

This report is public	
Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025 – Update on Actions	
Committee	Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee
Date of Committee	14 January 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services Councillor Chris Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	5 January 2026
Report of	Monitoring Officer & Assistant Director of Law & Governance, Shiraz Sheikh

Purpose of report

To consider an update on actions from the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2024/2025.

1. Recommendations

The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee resolves to:

- 1.1 Consider and comment on the update on the actions arising from the Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 At its 16 July 2025 meeting, the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (AARC) approved the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the financial year 2024/2025.
- 2.2 The report gives the Committee an update to the actions that was included in the Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no financial implications as a result of this update report. Rachel Ainsworth, Finance Business Partner, 19 December 2025
Legal	The Council has a legal duty to agree an Annual Governance Statement. This report does not itself raise legal implications but this update on the actions arising from last year's AGS is consistent with the responsibility of this Committee to ensure the effectiveness of the Council's Governance.

	Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer & Assistant Director of Law & Governance, 19 December 2025			
Risk Management	There are no risk implications associated directly with this report. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 19 December 2025			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		x		Not applicable
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		Not applicable
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		Not applicable
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		Not applicable
ICT & Digital Impact		x		Not applicable
Data Impact		x		Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy		x		Not applicable.
Council Priorities	Not applicable			
Human Resources	Not applicable			
Property	Not applicable			
Consultation & Engagement	Senior officers for each area have been consulted and provided updates on progress as set out in section 4 of this report			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 At its 16 July 2025 meeting, the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (AARC) approved the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the financial year 2024/2025 which can be found at appendix 1 of the report.
- 3.2 Local authorities are required to prepare an AGS to be transparent about their compliance with good governance principles and to give an opinion on the effectiveness of those arrangements. As part of the process, authorities are expected to highlight particular areas of focus for the year following. This report updates the Committee on the actions identified for 2025/26 in the AGS.

4. Details

Annual Governance Statement Actions for 2024/2025

- 4.1 The Annual Governance Statement outlined the following areas and expected outcomes for particular focus in 2025/26:

Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Update
An audit of compliance with Health and safety management system identified several significant control weaknesses in this particularly within the Place directorate. Demonstrably meet the Council's accident and incident reporting and investigation requirements. Implement the action plan.	AD HR as corporate health and safety. AD Environment for implementation	The action plan has been implemented
Implement improvements in report clearance processes, with DLTs taking responsibility for early engagement with legal and finance to improve quality and timeliness of reports and improved forward planning.	DLTs	All directorates are instructed by CLT to ensure that all reports are cleared by legal and finance and there is early engagement.
Management of strategic site applications to minimise the risk	AD – Planning	The action plan was presented to AARC on 28 May and a corporate commitment made to provide

<p>of legal proceedings and costs exposure.</p> <p>Implement all review findings and action plan</p> <p>Address issues identified in the Internal Audit fact finding review relating to negative framing of officer recommendations, strategic partnerships and stakeholder management, Resource and document management, Performance management, management of planning performance agreements and management of service improvement.</p>	<p>Head of Development Management</p>	<p>resource to support implementation. This resource has not yet been secured and therefore implementation is c. 5 months behind. Resource needs are now being considered through the corporate Transformation Programme.</p>
<p>Work with Executive and CLT to deliver the 2025/26 budget and financial challenges, giving particular attention to the delivery of the agreed savings.</p> <p>Delivery of agreed savings Where overspends are identified operating within the mitigation plan outlined in the S25 statement.</p>	<p>AD Finance</p>	<p>At the mid-point in the year the council is forecasting an overspend at year end of £0.1m. Significant mitigations have been identified to offset forecast overspends of £1.5m in Property, £0.5m in Housing and Wellbeing and £0.4m in Environmental Services.</p> <p>Whilst mitigations have been identified this year, a significant amount have come from Policy Contingency. There is likely to be less policy contingency funding available in 2026/27, and so services will need to look to identify more mitigations if a similar situation occurs in 2026/27.</p>
<p>In collaboration with the new administration, better engagement and consultation with Portfolio Holders (PH) and CLT including focus on strategic planning and transformation change.</p> <p>Officers and members should work together. PH briefing, reports produced and presented to ensure that it meets members needs and provided sufficiently in advance to allow PH and Exec members to review and have</p>	<p>CLT DLTS</p>	<p>There have been a significant amount of away days around the annual planning process and budget process.</p>

political discussion. Planned away days.		
<p>Build on the existing work on transformation and develop a plan to address the budgetary shortfall identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy beginning in 2026/27.</p> <p>Transformation</p> <p>Case for Change</p> <p>Strategic Planning Process</p>	CD Resources (ED Resources) AD Finance & CLT	<p>Savings proposals and member priority investments have been identified for 2026/27 and future years. A significant amount of work has taken place to consider member prioritisation of services in case service reductions are required.</p> <p>Executive has agreed an approach to transformation which is in the process of being implemented and business cases being prepared to deliver transformation approaches in line with the Executive report.</p>
Further embed the new Procurement Act 2023 and Procurement Regulations 2024 including Member and officer training.	AD Law and Governance	To further embed the Procurement Act 2023 and the accompanying Procurement Regulations 2024, we have established a structured monthly training programme. This includes workshops aligned with Cabinet Office guidance, ensuring all stakeholders fully understand the new PA2023 framework, transparency obligations, and the range of competitive procedures. By building capability across the organisation, we are driving compliance, promoting best practice, and maximising the benefits of the Act—improving efficiency, delivering enhanced social value, and strengthening governance in public procurement.
Produce and Implement Risk Management Strategy and framework to ensure compliance with HM Government Orange Book and implement training programme to embed risk management.	CD Resources (ED Resources)	The Risk Management Strategy was considered at the November AARC meeting.
Specific training on Information Governance as identified in the improvement plan especially in relation to data breaches.	AD Law and Governance	In consultation with Revenues & Benefits and Customer Services (the teams with the highest rates of data breach reporting), improved protocols for data breach reporting

		<p>and assessment have been developed.</p> <p>CDC-specific Information Governance training has been developed and was delivered to members on 13 October 2025. This IG training can now be rolled out to relevant staff, in conjunction with training on the new IG case management system (which will go live in January 2026). It is anticipated that all relevant staff will have received the training by the end of 2025/26.</p> <p>The Risk Management Strategy was considered at the November 2025 AARC meeting.</p>
Building on the Corporate Strategy which covered at a high level "People" to produce Strategic workforce plan focussed on skills and knowledge gaps, performance management, including appraisal processes and learning development plans.	AD HR	Work is underway on a refresh of our performance management process, as well as the introduction of a competency behavioural framework following a refresh of our organizational values. Talent management and succession planning is also being reviewed and developed as part of this years ADP, rolling into next year.
Review of agency processes to ensure that pre-employment checks are conducted and the reasons for waiver of any requirement is properly authorised and reasoned.	AD HR	We are working on procuring contracts that will meet our staffing needs but also provide this assurance.
To produce and implement detailed Simpler Recycling action plan	AD Environment	<p>Simpler Recycling is progressing with kerbside glass collection due to commence in January 2026.</p> <p>Other elements regarding Simpler Recycling are due to be considered by the Executive in January 2026</p>
To define governance parameters around Local Government Reorganisation leading to implementation phase.	CLT	Design of the Governance framework will be/was agreed by LGR leads and Statutory officers regarding the baselining work required prior to Government announcement of preferred proposal and was agreed by CEOs in December 2025.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to note the update. This is not recommended as it is good practice for the Committee to review progress against actions arising from the Annual Governance Statement.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 In line with Annual Governance Statement process, this report provides an update on actions taken to date during 2025/2026 in respect of recommended actions arising from the 2024/2025 Annual Governance Statement.

Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A
Subject to Call in	N/A
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Annual Governance Statement 2024-25
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer & Assistant Director of Law & Governance
Report Author contact details	shiraz.sheikh@cherwell-dc.gov.uk , 01295 221651
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Report of the Statutory Officer, Monitoring Officer