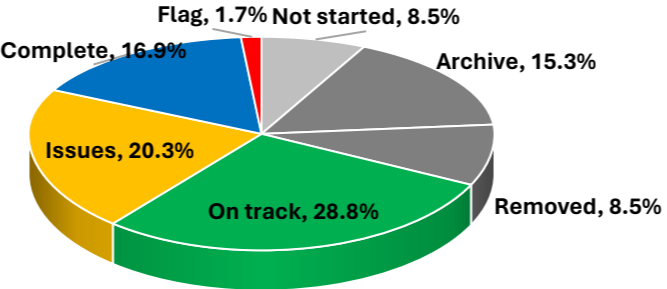


Annual Governance Statement 23/24 Action Plan / Progress Update

No.	Governance Issue	Action	Responsible Officer	Progress Update														
1	<p><b>Secretary of State Directions and London Borough of Croydon Intervention Exist Strategy Action Plan 2023 -25</b></p>	<p>To implement the Improvement &amp; Assurance Panel Exit Strategy Action Plan (<a href="#">Intervention Exit Strategy 2023-25</a>) relating to the following areas: governance; culture and leadership; financial stability; service performance; and capacity and capability to improve.</p>	<p>Darce Gocoul</p>	<p>The Exit Strategy Action covers the following themes: Governance, Culture and Leadership, Financial Stability, Service Performance: CYPE; ASCH; and Housing, and Capability &amp; Capacity to Improve. A delivery tracker has been developed to monitor progress against all 177 actions in the Exit Strategy. Progress is reviewed regularly by DMT's and at CMT on a bi-monthly basis.</p> <p>The latest performance report from September 2024 shows that, at September 2024, 97% of actions due by March 2024 were completed and 3% were overdue. Both actions are part of the financial sustainability theme and are on track to being achieved by the end of 2024. The Panel supports the reasons for these delays.</p> <p>All later actions are underway and latest reporting from September 2024 shows that 86% of actions due by the end of September 2024 and 90% of actions due by the end of March 2025 were on track to be completed within agreed timescales.</p> <p>The Panel have confirmed the Exit Strategy is being advanced well and that they are comfortable that it is either being met or, where there is a delay, there is a reason for this and that plans are in place to make up the ground. Progress will continue to be monitored overtime and reported on at the following intervals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 2024- Interim progress report on the Exit Strategy submitted to IAP. This is now completed.</li> <li>• September 2024- Progress report on the Exit Strategy submitted to IAP to inform October 2024 letter to SOS. This is now completed and MHCLG have advised that the letter and response from the SoS will be published by Christmas.</li> <li>• January 2025- Interim progress report on the Exit Strategy submitted to IAP in January 2025. This is on track.</li> <li>• March 2025- Progress report on the Exit Strategy submitted to IAP to inform April 2025 letter to SOS. This is on track.</li> </ul>														
		<p>To deliver on the <a href="#">Council Improvement Plan 2022-27</a></p>	<p>Sharon Godman Anthony Thacker</p>	<p>The Council Improvement Plan 2022-27 includes existing and new improvement projects across services including children's, adults, planning, and housing that are critical to strengthening the foundations for future transformation. These projects will contribute to savings in the MTFs. They are grouped under the following ten programmes: Adult Social Care and Health Improvement Programme; Asset Management Programme; Borough Regeneration Programme; Business Improvement Programme; Cleaner Croydon Programme; Children, Young People and Education Improvement Programme; Digital and Legacy Improvement Programme; Housing Improvement Programme; Libraries, Community Hubs &amp; Museum Programme; and Safer Croydon Programme.</p> <p>59 projects have been assigned to the Council Improvement Plan (CIP). 9 have been archived and 5 removed due to their lack of value to the organisation or unsuitability. 10 projects have been successfully completed and 35 are currently being monitored.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="872 1266 1863 1528"> <thead> <tr> <th>Status</th> <th>No. of projects</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>On track (green)</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>On track with issues (amber)</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flagged (red)</td> <td>01</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not started (grey)</td> <td>05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Complete (blue)</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Archive / removed</td> <td>14</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <div data-bbox="872 1566 1991 1896"> <p><b>CIP STATUS</b></p>  <p>Legend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not started</li> <li>Archive</li> <li>Removed</li> <li>On track</li> <li>Issues</li> </ul> </div>	Status	No. of projects	On track (green)	17	On track with issues (amber)	12	Flagged (red)	01	Not started (grey)	05	Complete (blue)	10	Archive / removed	14
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Verto report for 35 current CIP projects

Project Name	Stage	RAG Status	Reason for Overall Status
<b>ACE Corporate IMPROVEMENT Programme</b>			
PR000517: Core Digital System Improvements	Plan	Amber	Discussions have been ongoing with CMT and Star Chamber to present the overarching business case, detailing the projects within the programme of work. However, funding is not currently agreed.
PR000359: HR and OD redesign	Plan	Green	Transition work from October as part of the redesign and change readiness for supporting Oracle programme changes is currently underway.
PR000286: People and Culture Transformation Programme	Plan	Green	The programme has seven pillars all of which have individual workstreams and activities assigned to them for each financial year of the plan. All activities are on track to be delivered.
PR000575: Public Health Development Project	Deliver	Green	On course to achieve our goals within the scope of the project.
PR000639: LBC data strategy	Plan	Green	Impera Analytics have been procured and planning is proceeding according to agreed plan.
<b>ASCH Assurance Programme (IMPROVEMENT)</b>			
PR000092: Community Equipment Service	Deliver	Green	The project is complete and lessons learned workshops are scheduled as part of the close process.
<b>CYPE Corporate IMPROVEMENT Programme</b>			
PR000089: Calleydown Transformation	Plan	Amber	Project moved to amber due to delays with getting the cost/benefit analysis completed because of the Ofsted inspection.
PR000079 / 300 / 303 & 304 : CYPE Corporate Parenting Transformation:	Plan	Amber	This programme is Amber as all work was paused for the OFSTED inspection.
<b>Housing Corporate IMPROVEMENT Programme</b>			
PR000163: 8.11 Temporary Accommodation (Occupancy checks)	Plan	Red	The project has met foundational milestones particularly around the tenancy checks completed and audit of data. The objective of discharging duty for 100 households, which was expected to result in cost reductions of approximately £1.8 million is unlikely to be delivered as only 25 households have been identified for discharge. Assurance has been provided regarding occupancy of Temporary Accommodation residents.
PR000033: 4.1 Regina Road - Regeneration Project	Deliver	Amber	Final draft demolition consultant appointment issued. Final draft Pellings/EA consultant appointment issued. Summary financial appraisal produced. Communication plan and Decant plans produced.
PR000165: 8.8 Housing Association Liaison Recharges & Nominations	Plan	Amber	Although initial contact has been made with the HAs that use Home Connections, no formal agreement has been reached to recover former costs (if this is possible) and set up ongoing use arrangements (based on the number of adverts raised).
PR000059: 8.10 Housing Benefits Subsidy - SEA & EA/TA	Deliver	Green	The project is on track to meet the financial savings target.
PR000132: 8.1 Housing Needs Restructure(Phase1)	Deliver	Green	New service model implemented and will be reviewed after 6 months by end of May 2024. Phase 1 is complete
PR000498: 8.1 Housing Needs Restructure(Phase 2)	Plan	Green	Phase 2 will commence in Q1 2025 with a view to delivery in Sept 2025
PR000166: 8.2 Supported Housing Review	Plan	Green	The Council appointed Homeless Link, a national homeless charity, to carry out full review of existing services & support in the retendering of new contracts. A position paper has been circulated, and a cross-organisational sub-group is being created which will set specifications and expectations for re-commissioning of new contracts.
<b>Resources Corporate IMPROVEMENT Programme</b>			

PR000344: Oracle improvement programme	Deliver		Programme on track, the first wave of improvements to Oracle, went live in the system on 21 October 2024. Delivery focusing on first phase.
PR000469: Procurement and Contract Management Improvement Plan	Plan		Project is fully resourced. Strategic Contracts Board now operational to provide effective governance & assurance. Overall delivery on track against majority of milestones.
PR000472: PSTN Audit	Plan		The project is at the anticipated stage and progressing as planned.
<b>SCRER Corporate IMPROVEMENT Programme</b>			
PR000110: CALAT	Plan		The project manager replacement will soon be appointed. However, until a replacement is appointed, the project will not be producing any highlight reports.
PR000109: Planning & CIL Transformation	Plan		PM appointed and reviewing background work, and initiating workstreams.
PR000065: Passenger / SEND Transport Transformation	Plan		Consultants report received, financial savings attributed to the project may not be realised. A full Financial Recovery Plan was submitted to Chief Executive, breaking down the actions into 13 work areas for progression.
PR000621: Uniform Transformation Programme	Plan		The project has commenced and has entered plan phase with funding acquired for initial resources until 31/03/25, however plan phase is currently running until the end of August 2025, so there currently a funding gap and a business case is required to acquire capital funding for the rest of the programme.
PR000108: Building Control Transformation	Plan		Overall all workstreams are either on target or slightly behind meeting project milestones and all within budget hence overall status of Green.
PR000068: Croydon Museum Transformation	Plan		Commissioned consultant and agreed delivery timelines
PR000049: LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW	Plan		Workstreams progressing in line with cabinet decision. Project is currently confirming quotes for removals, waste collection and securing the buildings
PR000516: Improvement to Waste and Recycling Contract Management	Plan		The project remains on track, and we have completed all formal procurement processes and confirmed that Veolia ES (UK) have been identified as the preferred bidder. Contract award report has been presented Procurement Board following which the recommendations have been through both Scrutiny and Cabinet in September 2024.  The project now moves into the final phase 'Contract Mobilisation'. A new Programme Board is to be established with new 'Terms of Reference' chaired by the Director of street and Environment to oversee the mobilisation of the new services.
PR000556: Mobile Parking	Plan		Project on track

The Future Croydon six-month progress report to November 2024 Cabinet meeting is linked below.

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s61742/DRAFT%20V.24%20Future%20Croydon%20Cover%20Report%206%20month%20progress%20update%2008.11.pdf>

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s61744/Appendix%202%20Council%20Improvement%20Plan%20Final%20202.pdf>

To deliver on the ['Future Croydon', our Transformation Plan for 2024–2029](#).

Sharon Godman  
Alan Layton

The goal of Future Croydon, and the Council Improvement Plan is to improve the Council, its services and the place. There are ten programmes listed in the Council Transformation Plan:

1. The Customer Experience Programme is Amber but on track and has recently delivered improvements to the Access Croydon experience for residents, an improvement in the number of Citizenship appointments.
2. The Adults Living Independently Transformation Programme (previously called ASC&H Strategic Delivery Partner) is a collaboration with Newton Consulting and Veolia to improve the services provided to residents, focussing on improving personal independence and overall outcomes whilst at the same time making services financially sustainable. Having concluded their diagnostic phase and moving into delivery. The MTFs includes an expectation of £15m of savings delivered over the coming four years.
3. The Asset Transformation Programme is Green and on track to delivering the £100m of capital receipts planned over two years. It is also looking at reconfiguring Davis House and Bernard Weatherill House.

				<p>4. The Croydon Town Centre Programme – Reconnected Croydon is Green and on track having secured £18.5 million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund which will benefit residents and visitors. The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy (TCRS) is currently being developed and expected to conclude by spring 2025.</p> <p>5. IMPOWER Consulting has been engaged by Croydon's Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) directorate as the CYPE Strategic Delivery Partner to support families. This programme is Green and on track with IMPOWER in the process of concluding their amplified analysis diagnostic of the services provided by the directorate over the next four years as an output from this programme.</p> <p>6. The Target Operating Model programme is a core component of the transformation plan. This programme is Green and on track. Boston Consulting Group (BCG) is leading a programme of work to redesign the Council's operating model supported by a business case and delivery plan. The work concluded in October and the Council is reviewing the findings.</p> <p>The Future Croydon six-month progress report to November 2024 Cabinet meeting demonstrates good progress.  <a href="https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s61742/DRAFT%20V.24%20Future%20Croydon%20Cover%20Report%206%20month%20progress%20update.pdf">https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s61742/DRAFT%20V.24%20Future%20Croydon%20Cover%20Report%206%20month%20progress%20update.pdf</a>  <a href="https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s61743/Appendix%201%20-%20Future%20Croydon%20Six%20Month%20Report%20Final%202.pdf">https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s61743/Appendix%201%20-%20Future%20Croydon%20Six%20Month%20Report%20Final%202.pdf</a></p>
2	<p><b>External Auditor Annual Report for 2022/23</b></p>	<p>To implement the recommendations from the External Auditors Annual Report relating to: financial sustainability; governance; and Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness:</p>	<p>Allister Bannin</p> <p>Malcolm Davies</p> <p>Lara Ashley</p> <p>Sue Hanlon</p> <p>Mary Larbie</p>	<p><u>Financial sustainability</u></p> <p><i>The Council continues to maintain its strict controls over spend and discipline over savings and transformation plans).</i></p> <p>The Council continues to operate strict financial control through monthly budget monitoring, monthly directorate budget assurance meetings with the Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Resources, daily Spend Control Panels and a weekly Recruitment Panel. Delivery of planned savings is monitored each month. There is an annual cycle of budget challenge through Star Chamber meetings to reach the annual October Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Update to Cabinet followed by Council Tax setting in February and March. The Council has published its Transformation Plan 2024-2029 and progress is being reported to Cabinet every 6 months. Discussions are continuing with MHCLG in relation to the annual £38m gap in the Council's MTFS. The Council's ambition is to eventually eliminate capitalisation directions as the additional debt charges these generate are unsustainable.</p> <p><u>Governance</u></p> <p><i>The Council should improve on its risk management arrangement through: Mapping of strategic risk to the achievement of corporate objectives and associated KPIS;</i></p> <p>All corporate risks are now aligned to the corporate objectives of the council namely the 5 outcomes of the Mayor's business plan and reports can be run from the council's corporate risk system JCAD accordingly.</p> <p><i>Aligning Scrutiny and Overview work plans to the high-risk issues identified in Council's Risk Register and Performance Management Systems.</i></p> <p>All Members of the Council's Scrutiny and Overview Committee have been trained on the Council's risk management framework and given access on demand to the corporate risk register and via the routine publication of the council's risk register on the council's transparency pages on our internet site and have undertaken to use the contents of the corporate risk register to plan their work programme.</p> <p><u>Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness</u></p> <p><i>The Council needs to continue to improve the quality of its housing services and prioritise for action identified through the IAP – strengthening the quality and accuracy of its housing data, robust management of repairs, heating and void contractors to ensure performance levels remain high and put in place an improved structure for tenant and resident engagement.</i></p> <p><u>Housing:</u></p> <p>We continue to keep the IAP apprised of progress made against their priorities and those of the housing transformation programme.</p> <p>Accuracy of Housing Data - We have conducted a cleansing exercise on Homelessness and temporary accommodation data with regular upload of the data from NEC into government DELTA system to ensure any data quality issues are identified and fixed. This results in the full set of both the Homelessness and temporary accommodation Case Level Information Collection (HCLIC) submitted to government impacting positively on accurate allocation of support grant funding.</p> <p>We have completed data checks on service charges and rent account reconciliation and have a high degree of confidence in this data set. Our final leaseholder service charge accounts were sent out in July 2024.</p>

				<p>We are currently ahead of our Exit Strategy target commitment for stock condition surveys, having achieved circa 61% stock survey data within the 15 months of the programme being initiated. We will transfer data into the appropriate NEC module upon completion of the module's development and the data from these stock condition surveys will be used to inform our Asset Investment Strategy.</p> <p>We have developed a Property Control Manual which clearly defines the controls for our assets within our processes and systems as they progress through from acquisition, maintenance to disposal. We have conducted an asset reconciliation exercise to assess the accuracy of our asset data and to ensure we are appropriately charging, managing and maintaining our assets. We will superimpose these controls onto our NEC system to ensure data accuracy and integrity going forward.</p> <p>We continue to conduct tenancy audits across our stock as part of a rolling programme. We update our tenancy information through these checks and through interactions with our contact centre. We utilise this information to review our services and have already implemented changes to services including installing hearing loops in community centres through analysis of data in particular communities.</p> <p>We have co-developed with TPAS and residents, a new resident engagement framework which was approved at Cabinet in the Summer 2024. <a href="#">Resident Engagement Strategy 2024 - 2029.pptx</a></p> <p>We continue to manage our contractors through established core group and strategic core group meetings. We collate, evaluate and manage contractor performance through the collection of satisfaction data, complaint information, job completion data and work orders. Satisfaction with repairs has seen a quarterly increase up 8% in Q2 of 24/25. Work continues to improve response times against expectations with repairs within target time at 91% (Sep 2024 figure)</p>
3	<b>Internal Audit Reports and Recommendations</b>	All Directorates to action all outstanding internal audits agreed actions from the current and previous years.	Dave Phillips Ella Hullet	<p>CMT agreed a three-tiered approach and actions to reducing the internal audit backlog, ensuring compliance with scheduled audits and effective reporting of this improvement to Audit and Governance Committee.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Outstanding Internal Audits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A spreadsheet is maintained on SharePoint detailing the outstanding responses to draft reports.</li> <li>• The instruction is for these to be progressed as priority, with CMT having an update on audits completed within one month</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Audit Liaison Officers to work with Executive Officer to schedule time in diaries for Directors and Corporate Directors to share information and sign off audits.</p> </li> <li><b>2. Upcoming Internal Audits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A spreadsheet is maintained on SharePoint detailing the upcoming audits and key dates.</li> <li>• Schedules of planned audits were shared with each Directorate in May, along with indicative scopes. Directorates were required to liaise with audit team regarding any concerns around timings.</li> <li>• The terms of reference for each audit are typically issued at least two weeks in advance of the start date. These will generally include initial information requests.</li> <li>• Each audit will commence with an opening meeting, to run through the audit.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Executive Officers to schedule in time for Directors to review terms of reference 2 weeks before planned audit.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> EOs and ESOs to add into Directors calendars start dates for internal audits</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> ESO to relevant Director and EO to Corporate Director will need to schedule time ahead in advance of internal audit for senior officers to complete and review audits.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Audit Liaison officers to send reminder emails of upcoming audits on a monthly basis to CDs and Directors (noting which audits are imminently upcoming and which audits have now been completed and are no longer outstanding)</p> </li> <li><b>3. Reporting improvements to Audit and Governance Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly updates are provided by the Head of Internal Audit to CMT of all outstanding responses to draft audit reports and to progress agreed actions arising from audit reports.</li> <li>• The Strategic Support Officer to CMT sends 2 weekly reminder emails to Audit Liaison Officers / Corporate Directors and Directors, flagging where relevant at CMT</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Detail on the progress on the above is included in the audit progress report to the Audit and Governance Committee meeting to be held on 29 November 2024. This details that since 1 October 2024, when there were 27 draft reports (12 relating to 2022/23, 14 relating to 2023/24 and 1 to 2024/25), there are now 8 drafts where responses are being sought (which include two new reports issued in the interim) as follows:

Year	Audit title	Corporate Director	Date issued
2022/23	Housing Register: Assessments	Susmita Sen	14 April 2023
2023/24	Starters and Leavers: IT Accounts & Equipment	Marie Snelling	31 January 2024
	LGL Complaints: Embedding Subsequent Actions	Susmita Sen	1 March 2024
	Croylease	Susmita Sen	24 June 2024
	No Recourse to Public Funds	Debbie Jones / Annette McPartland	23 July 2024
2024/25	CIL/S106: Use of Funds	Nick Hibberd	12 August 2024
	Application Audit: Housing Management System (NEC)	Marie Snelling	30 August 2024
	Coulsdon C of E School	Debbie Jones	24 October 2024

As can be seen from the table, although the number of reports with outstanding responses has dramatically reduced, there are still some reports where the responses have been outstanding for some time.

There has also been some progress in clearing actions relating to older audit reports, but as detailed in the audit progress report, there are still actions outstanding from 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. Some of these actions include Priority 1 actions.

Overall, while good progress has been made to clear the backlog of outstanding responses to draft audit reports and actions relating to older audit reports, work is ongoing to embed the above as a business as usual.

4	<b>Capital Projects and Programmes</b>	To continue to improve on arrangements for the management of major and minor capital projects and programmes including oversight of the finance and delivery of key milestones.	Allister Bannin Anthony Thacker David Baptiste	<p>An update on progress against the 9 recommendations from the PwC Capital Framework Improvement Plan was taken to A&amp;G Committee on 18/7/24 which showed 5 as completed. A further update to A&amp;G Committee is planned for early 2025.</p> <p>The Capital Internal Control Board (CICB) continues to further improve the governance of the capital programme taking on board what best practice can be incorporated within the resource constraints given the Council's financial position. This includes overseeing the development of business case templates in line with the Five Case Model and associated training and governance approval routes, which will be taken forward after the recruitment of capital accounting officers into the new Strategic Finance structure.</p> <p>The capital programme is reviewed by the CICB on a monthly basis, providing robust challenge to project managers on project delivery. Capital delivery is reported on a monthly basis to Cabinet through the Financial Performance Report. Verto 365 project management software has been rolled out across the Council and this is supporting the CICB to oversee the delivery of the Capital Programme in a more consistent and informed way.</p> <p>For 2023-24, as part of the budget setting process, a new best practice Capital Strategy was prepared and approved by Full Council. This set out the overall capital strategy and capital programme plans. It also set out clearly the governance of the capital programme including, roles and responsibilities, funding and financing, decision making process, risk management and escalation approach, and management and monitoring processes. This was further developed through the Capital Programme and Capital Strategy 2023-29 agreed by Full Council in March 2024.</p> <p>In July 2024, the organisation adopted Government Functional Standard GovS 002: Project Delivery, as it's framework for project and programme management (PPM), establishing 6 directorate portfolios, replacing the central project management office (PMO).</p> <p>This framework details the process, roles and responsibilities and sets clear governance for all project management activities across the organisation. The recently launched managers training (Module 6 Service Planning) and supplemented training aims to improve the organisations low PPM maturity.</p> <p>The Verto system was adopted as the organisations project management software in January 2023.</p>
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				<p>PPM maturity remains an issue for the organisation and further work is being done to improve the rigor around governance, to ensure projects have clearly defined benefits and resource is optimised. Use of the Verto system has improved, which in turn has greatly improved reporting and decision making.</p> <p>Regina Road Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Regina Road Project Board meets monthly to report on activity and progress against this scheme. The Project Board in turn reports to the Housing Regeneration Board which meets regularly to approve or unlock any blockages.</li> <li>-Regina Road progress is also reported to the Mayors Advisory Board, Improvement and Assurance Panel, Transformation Board and Capital Board.</li> <li>-Risks are managed within the project and picked up through the council's VERTO project management tool alongside being covered and reported through the council's JCAD reporting tool.</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Ongoing Improvement in awareness and practice in finance management</b></p>	<p>Implement CIPFA maturity model.</p> <p>Finance training for non-finance managers.</p>	Allister Bannin	<p>CIPFA carried out a Financial Management (FM) Review to improve alignment with best practice of the CIPFA FM Model. The review commenced in October 2022, workshops with senior finance officers concluded in April 2023 and draft recommendations have been provided to the council.</p> <p>Issues and draft recommendations raised from the review highlighted the main areas of processes/systems, budget holder accountability/skills, monitoring of revenue savings &amp; capital delivery, and the skills/knowledge/ways of working of finance staff (and the risk from the high level of interim finance staff).</p> <p>Processes/systems: The Oracle Improvement Project is underway with three workstreams (finance, procurement and human resources) for quick wins to improve workflows and surrounding processes, review current and potential modules and longer term improvements. The business case for the finance and procurement workstreams was agreed by the Executive Mayor in Cabinet in March 2024, and the HR workstream has been agreed by Individual Mayoral Decision on 18 June 2024. The new Strategic Finance structure creates a new Finance Manager post (reporting to the Chief Accountant) to lead on ongoing systems development, production of guidance notes and delivery of training.</p> <p>Budget holder accountability/skills: The Council commissioned CIPFA to provide training to over 300 budget holders in 2022 and to provide Housing Revenue Account (HRA) ringfence and recharge training to officers and Councillors in June 2023. Once new business case templates and governance routes are agreed for capital, then capital training will be provided for capital leads. The extra capacity built into the new Strategic Finance structure for systems (one Finance Manager and two Accountant posts) will allow monthly reporting on the submission of forecasts by budget holders to improve accountability and identify training needs to provide support as required.</p> <p>Monitoring of revenue savings &amp; capital delivery: The Council brought in a savings tracker at the beginning of 2023-24 which allows monthly monitoring of savings delivery and the RAG rated performance of individual savings is reported monthly to Directorate Management Teams (DMTs), the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Mayor's Advisory Board. A summary of savings performance at directorate level is reported to Cabinet monthly through the financial performance reports. Monitoring of capital delivery was improved through the creation of the Capital Internal Control Board (CICB) in 2022 and further improved during 2023-24 through the Council-wide implementation of the Verto project management software system. The Verto project delivery and risk information, together with financial reports, are reviewed by the CICB on a monthly basis and deep dives into specific projects are undertaken by the CICB on a risk-based approach. Capital monitoring has also been harmonised with revenue budget monitoring, to ensure consistent timelines and consolidation of information for both revenue and capital to be taken to DMTs (for consideration at the same meeting) for integration into the monthly financial performance reports.</p> <p>Skills/knowledge/ways of working of finance staff (and the risk from the high level of interim finance staff): The Strategic Finance restructure reviewed the capacity and skill levels required in the accountancy function and identified required growth of £0.5m in the revenue staffing budget which was agreed by Full Council in the 2024-25 budget. The Council has recruited a permanent Director of Finance (Deputy s151), six permanent Head of Strategic Finance posts and ten Finance Manager posts to reduce reliance on acting up, agency and fixed term contract arrangements. Recruitment will now continue down the remaining levels of post throughout the structure (with the recruitment advert for eleven Principal Accountant posts expected to go live in November 2024). Once appointments are made, a skills audit will be undertaken to identify the training needs of staff including external CIPFA and AAT professional studies. The new Finance Manager (Systems) post will lead on updating guidance and procedure notes and providing internal training to both finance and non-finance staff.</p>
6	<p><b>Strengthen governance framework</b></p>	<p>Ensure Directorate Schemes of Delegation are reviewed and updated.</p> <p>To continue to review and update to the Constitution in</p>	Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense	<p>In October 2024, the Directorates Scheme of Delegation were reviewed and updated and available here <a href="#">Decision making   Croydon Intranet</a></p> <p>Through the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) there is ongoing work to review, update and strengthen the Council's Constitution in the following areas: a) Planning Committee procedures; b) Tenders and Contracts Regulations (Phase 1 Thresholds and streamline approvals and Phase 2 Procurement Act 2024); c) Council Procedures Rules / Budget &amp; Policy Framework Meeting Procedures; d) Scrutiny &amp; Executive Protocol; e) Financial Regulations; d) Scheme of Co-option. The proposed changes to the Council Procedure Rules, Scheme of Co-option, Appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs were approved by the General Purposes Committee on 5 November 2024 available here <a href="#">Agenda for General Purposes Committee on Tuesday, 5th November, 2024, 6.30 pm   Croydon Council</a> They will be presented to Full Council for Approval on 11 December 2024 along with proposed changes to planning matters. The CWG considered proposed changes to the Financial Regulations on</p>

		particular, financial regulations and contracts and tender regulations and to take account of any recent statutory development.		14 November and if approved will be presented to Full Council for approval on 26 February 2025. Work has commenced on the Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules and Scheme of Members' Allowances with plans to present a report at CWG in January 2025. An updated version of the Constitution will be published in December/January with all the changes approved by Full Council on 14 December 2024.
7	<b>Information management</b>	To continue to provide assurance that the Council is operating in accordance with best practice and relevant legislation to include Publication Schemes, Open Data, Data Storage Security, Subject Access Request and Freedom of Information. Also, to ensure that the Council has in place and embed all policies and practices fundamental to information management.	Paul Golland Sarah Cullen	<p><b>Governance</b> – From September 2024, the Section 151 Officer has SIRO responsibility for the Council and a new Data Protection Officer (DPO) with extensive experience of local government information governance requirements appointed October 2024. SIRO and DPO attend IM ICB, Statutory Officer board, CMT and DMT’s quarterly with report on assurance. IM ICB Chaired by Caldicott Guardian for Adults to ensure assurance and accountability.</p> <p>Following DPO review of Information Management function and UK GDPR compliance, benchmarked against ICO expectations and NHS compliance requirements, strategy and action plans for Information Management to be developed and implemented. This will address organisational maturity for information Management and ensure that the foundations to improve this function are embedded into business as usual for all service areas, but with greater focus on those areas of the business that handle high volumes of sensitive personal data. Profile of Information Management function and the Data Protection Officer to become more visible across the organisation to embed key themes and objectives in addition to raising the profile and importance of the specialist function to all business areas. This will be in line with action plans, statutory compliance requirements and a greater emphasis on a collaborative approach to achieve agreed aims and objectives. Information Management report into IM ICB and CMT and DMT’s Quarterly on areas of concern and progress achieved against action plans derived from the benchmarking exercise. Milestones will be identified to measure progress and ensure concerns are being proactively monitored with on-going issues and improvements with key stakeholders discussed at the earliest opportunity. Any serious risks will be escalated to the Corporate Management Team, either directly by the DPO and SIRO or, IM ICB.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that the Council is going through a period of review and restructure to address identified issues. The findings of such reviews and plans to effect positive change will have a bearing on any Information Management Action Plan and the establishment of the service. Presently, the service is resourced through temporary provision to execute business as usual workstreams. In anticipation of Council’s review and restructure the DPO is working closely with the SIRO, Business Operations Manager, Cyber Security Manager, Information Manager and elements of Legal Services to look at future options.</p> <p><b>Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests</b> - Croydon has previously been subject to an Enforcement Notice issued by the ICO. The Council has met the requirements of the action plan formed to address the backlog of overdue FOI requests and reported back accordingly to the regulator resulting in the Enforcement Notice being removed.</p> <p>Support of the Corporate Management Team led to an improvement in FOI response timeframes to a 90% compliance rate end 2023 and to quarters 1 &amp; 2 2024. Presently, FOI performance is not currently compliant with legislation, standing at 76%. FOI action plan to address has been published at <a href="#">FOIA-Improvement-Action-Plan-Final.xlsx</a>. Additionally, DPO and Information Manager to meet with service areas to address issues to increase compliance rates to expected levels.</p> <p><b>Publication Scheme</b> - The Council continues to review and update our processes in line with responsibilities set out in the Information Commissioner’s Office Model Publication Scheme. This ensures that all information required to be in the public domain is published. Croydon remains compliant. We continue to proactively publish required key information including through the Council’s website as well as implement improvements to working practices to ensure data is openly available as appropriate.</p> <p><b>Subject Access Requests (SAR)</b> - A detailed SAR improvement plan was developed and shared with the ICO: <a href="#">FOI SAR Project Plan Feb 2023 - OS revision.xlsx</a>. The Council’s performance with SAR performance is currently at 60%. DPO and IM Team continue to work with the wider organisation to support increasing rates of compliance.</p> <p><b>Training &amp; Awareness - GDPR Training</b> - There is a mandatory e-Learning training module for all Council staff to complete online. This training is for all new staff starting with the Council and all staff are required to do yearly refresher training. This training has been refreshed as of January 2024. The Croydon learning team are now able to capture statistics and send out reminders to staff.</p> <p>In-depth face-to-face training sessions, held virtually on MS Teams, are available via Croydon learning for up to 40 attendees. These are held monthly and advertised on the intranet and via the Chief Executive’s news bulletins. In line with the ICO’s recommendation, these sessions are an opportunity for staff to engage with the team and for staff to ask for more service specific guidance. This training is continually being revised to include examples of previous Data Breaches, remedies and changes to processes as required.</p>



				<p>Going forward, there is a plan to make this training mandatory for all staff, and their line-manager, who have been involved in a Data Breach, to complete the e-Learning training again and a recommendation to attend the in-depth face-to-face session.</p> <p><b>Data Protection, GDPR Training</b> - There is a mandatory e-Learning training module for all Council staff to complete online. This training is for all new staff starting with the Council and all staff are required to do yearly refresher training. This training has been refreshed as of January 2024. The Croydon learning team are now able to capture statistics and send out reminders to staff.</p> <p>In-depth face-to-face training sessions, held virtually on MS Teams, are available via Croydon learning for up to 40 attendees. These are held monthly and advertised on the intranet and via the Chief Executive's news bulletins. In line with the ICO's recommendation, these sessions are an opportunity for staff to engage with the team and for staff to ask for more service specific guidance. This training is continually being revised to include examples of previous Data Breaches, remedies and changes to processes as required.</p> <p>Progress to be made in the mandatory requirement for all staff and their line-manager, involved in a Data Breach, to complete the e-Learning training again and a recommendation to attend the in-depth face-to-face session.</p> <p><b>Freedom of Information Training</b> - The FOI improvement plan led to the team creating new FOI &amp; EIR training. This training details the background to the legislation, key obligations of the Council and all relevant exemptions &amp; exceptions. It has been delivered to all key stakeholders and has been added to Croydon's e-Learning portal. This is now mandatory for new starters joining the Council.</p> <p><b>Reporting</b> - Weekly SAR / FOI reports sent to the whole organisation highlighting all open and overdue cases per directorate. Colleagues can view the report and advise on any closures or responses due. Regular updates on FOI, SARs and Data Breaches are reported to the Corporate Management Team and the Information Management Internal Control Board.</p> <p><b>Policies/procedures</b> – A review of all the Council's Information Security and Information Management Policies, as part of DPO compliance and IT future strategy, is taking place. These policies will be ratified at the Information Management Internal Control Board. For more details on added or amended procedures please refer to the FOI/SAR improvement plans, linked above.</p>
8	<b>Council Policies and Procedures</b>	To develop and implement a yearly programme for raising awareness amongst staff of key Council's policies and procedures for example on financial controls, contract management, project management tools, mandatory training etc including policies and procedures covering the management and delivery of Capital Projects	Dean Shoesmith	The council has put in place managers' training (Invest programme) for all managers from frontline supervisors up to heads of service (grades 9-17) which commenced in September 2024 and is scheduled to run until the end of March 2025. For year 2025/6 further training will be provided to new cohorts as new managers join the council, or from internal promotion. The Invest programme covers a range of mandatory training covering the council's policies and procedures for finance, commissioning and procurement with SME training from internal colleagues, as well as the learning provider. Project management is included in a separate module with the Invest programme, again including an internal SME on project management. The council is also in the process of commissioning training for project SRO's recently agreed by the Finance, Risk and Assurance ICB. The council has a set of mandatory training for all new staff as part of the induction requirements as well as refresher training which needs to be completed on an annual basis. The council's HR policies are regularly reviewed and updated, especially to ensure any changes to employment law to ensure correct compliance.
9	<b>Complaints</b>	To continue to improve arrangements for the management of customer complaints including ensuring that agreed LGSCO and HO recommendations are implemented	Lisa Wheatley Kim Hyland	<p>The following improvements have been made in the management of complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the end of Q1 (April – June 24) the overall SLA figure for responding to complaints was 64% compared to 47% at end of Q4 (January – March 24);</li> <li>• A <b>56%</b> reduction in overdue complaints between January and June 24.</li> <li>• Housing and SCRER have improvement plans in place as part of the Improvement and Assurance Panels exit plan.</li> <li>• Regular meetings held between the complaints team and services to improve communication and to discuss performance and improvements</li> <li>• Focussed attention on complaints in CMT and DMTs – quarterly attendance at CMT to discuss</li> <li>• Weekly complaints meeting held with housing and complaints team to focus on overdue complaints and any urgent cases</li> <li>• Escalation meeting held with performance team, Corporate Director and Head of Service to discuss how improvements can be made</li> <li>• Bespoke reports built to assist services to focus on backlogs as well new complaints received</li> </ul>

within the agreed timescales

- Weekly reports sent to all Departmental Complaint Officers, CMT, Directors and Heads of Service detailing overdue cases, current cases and cases due this week
- The Corporate Complaints team now have a dedicated Ombudsman resource, ensuring continuity and consistency and that responses and actions are being completed on time.
- All LGSCO determinations are sent to Corporate Directors for oversight
- Internal escalation policy to ensure responses to stage 2 and LGO's are received within timeframes with senior managers involvement if required
- Recommendations from severe maladministration cases overseen by Directors

The annual complaints report was presented to scrutiny on 19/11/24 and can be accessed on the following link:

[Annual Complaints Report 23-24.pdf](#)