Laundering Policy and the Anti Bribery Policy.

F5 – Managing Data

- The processing of personal data is essential to many of the services and functions carried out by local authorities. The Council complies with data protection legislation, which includes UK GDPR (United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). This will ensure that such processing is carried out fairly, lawfully, and transparently.
 - [Data Protection](#)
- The Council reviews and supplement its policies, keeping its processing activities under review, to ensure they remain consistent with the law, and with

any compliance advice and codes of practice issued from time to time by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

- Corporate Data Management policy
- The Council ensures that officers handling personal data are trained to an appropriate level in the use and control of personal data. It is made clear that all staff and members are personally accountable for using the Council's information responsibly and appropriately. All staff must regularly undertake protecting information and cyber safety e-learning training, and this forms part of the induction process for new staff. Data protection forms part of the training offer for existing members to access. It is also part of the induction programme for new members and is included in the Council's new starters induction pack.
- Information Governance is overseen by the Corporate Information Assurance and Risk Group (CIARG) chaired by the City Solicitor who is the Senior Information Risk Officer for the Council (SIRO).
- The Council makes information available to the public via the information access regimes provided for by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018, provides individuals with various rights. The Council ensures that all valid requests from individuals to exercise those rights are dealt with as quickly as possible, and by no later than the timescales allowed in the legislation.
 - Freedom of Information
 - Environmental Information Regulations
 - Subject Access Requests

F6 – Strong Public Financial Management

- The Council's approach to Financial Management ensures that public money is safeguarded at all times, ensuring value for money. Its approach supports both long-term achievement of objectives, and shorter term financial and operational performance.
 - Medium Term Financial Strategy
- The Chief Finance Officer (City Treasurer) ensures that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, that proper financial records and accounts are kept, and oversees an effective system of internal financial control. The City Treasurer ensures well developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control including management of financial risks, systems and processes. The Constitution (Part 5) details the financial regulations which underpin the financial arrangements.
 - Our Constitution (Part 5)
- The Financial Management Code (FM Code) sets out the standards of financial management expected for local authorities and is designed to support good practice and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. The FM Code was launched in 2019, with the first full year of compliance being 2021/22. Information about the financial resilience

assessment which the Council has carried out is set out in Section 5 of this AGS.

- Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires that when a local authority is making its budget calculations, the Chief Finance Officer of the authority must report to the Council on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
 - Medium Term Financial Strategy
- The performance and outcomes delivered through the companies, Joint Ventures and charities which the Council is a party to is monitored through the Commercial Board and Shareholder Panel (both chaired by the City Treasurer). The Council's loan and equity investments are also tracked through these routes to ensure that expected returns and repayments are in line with contractual agreements and forecasts.
 - Commercial Activity, Investments and Governance Update - Feb 2025
 - The Register of Significant Partnerships provides additional assurance through the detailed review of a number of entities and is reported to Audit Committee every six months.
- CIPFA's Prudential Code of Practice and Treasury Management Code of Practice sets out the risk framework through which the Council manages its balance sheet and makes capital investment decisions. Alongside the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government guidance on minimum revenue provision, and the guidance on borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) which seeks to limit borrowing solely for yield, the Council has a strong regulatory framework that it adheres to. The Capital Strategy and capital approval process detail the approach to decision making on capital investments, and the Treasury Management Strategy details the approach for debt management and cash investing, both of which contribute to strong, ongoing financial management of the Council's balance sheet.
 - Capital Strategy and Budget 2024/25 to 2026/27
 - Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 (Item 26)

Principle G - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

G1 – Implementing Good Practice in Transparency

- The Council follows the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, which includes requirements and recommendations for local authorities to publish certain types of data.
 - Local Government Transparency Code
- The Council's website is set out in a clear and easily accessible way, using infographics and plain language. Information on expenditure, performance and decision-making is sited together in one place and can be accessed quickly and easily from the homepage.
 - Manchester City Council website

G2 – Implementing Good Practices in Reporting

- The Council produces regular updates on the city’s progress towards its vision and priorities in the Our Manchester Strategy.
 - Our Manchester Progress Update
- An Integrated Monitoring and Corporate Plan report is provided to Corporate Management Team (CMT) four times a year. This brings together analysis of performance, finance, Corporate Plan delivery highlights and risk - to support effective resource allocation, and to shine a light on any challenges so that they can be addressed.
- A Public Sector Equality Duty report for the year was taken to Communities and Equality Scrutiny Committee in March 2025.
 - Public Sector Equality Duty report - March 2025

G3 - Assurance and Effective Accountability

- The Council welcomes peer challenge, internal and external review and audit, and inspections from regulatory bodies and gives thorough consideration to arising recommendations.
- The outcome letter of the Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services for Manchester was published on the Ofsted website in May 2022. This grades the overall effectiveness of children’s services as ‘Good’. The report notes that services for children in Manchester have significantly improved since the last inspection in 2017, and that many areas of service provide consistent practice for most children and their families. This includes when children first need support, come into care, and leave care.
 - Inspection of Manchester local authority children’s services
- The Council’s annual Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman performance report is presented to the Executive.
 - 2023/24 performance report
- A Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) in respect of Serious Youth Violence took place in September and October 2023. The inspection was led by Ofsted and involved inspectors from CQC (Health and Care), Ofsted (Schools and Social Care), HMPI (Youth Justice) and HMICFRS (Police, Fire and Rescue). The inspection identified the governance arrangements for Serious Violence in the city to be a strength and Inspectors described the work of Manchester’s Complex Safeguarding Hub as strong and effective. The Joint Targeted Area Inspection outcome report and resulting action plan were taken to Executive in February 2024.
- The Council monitors the implementation of internal and external audit recommendations. Assurance reports are presented to Audit Committee and Mazars (the Council’s external auditors), summarising the Council’s performance in implementing recommendations effectively and within agreed timescales.
 - Audit Committee meetings

- Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) set out the standards for internal audit and have been adopted by the Council. This process includes the development of an Emergent Audit Plan designed to invite comment from management and the Audit Committee. New global standards will be adopted in 2025/26.
- The Council requested a Corporate Peer Review from the Local Government Association (LGA) which took place from 30 November to 3 December 2021. The overall feedback from the peer reviewers was very positive for both the Council and the city. A further progress review was undertaken in September 2022 commending the progress made and recognising that the Council “embraces challenge and sector-led improvement”
 - Manchester City Council Peer Review and Action Plan

5. Annual Review of the Governance Framework's Effectiveness

- 5.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the systems of internal control. *Opinion: After conducting this review, the Council has assurance that its governance arrangements and systems of control are robust and reflect the principles of the Code of Corporate Governance.*
- 5.2 The effectiveness of governance arrangements is monitored and evaluated throughout the year, with activity undertaken including:
- **Corporate Management Team (CMT).** Responsibility for governance and internal control lies with the Chief Executive and the Corporate Management Team (CMT), which meets on a weekly basis to steer the organisation's activity.
 - **Scrutiny and challenge by Council and its Committees.** The Council has four bodies responsible for monitoring and reviewing the Council's governance:
 - **The Executive** - Proposes the budget and policy framework to Council and makes decisions on resources and priorities relating to the budget and policy framework.
 - **Audit Committee** - Approves the Council's Annual Accounts, oversees External Audit activity and oversees the effectiveness of the Council's Governance, risk management and internal control arrangements.
 - **Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee** - Considers the implications of financial decisions and changes to corporate, partnership and city region governance arrangements.
 - **Standards Committee** - Promotes high standards of ethical conduct, advising on the revision of the Codes of Corporate Governance and Conduct for members.
 - **Consideration of evidence sources** to identify the Council's key governance challenges looking ahead to 2025/26. These sources include:
 - Responses to an annual online governance questionnaire from each service. This provides a self-assessment of compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance. In 2024/25, the questionnaire was sent to 52 different service areas, and the response rate was 100%.
 - Consideration of risks identified in the Corporate Risk Register.
 - Significant governance challenges in partnerships as identified by the Council's Register of Significant Partnerships assessment process.
 - Emergent challenges identified by the work of Internal Audit.
 - A meeting of key Senior Officers with responsibility for governance, to identify and discuss emerging governance issues.
 - Where appropriate, carrying forward elements of action points from 2024/25 if substantial further challenges remain, and ongoing monitoring is required.
 - **Head of Audit and Risk Management Annual Opinion 2024/25.** In terms of the year to March 2025, the Assistant Director of Audit and Risk Management will provide an assurance level on the Council's governance,

risk, and control framework. The assurance level and full opinion detail will be set out in the Annual Audit Opinion 2024/25 report, which will be taken to Audit Committee in June 2025.

- **External Auditor’s Review of the Effectiveness of Governance Arrangements.** The Council’s external auditor is Mazars. They submit progress reports and their Annual Audit Letter to Audit Committee.
- **CIPFA Financial Management Code 2019 (FM Code).** The Council has carried out a credible and transparent financial resilience assessment. This includes consideration of the CIPFA Financial Resilience Index. The results show the Council to be relatively well placed on earmarked reserves and in a reasonably comfortable mid position on the others. The only ratio classed as high risk relates to the low council tax base, which is well understood. This is mitigated by attempts to grow other income streams and highlighting the importance of council tax equalisation in all funding discussions and consultation with the government. The index is not intended to represent the entire story on the financial sustainability of a Local Authority but provides some indicators of potential risk. In addition, the Chief Finance Officer has examined the major assumptions used within the budget calculations and associated risks. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy have been updated to reflect the ongoing impact of the financial pressures faced in the current year.
- **Annual Report of the Standards Committee.** The Council is committed to promoting the highest standards of conduct by members and has adopted a Code of Conduct for all members as part of its Constitution. The Annual Report of the Standards Committee is one of the Council’s sources of governance assurance.
- **Governance of Significant Partnerships.** Assurance relating to governance arrangements of the Council’s significant partnerships is recorded on the Register of Significant Partnerships. Each partnership is self-assessed annually to provide assurance that effective arrangements are in place, and to highlight any governance challenges which need to be addressed.
- **Commercial Governance.** The Council has oversight and assurance for governance in relation to companies, Joint Ventures, Charities, loans and equity investments it is party to via the Commercial Board and Shareholder Panel. Regular performance reporting is reviewed via these forums to ensure that the expected governance standards are met.

6. Addressing the Council's Governance Challenges in 2024/25

This section provides a concise high-level summary of strategic actions taken to address the Council's governance challenges for the 2024/25 financial year, and the arrangements for oversight of delivery. These seven challenges were set out in the Action Plan at the end of the 2023/24 AGS. Through the year, relevant progress updates are provided to Project and Programme Boards, and reports and information are taken to Committees.

Action 1 - Further development of Integrated Care arrangements for the benefit of the residents of Manchester by delivering the priorities of Manchester Partnership Board. Delivery of the Making Manchester Fairer programme including the 'kickstarter' programmes. Delivering the significant savings requirements for the 2024/25 Adult Social Care budget as part of Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO). Embedding the Achieving Better Outcomes Together (ABOT) transformation programme into Adult Social Care.

Governance of actions taken and planned

- Responsible officers (CMT): Director of Adult Social Services, City Solicitor, Director of Public Health
- Responsible officers (Directors or Heads of Service): Director of Adult Social Services, Director of Public Health
- How this is monitored: Health Scrutiny Committee

A. Integrated Care arrangements and MLCO update

Further development of Integrated Care arrangements for the benefit of the residents of Manchester by delivering the priorities of Manchester Partnership Board:

- The Section 75 agreement was refreshed and renewed in year. Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 allows partners (NHS bodies and Councils) to contribute to a common fund which can be used to commission health or social care related services. This power allows a local authority to commission health services and NHS commissioners to commission social care. It enables joint commissioning and commissioning of integrated services.

Delivering the significant savings requirements for the 2024/25 Adult Social Care budget as part of Manchester Local Care Organisation:

- A significant proportion of savings were achieved in 2024/25 (£4.887m at year-end).

Delivering the Achieving Better Outcomes Together programme in Adult Social Care:

- The ABOT programme has a bi-monthly programme board in place, as well as weekly meetings of the Senior Responsible Officers for each of its workstreams/projects.
- The Programme Board reports into the MLCO Transformation Portfolio Board, which brings together all change and transformation activity within MLCO and is chaired by the Strategic Director for Adult Social Services.

B. Making Manchester Fairer programme update

Due to the ambition and breadth of the Making Manchester Fairer Action Plan, it is essential that ownership and accountability for the plan is distributed across services and partners from across the city. The programme is accountable to Manchester's Health and Wellbeing Board and provides regular reports which focus on specific areas of the programme. Reports are also provided to Health Scrutiny Committee. Making Manchester Fairer also reports quarterly to the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT). The internal governance of the programme includes:

- The Making Manchester Fairer Task Force, made up of leaders across the system who drive delivery of each programme theme. The Task Force meets every two months to review progress, share updates, work collectively on challenges and offer feedback on proposals. Monthly highlight reports covering progress against milestones within the programme's workstreams, kickstarter programmes and delivery of the Anti-Poverty Strategy are provided.
- The quarterly Making Manchester Fairer Programme Board, established in May 2023. The Board plays a vital role in ensuring that we deliver the actions within the plan in line with our core principles of proportionate universalism and health equity. Quarterly highlight reports covering progress within all elements of the Programme are provided to the Programme Board and other stakeholders. The majority of Board members were selected following an open expression of interest process, with a focus on selecting individuals with lived experience of inequality. The Board:
 - Contributes to the strategic direction of Making Manchester Fairer and ensures implementation of the Action Plan (including Kickstarters) and the Anti-Poverty Strategy
 - Holds partners responsible for delivering the Action Plan to account
 - Reviews and scrutinises activities across the partners delivering the Action Plan to ensure that they are delivered in line with the Making Manchester Fairer principles and that our aims and objectives are achieved

A key ambition for Making Manchester Fairer is to enable communities to identify and implement solutions to address issues within their own settings. To support this, a number of approaches have been used to include people with lived experience of health inequalities, first-hand experience of discrimination and voices less traditionally heard in decision making. Care and consideration has been given to ensure that the inclusion of people with lived experience is co-ordinated, meaningful and sustained, going beyond tokenism with robust support mechanisms in place. Building on the work in the first year of the programme to recruit individuals with lived experience to the Programme Board, the focus over the recent year has been two-fold:

- Establishing the Making Manchester Fairer Community Forum to work with and support the Programme Board and to have a key role in holding partners to account. 16 Forum members work with and support the Programme Board by reviewing, questioning, and supporting the development of Making Manchester Fairer delivery plans. The Forum also supports the Programme Board to hold partners to account from a community perspective.
- Establishing the Making Manchester Fairer Anti-Poverty Insight Group to provide insight and challenge to the delivery of the Making Manchester Fairer

Anti-Poverty Strategy. This work falls within the remit of the Poverty and Debt theme.

Action 2 - Effective governance of the Housing Services Improvement Plan to ensure the Council delivers improvements to housing for tenants and meets the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator including safe housing

Governance of actions taken and planned

- Responsible officers (CMT): Strategic Director – Neighbourhoods
- Responsible officers (Directors or Heads of Service): Director of Housing Services
- How this is monitored: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee, Housing Advisory Board, Housing Board and Housing Services Improvement Board

Over the past year, colleagues have reviewed the governance of the Housing Services Improvement Plan, considering the Council's statutory obligations as a landlord under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. In essence, it is important that there is appropriate governance in place to ensure Housing Services can deliver all the requirements of the consumer regulations within the Act. The updated governance structure has been presented to Economy Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in March. Assurance is provided to:

- Housing Services Senior Leadership Team
- Housing Advisory Board
- Housing Board (now includes the remit of the Housing Services Improvement Board)
- Economy Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
- Audit Committee
- Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

To ensure compliance with the consumer regulations, a self-assessment and mock inspection has been carried out supported by external expertise. Internal Audit will review the results of the mock inspection and ascertain the assurance mechanisms and plans in place. Actions have been produced, and progress will be reported to and monitored by the governance groups above.

Action 3 - Effective updating, communication, and accessibility of key defined policies, including assurance over policy being put into practice for online and offline staff. Effectively support the continued development of manager capabilities, to ensure policies are consistently implemented and adhered to, with particular focus on strengthening risk management.

Governance of actions taken and planned

- Responsible officers (CMT): Deputy Chief Executive
- Responsible officers (Directors or Heads of Service): Director of HRODT
- How this is monitored: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Over the past year, the HRODT and Risk and Resilience teams have:

- Launched the new Risk Management Strategy; focus has been on implementing it at Corporate and Directorate level. The Risk and Resilience team offer a facilitated risk workshop, which has been taken up by some services.
- Ensured that risks are reviewed by Risk and Resilience leads during the Service Planning process. Feedback and 121 coaching is offered as and when required.
- Ensured that staff policies are reviewed every three years or where there are legislative changes. Minor changes are agreed under the authority of the Director of HRODT with Trade Union consultation where there is a contractual impact; significant changes to policy which impact on terms and conditions are agreed at Corporate Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), SMT and at Personnel Committee. Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken on significant changes to policy and equality networks are engaged in their development. Following approval at Personnel Committee, the policy changes are embedded through staff and manager communications, intranet content updates, briefings or training. All policies are available on the intranet, or via request through the HR Helpdesk.
- Provided support to managers to be as effective as possible, for example to understand and apply policies correctly. This forms part of the 'Good Manager' programme of activity. This is part of the Organisation Development Plan which is owned by SMT as part of the Council's Workforce Strategy. Work is underway to develop the Manager Accountability Framework.
- Included a brief guide to risk management in the Good Managers Guide.
- Required all new employees to attend the Corporate Induction within their probation period. New employees are also provided with the Code of Conduct and Welcome to the Council pack on joining the Council.
- Embedded relevant policies into associated training such as Recruitment and Selection and Managing of Attendance.
- Ensured that Team Talk email communications to staff feature policies on a rotation basis, which is usually on a seasonal basis or where there are updates to policies.

Future planned actions:

- Develop training plan for risk management targeted at managers and heads of service, to include toolkit, guidance and e-learning package.
- Targeted offer of support to implement risk management at a service level, in consultation with Assistant Directors.

Action 4 - Future Shape of the Council (now titled Our Transformation - Enabling Success for the Council): Ensure effective governance of the coordination of, and interdependencies between the work programmes which will deliver the next steps to reshape how the Council operates, including using new technologies, ways of working and new delivery models.

Governance of actions taken and planned

- Responsible officers (CMT): Deputy Chief Executive
- Responsible officers (Directors or Heads of Service): Director of HRODT

- How this is monitored: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Over the past year, the programme has transitioned from the Future Shape of the Council Programme to the “Our Transformation - Enabling Success for the Council Programme”, with a new Senior Responsible Officer, Programme Board and workstreams. These changes have been presented at Resource and Governance Scrutiny and shared with the leader, CMT and Strategic Leadership Group as part of the consultations to develop the new delivery programme.

The Our Transformation programme has a strong governance structure in place, consisting of a monthly Programme Board reviewing programme performance including success criteria, risks and issues. The programme is split into four key workstreams, with leads at Head of Service or Director level:

- Workforce and Culture
- Processes and Systems
- Digital and Data
- Estates and Assets

Each workstream lead is supported by work package leads from across the Council. Our Transformation projects are delivered in an agile way to ensure adaptability, effective collaboration, continuous improvement and benefits. The team have aligned all workstreams and existing governance to ensure effective, efficient and enabling outputs from all work packages.

Action 5 - Effective governance and leadership of major systems including strong post-implementation governance. In scope are systems used by multiple services including ICT systems such as LiquidLogic (social care system) and Microsoft 365.

Governance of actions taken and planned

- Responsible officers (CMT): Deputy Chief Executive
- Responsible officers (Directors or Heads of Service): Director of ICT
- How this is monitored: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

The ICT and Digital Design Authority Board and Delivery Board are responsible for governance, direction, technical decisions and project authorisation. They advise, commission, and deliver the most appropriate ICT and digital solutions for the Council. The Design Authority reports to SMT and the Executive and is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive and the Lead Member for ICT. Senior stakeholders from across the Council, as well as ICT managers, attend. Areas of work include ensuring technology roadmap alignment with the Council’s ICT and Digital Strategy, reviewing business cases, challenging social value, climate change, and benefits statements, considering income generation approaches, making recommendations to existing governance structures, and monitoring ongoing implementation and delivery.

The LiquidLogic System Board has been established by the ICT Strategic Business Partner for Adults and Children’s Services to support effective operation of LiquidLogic from a holistic, cross-service perspective. This is further supported by ICT’s LiquidLogic Product Manager post, serving both technical and non-technical

system users and teams. ICT also hosts a Product Manager for Microsoft 365, responsible for translating the Council's vision and strategy for the product into actionable requirements that can be implemented as appropriate.

Other governance mechanisms include:

- Risk and issue management: the ICT service manages its identified risks in line with its own ICT Risk Management Policy, Risk Management Strategy and Methodology Policy, which is aligned with the Council-wide Risk Management Strategy.
- Change management: ICT manages changes to current services in line with its own ICT Change Management Policy.
- Data safeguarding: ICT operates in line with its own ICT Backup and Retention Policy, which is embedded into the backup system. Backups are held both on premises and copied to the cloud, with both copies being immutable.
- Cyber security: the ICT and Digital Strategy aims to provide a stable and reliable ICT infrastructure that is secure, robust, and fit for the Council's ambitions. Data security and standards are governed through the Corporate Information Assurance and Risk Group (CIARG), chaired by the Council's Strategic Information Risk Owner (the City Solicitor).

In 2024/25, ICT concluded a three-month trial of an Enterprise Architecture (EA) management tool called LeanIX. EA is a standard ICT infrastructure for large organisations which ensures that the organisation optimises resources and adapts to changes in the business environment. The trial of LeanIX confirmed various benefits such as lifecycle tracking, roadmap planning, application consolidation, cost governance, and support for digital change. It is now being embedded across the service and is being monitored for its delivery and impact.

Additional details can be found in [this report to Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee](#) in March 2025.

Action 6 - Governance of the coordination of delivery of our commitments on equality, diversity, and inclusion in relation to work with communities, our partners, and our workforce. This includes delivery and communication of the Workforce Equality Strategy, training on accessibility standards, the Council's equality objectives and addressing health inequity.

Governance of actions taken and planned

- Responsible officers (CMT): Chief Executive.
- Responsible officers (Directors or Heads of Service): Director of HRODT, Joint Director of Equality, Inclusion and Engagement
- How this is monitored: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee, Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

A. Workforce update

Over the past year, the Organisational Development team have:

- Delivered 46 out of 47 actions in the Workforce Equality Strategy and 26 out of 27 actions in the Race Review.

- Launched a new Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2027, which sets out six new priorities to accelerate our EDI journey, address key challenges and create the conditions for a truly inclusive Council that delivers excellent services to residents.
- All senior leaders have a workforce equality performance objective aligned to the delivery of the Workforce Equality Strategy.
- Each Directorate has a senior officer that provides leadership of EDI and leads the delivery of a Directorate Equality Plan.
- Advancing EDI is embedded in the annual service planning process. Each service is required to set out actions to advance workforce EDI.
- A review of the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion infrastructure has been undertaken to maximise the impact and effectiveness of EDI governance, accountability and resources.
- Additional details can be found in [this report to Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee](#) in November 2024.

B. Inclusion and Engagement update

Over the past year, the Inclusion and Engagement team have:

- Implemented a cross-directorate accountability framework and Year 1 delivery plan for the Council's corporate Equality Objectives 2024-2028.
- Launched Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) training.
- Adopted the socio-economic duty and incorporated socio-economic disadvantage into Equality Impact Assessments.
- Begun to develop an EIA peer review and assurance framework.
- Collated baseline data and metrics to enable improvement in submitted and completed EIAs, which will also form part of an equalities dashboard for EDI accountability reporting.
- Worked with Manchester Disability Collaborative (MDC), facilitated by Breakthrough UK, to deliver a strategy refresh, which included the development of five priority areas, each with KPIs and action plans.
- Reviewed the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) steering group, acquired Pride in Veterans accreditation, ensured that over 50% of GP practices undertook AFC training and completed Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) for armed forces veterans from racialised communities and LGBTQ+ veterans.
- Facilitated the development of a multi-agency approach to pre-employability work for veterans from racialised communities.
- Developed a JSNA for care-leavers, and a cross-organisation action plan.
- Developed an inclusion health plan, aligned to Council of Sanctuary accreditation.
- Delivered the Making Manchester Fairer Race and Health Equity Education programme (RHEEP) for Council leaders, with a second cohort commissioned for 2025.
- Reviewed the Community Health Equity Manchester (CHEM) programme and Sounding Boards, and rolled out recommendations.
- Additional details can be found in [the 2024/25 Public Sector Equality Duty report](#) presented at Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee in March 2025.

Action 7 - Embed, deliver, and communicate the Organisation Development (OD) Plan 2023-25 to further improve Council-wide governance arrangements.

Governance of actions taken and planned

- Responsible officers (CMT): Deputy Chief Executive, City Solicitor
- Responsible officers (Directors or Heads of Service): Director of HRODT
- How this is monitored: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

The approach to embedding and delivering the Council's Organisation Development (OD) Plan 2023-25 has focused on progressing priorities of the plan aligned with other strategies (Talent Plan 2026, Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-26, Workforce Equality Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2025-28), as part of the overall MCC Workforce Strategy.

Key actions taken during 2024/25 included:

- Continued delivery of the Good Manager Guide development programme:
 - Masterclasses and thematic webinars on management practices (including performance management, wellbeing, feedback, inclusivity, menopause support).
 - Updated intranet content and dedicated manager communications.
 - Providing learning and development opportunities for line managers on effective 121 conversations and performance management.
- Decision-making support - collaboration with Audit and Risk Management to develop principles and tools for effective decision-making at all levels.
- Initial scoping of an Organisation Capabilities Framework, aligned with the new Our Manchester Strategy and internal communication/engagement activities.
- Targeted OD interventions, working with services to address culture, performance, and workforce challenges.
- The development, engagement, delivery and reporting of the Staff Survey 2024/25.

7. Action Plan: Governance Challenges for 2025/26 Onwards

The review of governance arrangements has identified four main areas where the Council will need to focus its efforts during 2025/26, to address changing circumstances. These are set out below. Completion of, or substantial progress against, these objectives is due by the end of the financial year, in March 2026.

Action 1 - Within the changing context of health governance arrangements across Greater Manchester, ensure the sustainability of Manchester Local Care Organisation, deliver the Making Manchester Fairer programme and embed the Achieving Better Outcomes Together transformation programme into Adult Social Care.

- Responsible officers (CMT): Director of Public Health, Director of Adult Social Services, City Solicitor
- Responsible officers (Directors or Heads of Service): Director of Adult Social Services, Director of Public Health
- How this is monitored: Health Scrutiny Committee

Action 2 – Effective updating, communication, and accessibility of key defined policies, including assurance over policy being put into practice for online and offline staff. Ensure accountability for effectively supporting the continued development of manager capabilities, to ensure policies are consistently implemented and adhered to.

- Responsible officers (CMT): Deputy Chief Executive
- Responsible officers (Directors or Heads of Service): Director of HRODT
- How this is monitored: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Action 3 - Effective governance and leadership of major systems including strong post-implementation governance, data governance, ownership, and quality. In scope are systems used by multiple services including ICT systems such as CoreLogic (LiquidLogic) and Microsoft 365.

- Responsible officers (CMT): Deputy Chief Executive
- Responsible officers (Directors or Heads of Service): Director of ICT
- How this is monitored: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee

Action 4 - Effective governance of the delivery of the Council's Equality Objectives 2024-2028 and Workforce EDI Plan 2025–2028, to be mitigated through development of a Corporate Accountability Board.

- Responsible officers (CMT): Chief Executive.
- Responsible officers (Directors or Heads of Service): Director of HRODT, Joint Director of Equality, Inclusion and Engagement
- How this is monitored: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee, Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Conclusion

The governance arrangements as described above have been applied throughout the year, and up to the date of the approval of the Annual Statement of Accounts, providing an effective framework for identifying governance issues and taking mitigating action.

Any significant events or developments relating to the governance system that occur between the year end and the date on which the Statement of Accounts is signed by the City Treasurer (Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer), will be reported by the City Treasurer to Audit Committee prior to the final audited AGS being signed off.

Over the coming year, the Council will continue the operation of its governance framework and take steps to carry out the actions for improvement identified in the review of effectiveness to further strengthen its governance arrangements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BA Craig".

Signed, Councillor Bev Craig (Leader of the Council):

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Stannard".

Signed, Tom Stannard (Chief Executive):