

Appendix A

Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

Scope of Responsibility

- 1.1 Rutland County Council (“the Council”) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and 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 its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercising of its functions, which includes the arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 The elements of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (updated in 2016) are embedded throughout the Council’s Constitution and other strategies. This statement explains how the Council has complied with the framework and also meets the requirements of regulation 4(3) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement (“AGS”).

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

- 1.4 The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which the Council is managed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.
- 1.5 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council’s policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically by identifying and implementing measures to reduce the likelihood of the risks being realised and to negate or mitigate their potential impact.
- 1.6 The governance framework has been in place at Rutland County Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the statement

of accounts. Where there have been changes to the Governance framework in the year, these are outlined in the relevant sections below. Key events and issues falling outside of the 20/21 financial year but relevant to the Governance Framework are included in this AGS.

The Governance Framework

1.7 Overview

1.7.1 The Council has a 'Local Code of Governance' which states our commitment to complying with the principles of good governance and references relevant documents where stakeholders can find out more. This section of the AGS describes some of our arrangements in more detail.

1.8 Coronavirus Pandemic

1.8.1 From mid-February 2020, the Council joined the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (LLR) Local Resilience Forum (LRF) in preparing its response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Council also invoked the emergency delegation in the Constitution (11.10.5) which allows the Chief Executive "to take any urgent action necessary in the event of a civil emergency and deal with matters relating to civil protection/emergency planning arising from the Council's powers and duties under the appropriate legislation." and the provisions in the Financial Procedure Rules (4.6) which allows the Chief Finance Officer to put in place alternative financial systems in the case of a major incident.

1.8.2 As part its response, the Council quickly established a Local Strategic Coordinating Group (LSCG) comprising of senior management and a Local Tactical Coordinating Group (LTCG) involving key officers from across the Council.

1.8.3 In the early part of its pandemic response, February to the end of June 2020, the Council put the following arrangements in place:

- Establishing a revised operational structure so that resources could be focused on delivering 'business as usual' activity as far as possible and responding to the needs of vulnerable people through Operation Shield (announced 22nd March)
- Participating in all of the LLR Groups and Cells covering a range of issues from Personal Protective Equipment to Business issues
- Reviewing all key services, in accordance with Government guidance, and determining which services could continue as 'business as usual' and which services would be stopped
- Developing an approach to the "shielding of vulnerable people" – i.e. supporting those people who are vulnerable, and who have no other means of support – (obtaining required medication; obtaining food; support with social isolation and other welfare support).

- Deploying new technology to enable staff to work at home under 'lockdown'
- Redeploying staff to areas of greatest need as services were reduced or discontinued
- Delivering key Government initiatives such as payment of business rate grants and reliefs, ensuring ongoing payments to key suppliers/contractors and enforcing social distancing measures.

1.8.4 From a governance perspective, the following key arrangements were put in place underneath the work of the LSCG and LTCG:

- The Council structure was revised with two key cells created (a BAU and Operations cell and a Health, Social Care and Isolation cell led by SMT members)
- Decision making at both the RSCG and RTCG levels informed the agenda and direction of travel for both Cells
- The Cells met at least twice weekly, with all meetings minuted with actions
- Below the two main cells various sub-cells were created to focus on specific issues such as advice and hardship
- A Status and Data report was developed to capture key information to inform decision making
- Reporting was a two-way flow, where information coming from the Cells was put in to Status and Data Reports and formally submitted to the LSCG three times a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) with issues raised for decision making
- An Executive Decision log was created to record all Executive decisions
- Separate finance cost centres were created and maintained to record all funding received and costs and changes to finance systems enacted to facilitate decision making
- Verbal briefings were provided to Cabinet (daily), all Members (weekly) and Parish Council (weekly) alongside daily written communications

1.8.5 From June through to September, the Council evolved its internal arrangements and set up a Business Delivery Group reporting through to the RSCG with the RTCG being stood down. The key rationale for this at the time was that there was a move towards "business as usual" as national restrictions were lifted. Briefings to Members and Parishes became less frequent as the requirement on the Council to set up new services reduced with, at the time, a move towards consideration of Recovery. The Council developed an initial Recovery Plan as part of its work with LLR.

1.8.6 From September, the national landscape began to change again with the anticipation of the “second wave”. The Council therefore:

- Agreed that RSCG would meet twice weekly to provide strategic direction for the pandemic response
- Reinstated the RTCG to meet twice weekly to consider pandemic response matters corporately and resourcing arrangements, including advising on what services might need to be stopped to facilitate the pandemic response
- Set up a Task Force from within RTCG to drive forward a number of initiatives and work up proposals in response to “asks” from Government

1.8.7 From September through to today, the Council has continued to deliver its pandemic response including:

- Setting up a Vaccination Centre at Catmose with our partners in the NHS and national government albeit with the vaccination programme itself being managed by the NHS.
- Opening a Rapid Testing Centre to offer regular tests to people who are unable to work from home and have no COVID symptoms. The new testing centre for Rutland was of the Government’s plans to expand its programme of Lateral Flow Device testing across the country.
- Continuing to administer business grant schemes to local businesses in line with governance guidance to support the local economy during periods of lockdown
- launching in December 2020 a winter grants scheme to provide access to financial support for utility bills, food and other related essentials for eligible households with children aged 0-19.

1.8.8 The longer-term impacts and consequences on the Council are still uncertain. The Council has noted this as a key risk on its strategic risk register. The two key risks can be categorised as follows:

- Financial – the Council is monitoring its position. It has received Government funding to deal specifically with the response but the bigger concerns are the impact on the Medium Term Financial plan of lost income (with key income generating services stopped), a drop in collection rates for council tax and business rates, any additional costs incurred as key services are restored (and backlog issues dealt with), the fallout on the local economy and the impact on the demand for services (see below).
- Operational impacts – with key services stopped and resources diverted, officers will have to reinstate key services and catch up on a backlog of issues. Whilst work is being done to mitigate some of this

work, the extent of recovery is likely to be significant. Alongside the backlogs, the Council is anticipating possible impacts on key services such as adult and children's social care but at this stage the position is uncertain.

- 1.8.9 With the success of the vaccination roll out, the Government announced a roadmap out of lockdown. Against this backdrop, the Council has started again to turn its attention to recovery and further work will be done in this area in the near future.
- 1.8.10 The Council's senior management have engaged with the Internal Audit service to review their role during the Coronavirus pandemic and seek suitable assurances on financial management and governance during this challenging time. It was agreed that Internal Audit will conduct reviews on expenditure, decision making and key financial controls during this period. The approach was discussed and agreed with the s151 officer and the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, both of whom will receive regular updates on the outcomes, with reported to the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 1.8.11 The remainder of this document includes comments on how the pandemic has impacted governance arrangements where applicable.

1.9 **Vision, Aims and Objectives**

1.9.1 The Council has a Corporate Plan covering the period 2019 – 2024. The Corporate Plan serves as a roadmap for what the Council wants to achieve during its current four-year term. The Plan was developed following the local elections in May 2019.

1.9.2 The Plan was taken through the Scrutiny process and approved in January 2020. The Plan can be found here:

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-council/how-the-council-works/key-plans-policies-and-strategies/corporate-plan/>

1.9.3 The aims and priorities are underpinned by actions and targets which will be reported on quarterly through the corporate performance report. These targets form the basis for planning for the Budget, Local Plan, and other Strategic Plans as well as service and team plans.

1.9.4 With much management resource diverted to the pandemic, some actions have been progressed, with others deferred. As part of its year end reporting, the Council's performance report for Quarter 4 gave both an update on KPI's but also a progress update on actions.

1.9.5 The Council plans to revisit the corporate plan later in 2021/early 2022 after the Future Rutland Conversation has been completed.

Future Rutland Conversation

1.9.6 The 'Future Rutland Conversation', aims to involve local people in a process

that will develop a new vision and aspirations for the county – one that will help the Council to co-create new strategies and policies to achieve these goals.

- 1.9.7 The Future Rutland Conversation follows a commitment made in Rutland County Council's latest Corporate Plan (2019-2024) to develop a 50-year vision that will identify key priorities, emerging issues and give the county a long-term plan of action.
- 1.9.8 Work on the 50-year vision was due to begin in 2020 but paused due to COVID-19 but the Future Rutland Conversation aims to understand what matters most to residents and businesses in the county – both now and in a post-COVID world.
- 1.9.9 The Future Rutland Conversation (FRC) was approved by Full Council at a meeting on Monday 11 February 2021. The FRC began in earnest in April and as at June 2021 is still ongoing.

Deferred Key Priorities

- 1.9.10 The following actions supporting corporate key priorities have been deferred as resources were diverted to deal with the pandemic:

- Enhancing the Universal Offer (for Children Services)
- Launching of a customer portal (MyAccount)
- Updating of the Corporate Website
- Development of the plan for 5G Provision
- Hosting of a Road Safety Summit
- Improving coordination with Care Homes & Health Services
- Ensuring High Levels of 16-18 in Education, Employment and Training
- Developing in-house provider services into a new single community service
- Development or refresh of various policies and strategies (Customer Strategy, Digital Strategy, Corporate Asset Management Plan, Biodiversity Policy, Dementia Strategy, Autism Strategy, Carer Strategy, Adult Social Care Strategy, Community Safety Strategy, Cultural Services Strategy, Domestic Violence Strategy, Joint Exploitation Strategy)
- Redesigning of the Commissioning & Procurement Approach
- Implementation of a New Joint Care Placements Framework

1.10 Political and Constitutional Arrangements

- 1.10.1 As at 12th April 2020 the political composition of the Council changed to the following: 15 Conservative, 6 independent, 3 non-aligned and 3 Liberal Democrats.
- 1.10.2 Through the year there has been a phased transition for the role of Deputy Leader. The incumbent at the start of the Civic Year was Councillor Gordon

Brown. He made a decision to leave Cabinet for personal reasons and so arrangements were put in place for him to leave on a phased basis. The phased approach is a sign of political stability and enabled the proper handover and conclusion of key projects and tasks that he was leading. Councillor Lucy Stephenson took over as the role of Deputy Leader on 1st March 2021.

1.10.3 There have been a number of Political and Constitutional challenges throughout the year arising from the pandemic and the issues these are dealt with below. However there have been a number of issues caused by the legislative framework being inadequate. The Government brought forward legislation to enable remote meetings early in the pandemic but wrote to Council's on the 25th March 2021 informing them that it would not be making time to provide for this as at 6th May 2021. As a consequence the Council is putting in alternate arrangements that will enable meetings to proceed while COVID restrictions remain.

1.11 Elections

1.11.1 Due to the pandemic, the scheduled Police and Crime Commissioner election was postponed from 7th May 2020 and is now due to be held on 6 May 2021. In addition two parish council by-elections were called but have also been postponed until 6 May 2021.

1.11.2 2020 saw the reformed canvass model for electoral registration used across the UK for the first time. New processes were used to conduct the canvass involving a useful matching process with the DWP which resulted in cost saving on production of letters and postage. Door to door canvassing was also conducted following Government social distancing guidelines and was completed in time to produce the revised register of electors on 1 December 2020.

1.12 Constitution

1.12.1 The Council's Constitution defines the roles and responsibilities of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Scrutiny Committees and provides for extensive delegation to officers. Policy and decision making are facilitated by a clear framework of delegation set out in the Council's Constitution. The exercising of delegated powers is regulated by Financial Procedure Rules, Contract Procedure Rules and other policies and procedures.

1.12.2 The Constitution includes a list of roles of officers including officers responsible for undertaking statutory roles. The Chief Executive is the Head of Paid Service. The Deputy Director Corporate Governance is designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Strategic Director for Resources is designated as the responsible officer for the administration of the Council's financial affairs under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

1.12.3 The Audit and Risk Committee undertakes the core functions of an audit committee, in accordance with CIPFA's Audit Committees – Practical

Guidance for Local Authorities and this is set out in the Committee's terms of reference, which include the Council to act as those charged with governance on behalf of the Council.

1.12.4 The Constitution is kept under review by a working group of members appointed by the Council. This work has been largely curtailed during the pandemic. However updates to the Constitution have been made on the following areas:

- Committee Proportionality
- Officer Scheme of Delegations
- Procedure Rules - virtual meeting public speaking protocol
- Codes and Protocols – Officers' Register of Interests Protocol
- Register of Members of the Executive

1.12.5 At the Cabinet meeting held on the 21st April 2020, the Council declared an emergency because of the pandemic and the use of Emergency Powers was triggered. During the lockdown period, Council meetings were suspended but Cabinet meetings continued virtually and a virtual meeting programme was put in place following Annual Council in June.

1.12.6 Following June 2020 Council, the vast majority of decisions were made through the Council's democratic decision making structures reports a small number of decisions continue to be made under emergency powers to enable a timely response. The Decision Log was regularly made available to all Councillors to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of the emergency powers.

1.13 **Decision Making Arrangements**

1.13.1 The officer structure of the Council operates with a Chief Executive and three Directorates, entitled People, Places and Resources.

1.13.2 The Council's Chief Executive, Helen Briggs, retired in August 2020 having originally deferred her retirement following the outbreak of Covid-19. The Council appointed Mark Andrews as Interim Chief Executive from August 2020 and also appointed Dawn Godfrey and John Morley as Interim Director of Children's Services and Adult Services respectively. These officers alongside Interim Director for Places (Penny Sharp), Director for Resources (Saverio Della Rocca) and Phil Horsfield (Deputy Director/Monitoring Officer) make up Senior Management Team (SMT).

1.13.3 Matters which require a decision to be made by members are considered by the relevant Directorate Management Team (DMT), who will make a recommendation to the Strategic Management Team (SMT). If approved, the matter is reported, with a recommendation to the Cabinet or other appropriate body.

1.13.4 The Deputy Director for Corporate Governance is designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. All reports to a decision-making body must be considered by the Deputy Director

for Corporate Governance before they are submitted. This is to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures and that expenditure is lawful.

- 1.13.5 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, decisions made by officers following express delegation by the Cabinet are recorded in writing.

1.14 Performance Management

- 1.14.1 The Council has a performance management framework through which quality of service and use of resources is measured. Financial and non-financial performance is monitored by Service Teams and SMT on a regular basis and is formally reported to Scrutiny Panels and Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- 1.14.2 During 20/21, quarterly reports on corporate plan performance KPIs were switched to a mid-year and year-end report with pandemic priorities taking precedence. SMT put in place a specific performance report for pandemic matters.
- 1.14.3 The performance management framework flows through the Council, down to an individual employee level. All officers have an ongoing "Conversation" with their manager during each year. This process includes aspects of performance management including reviewing progress against objectives and targets and setting new objectives and targets for the forthcoming year. Training and development needs are also identified during this process.
- 1.14.4 The Council also has a Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy. Compliance with the Policy is reported via the performance management framework and an annual report is taken to Audit and Risk Committee for Member consideration.

1.15 Financial Management

- 1.15.1 The Council undertook an assessment of its financial management arrangements against CIPFA's Financial Management Code. The results are discussed in the section on Effectiveness but key elements are highlighted below.
- 1.15.2 The Strategic Director for Resources is designated as the responsible officer for the administration of the Council's financial affairs under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 1.15.3 All reports to a decision-making body must be considered by the Strategic Director for Resources before they are submitted to ensure the financial impact of potential decisions is clear.
- 1.15.4 The CIPFA Statement on the Role of The Chief Financial Officer in Local Government sets out the five principles that need to be met to ensure that the Chief Financial Officer can carry out the role effectively. The principles are that the Chief Financial Officer:

- Is a key member of the leadership-team;
- Must be actively involved in all material business decisions;
- Must lead the promotion and delivery of good financial management;
- Must lead and direct a finance function that is resourced to be fit for purpose;
- Must be professionally qualified and suitably experienced.

1.15.5 The Strategic Director for Resources is a member of the Council's SMT and is actively involved in the key business decisions of the Council. The post holder oversees the development and work of the financial management function at the Council and is the Council's proper officer for matters of financial administration. The post holder is professionally qualified as a CIPFA Accountant with suitable experience. It is therefore confirmed that the Council is fully compliant with the requirements set out in the CIPFA statement.

1.15.6 The Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covers a five-year period. Such an approach to financial planning provides the platform on which the Council can look to deliver public services in accordance with local priorities. Moreover, through horizon-scanning and anticipating necessary change at the earliest opportunity, the Council can plan and react accordingly to not only secure its financial position but to protect services.

1.15.7 The MTFP was updated throughout 2020/21 and periodically reported to Cabinet. The updated MTFP, following the Local Government Finance Settlement, was presented to each Scrutiny Panel by the Leader and to Council as part of the budget setting process. Members have up-to-date financial information about not only the current but also the medium-term outlook for decision making purposes.

1.15.8 In their External Auditor report issued in November 2020, the external auditors issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Authority's financial statements.

1.15.9 The Council has a set of Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs) and Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) within its Constitution which govern the way in which financial matters are conducted.

1.16 Risk Management

1.16.1 Risk Management is embedded in the Council through the Risk Management Strategy. Risk management is an integral part of the Council's decision-making processes. All Council papers include reference to risk to ensure that members and officers understand the impact of decision-making.

1.16.2 The Leader is the lead member for risk management. Each risk is assigned a member of SMT as risk owner. SMT is responsible for maintaining the register and monitoring the actions taken to mitigate the strategic risks. The Audit and Risk Committee receives regular reports on risk management, with the ability to refer particular risks to Scrutiny Panels if there is a need to look at them in more detail.

1.16.3 The register was reviewed in February 2020 by Audit and Risk Committee and

then again in February 2021. The latest risk register review took into account key events including the pandemic and Brexit.

1.16.4 The pandemic response has seen risk management become an integral consideration of systems design. For example, work on business grants, winter grant schemes and test and trace support schemes has been centred on mitigating risks around ineligibility whilst at the same time promoting access to available support.

1.16.5 Beyond the corporate risk register, the Council also has an Elections Risk Register and Fraud Risk register. Directorates also have their own risk registers albeit in different formats. These registers have not been updated in year and the move to standardise risk registers has been deferred.

1.17 Standards of Conduct

1.17.1 During 2020/21 the Monitoring Officer received 5 complaints of alleged councillor misconduct within the County compared to 13 that were received for 2019/20. 1 Complaint has been raised against Rutland County Council councillors, the rest (4) were raised against Town and Parish Councillors.

1.17.2 The Council has also (through the Monitoring Officer) actively engaged with the LGA and other bodies to feed views into the review of the Model Code of Conduct. The new Model Code of Conduct has been published will be considered in 21/22 by the Conduct Committee however it should be noted that the major reforms proposed by the Committee for Standards in Public Life are yet to receive a response from Government and legislative changes are required to enable the Council to secure significant improvements in this area.

1.18 Counter-fraud and Whistleblowing

1.18.1 The Council received 1 whistleblowing allegations during 20/21 and no reported frauds. The whistleblowing allegation was considered by senior management and Internal Audit. The required assurances and feedback were received, with no further action required.

1.19 Developing Effectiveness

1.19.1 Our ability to effectively recruit and retain quality staff is crucial to delivering Council services. Our Recruitment Policy provides the framework to recruit the right staff at the right time. We have continued to develop innovative and creative recruitment strategies which have enabled us to fill difficult to recruit posts and reduce the use of agency and interim staff.

1.19.2 During 2020, the use of our Applicant Tracking System and Rutland Recruitment Microsite played a significant part in supporting the Council continue recruitment through periods of lockdown and restrictions. The use of Zoom and Teams supported our interview process where we were otherwise unable to carry out assessment and interview on a face to face basis.

- 1.19.3 Whilst face to face delivery of training has been halted, much has continued to be provided but again via Zoom or Teams or through our Learning Management System – this has enabled continuity of essential and mandatory training. Specific supplementary training has been provided in IT skills such as use of Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- 1.19.4 Our new model of ‘One Conversation’ has continued during 2020 and indeed the model of a remote workforce has reinforced the value of ‘conversations’ between managers and their staff in order to manage workloads, key objectives, development and of growing importance, the wellbeing of staff. .
- 1.19.5 The Health and Wellbeing of our workforce has been a priority for the organisation – recognising the huge challenges and difficulties that our staff were facing as an employee and as an individual. We have delivered a range of programmes and initiatives at a corporate and local level to help support staff as best we can. Our Health and Wellbeing Group has played a key part in supporting the organisation, our managers and staff. A key part of our approach has been consistency of communication, message and support. Regular communication, guidance notes, bulletins and toolkits have all been developed to help provide useful frameworks for our staff. We have commenced a process of pulse surveys where we are now able to monitor and track changes in feelings and wellbeing.
- 1.19.6 We have seen reductions in our turnover and sickness levels during 2020 as a consequence of Lockdown and c.65% of our staff working from home (many staff continue to delivery their role in the community). The Council has drawn on existing policies and practices to support flexible ways of working.
- 1.19.7 We have also redeployed some staff to other services or COVID response work in order to cover key and new emerging areas of work – these individuals were particularly drawn from service areas that ‘stood down’ services during periods of Lockdown. We have sought to maximise our resources across the organisation as far as possible with only a small number of areas requiring additional casual support eg. Reablement, Lateral Flow Site, Covid Support Officers.
- 1.19.8 We are now turning our attention to Future Ways of Working, building on the benefits and advantages of working from home and enabling our staff to work smartly and productively.
- 1.19.9 Member development has been facilitated through various individual training sessions on a variety of subjects (long term stewardship in new communities, update for Local Authority Audit Committee members, media training and Scrutiny: Reset and Recovery) offered through organisations such as East Midlands Councils, Local Government Association and the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

1.20 **Service Delivery**

- 1.20.1 The Council is focused on delivering high quality outcomes at low cost and has always worked in partnership with an eclectic mix of Local Government

and Public Sector partners. The Council has a wide range of partners covering a wide range of service areas. Some examples are given below.

<u>Service area</u>	<u>Lead Authority Name</u>
Internal Audit	Local Government Shared Service
Welland Procurement	Melton Borough Council
Out of Hours Emergencies	Harborough District Council
Public Protection	Peterborough City Council
Emergency Planning	Leicestershire County Council
Local Safeguarding Children Board	Leicestershire County Council
Health and Safety	Peterborough City Council
Planning system	South Kesteven District Council
Adoption Services	Leicestershire County Council
Public Health	Leicestershire County Council (with shared Director)
Finance IT systems provision and administration	Herefordshire Council (local authority company, Hoople)

1.20.2 The Council's governance approach to partnerships (working with others) varies according to the legal basis of arrangements. All delegated services are covered by formal delegation agreements. Partnerships/shared services are covered by Service Level agreements. All arrangements have a Rutland Lead Officer and all documents cover scope of services, performance expected, reporting and termination clauses.

1.21 **Community Engagement, Partnership working and reporting**

1.21.1 The Council has worked closely with the Community, Voluntary and Faith (VCF) sector to support our residents during the pandemic. This has included setting up a range of services to support, in particular, those residents who are clinically extremely vulnerable and required to shield. Developments have included:

- Introducing a medicine collection scheme to enable those who are vulnerable and/or shielding to continue to access their medicine, this included working with local good neighbor schemes and the NHS first responders to identify local volunteers to support this programme.
- Working with the local Foodbank to support access to food and delivery of food for those unable to shop and who did not have access to local support through family and friends.
- Developing support for our vaccination Centre at Catmose which is supported by a large pool of local volunteers to manage the site and customer experience each day it is open, usually 2-3 days per week. This was one of the first sites launched across the region and has received

extremely positive feedback by our residents. The role of volunteers has been critical in enabling the Centre to run safely.

We have established a well-represented local groups which brings together key partners across the VCF sector and meets monthly to share key messages about local services and to promote and respond to the needs of our community. This continues to run and has proven a real asset in mobilizing community support for residents.

- 1.21.2 The Council has two projects that are part of the 'One Public Estate' programme which is supported by Central Government and aims to bring together Central and Local Government together with like-minded private sector partners to deliver services more effectively to the public. These projects relate to St Georges Barracks and the Rutland Hub. This section also includes details of our working on the Local Plan.

St Georges Barracks

- 1.21.3 In November 2016, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) announced it was to dispose of St. George's Barracks. The MOD and Rutland County Council agreed in September 2017 to work together to explore possible options for the future use of St George's Barracks in North Luffenham. Since then, High Level and Evolving Masterplans have been developed, with input from residents for the site.
- 1.21.4 The Evolving Masterplan sets out the policy context, a vision for the site and outlining the consultation process. It provides a potential future framework for redeveloping the site to create around 2,315 new homes for Rutland and more than 2,000 new jobs.
- 1.21.5 In November 2018, a bid was submitted by Rutland County Council to the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) for the project to be included in the national Garden Communities Programme.
- 1.21.6 The bid was successful, and in June 2019 it was announced that the Council would receive a proportion of the £3 million grant funding to help develop a design and layout proposal that includes the creation of innovative new dementia-friendly neighbourhoods within St. Georges.
- 1.21.7 In January 2019, Rutland County Council's Full Council approved a bid for £29.4m to be submitted to MHCLG to enable essential infrastructure and other works to be brought about in advance of the redevelopment of the St George's site.
- 1.21.8 This will underpin the viability of the project to ensure appropriate and timely investment in infrastructure is put in place. The investment would not only benefit the St George's site, but benefits will be seen across the county as roads and junctions are upgraded along with health facilities and public transport supporting the local community at and around St George's.
- 1.21.9 In November 2019 MHCLG announced that Rutland has been successful in

its application. The decision whether to accept the funding was put to Full Council in January 2020 and Councillors voted to defer the decision until further information about the terms of the grant were provided by MHCLG.

- 1.21.10 Homes England, the Government agency that administers HIF, subsequently provided details of the terms and conditions that would apply to the funding and require agreement as part of the contract. These included standard conditions that apply to all HIF (Forward Funding) schemes and six pre-contract conditions that were bespoke to the St. George's Garden Village project.
- 1.21.11 The Council rejected the offer of HIF grant in March 2021. As a result of the HIF decision, later in March Rutland County Council wrote to the Planning Inspectorate to confirm when it intends to provide an update on Rutland's Local Plan Examination. Following confirmation from the Planning Inspectorate that Rutland's Local Plan Examination would need to be paused until there is clarity on the possible implications of the HIF decision, discussions are ongoing about funding for infrastructure and the viability of current St Georges Garden Community proposals. Once concluded, the outcome of these discussions will be reported back to a future Full Council meeting. Following this meeting, the Council hopes to be able to confirm its position regarding the Local Plan Examination.

Local Plan

- 1.21.12 The Local Plan sets out planning policies for the Rutland area, as well as listing sites for additional housing, employment and other development for the period 2018 to 2036.
- 1.21.13 Regulation 19 Consultation inviting residents, businesses and other stakeholders to comment on the soundness of the Local Plan took place between August and November 2020.
- 1.21.14 Consultation was originally postponed, owing to the outbreak of Covid-19. Consultation was opened on 27th August. Rutland County Council sought views on whether the Local Plan is legally compliant and meets the tests of 'soundness' as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.21.15 The Council received 1058 representations submitted by 338 representors (224 individuals and 114 organisations (including Parish Councils, planning consultants on behalf of developers, stakeholders and local resident groups)). Five sets of representations (included within the above) were formally supported by a list of named individuals wishing to put on record their support for the representations made.
- 1.21.16 In line with the Council resolution and as no unforeseen and significant issues have arisen post Publication that would require re-consideration of the Local Plan, the Local Plan and all relevant supporting documents were submitted to the Secretary of State on 3rd February 2021.
- 1.21.17 Responses submitted as part of the Regulation 19 Consultation, together with

the Local Plan and all supporting documents, were submitted to the Secretary of State who will appoint an independent Planning Inspectorate, who will conduct an independent review of the plan and all of the representations received, to determine whether the plan is sound. This is called an Examination in Public.

- 1.21.18 The Council will be advised of the timetable for the public examination after the independent Planning Inspector has been appointed subject to the comments made in 1.21.11.

Working with the business community

- 1.21.19 This year's primary focus has been managing the deployment of multiple Covid-19 Business Support Grants. The Economic Development Team worked with the Revenues and Benefits team and the Communications and the IT teams to create an effective cross-Council group. This group has ensured the effective and timely deployment of grants in excess of £6m since April 2020. This is in addition to the £12m announced by the Government at the end of March 2020 and deployed to businesses through April and May 2020.

- 1.21.20 A Grant Application for £35,600 to the Communities and Local Government Unit was successful. The funds have been used to support our high streets to operate safely within Guidelines for example through provision of social distancing signage as well as communications campaigns to assist those using the high street.

- 1.21.21 Rutland is now strategically aligned with Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Council and we are contributing to the development of plans to support economic recovery and growth across Lincolnshire and Rutland. Our local businesses also have access to specialist business advisors via the Lincolnshire Growth Hub; providing access to information about programmes and initiatives to support growth.

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-council/council-news/council-agrees-financial-support-package-for-sports-centre/>

- 1.21.22 We also organise an Annual Tourism Forum through the Discover Rutland Tourism Committee for groups, businesses and individuals connected with tourism in the local area. This year's forum took place in a virtual format on 30th November and included a review of achievements in the previous 12 months, the sector Covid Recovery Plan, and insights from Visit England.

<https://www.discover-rutland.co.uk/>

Working with health

- 1.21.23 In parallel with jointly mobilising health and care organisations across LLR to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, the LLR Sustainability and Transformation Partnership continued to look further ahead, reshaping health and care services

in 2020-21 around the needs of the LLR population under the Better Care Together programme. In line with the 2019 NHS Long Term Plan, LLR moved into its next phase of integration by demonstrating its readiness to become an 'Integrated Care System' (ICS), and transitioning to this status in April 2021.

- 1.21.24 LLR is now formally recognised as a designated ICS which enables the system to move forward at pace to deliver its full ambitions. This will be achieved through harnessing the collective power of its health and care partnership to deliver better services and tackle inequalities which lead to unfair and avoidable differences in the health of local people. Prevention will be a stronger dimension of joint working, as will using population health data and management to better shape and target services. How Adult Social Care and Public Health fit into the picture is progressively being clarified. The LLR programme is a standing item at the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.21.25 Under the umbrella of the emerging ICS, preparatory stages were undertaken through collaboration between local partners for the creation of a Place-based health and care plan for Rutland, as required by the NHS Long Term Plan. This mechanism will enable more decisions about how health and care services are structured and funded to be determined at the local level, overseen by the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board. Rutland is both a Place (the Local Authority tier) and a Locality (mapped to the Rutland Health Primary Care Network of GP practices), opening up significant potential for partners to plan Rutland's health and care services in a more integrated way than ever before, through a close alliance between the Council, the Rutland GP practices, community health services and the voluntary and community sector. The Place plan, in preparation now, is for delivery in 2022-25.
- 1.21.26 In parallel, delivery of the local Better Care Fund programme in 2020/21 was undertaken against the challenging context of the pandemic. Council, NHS and community sector partners continued to provide integrated health and social care approaches tailored to the Rutland context, adapting delivery to respond to the exceptional circumstances experienced over the last year. This included changing modes of delivery to be Covid safe, with increased remote service delivery by phone or video call and extensive use of robust Infection Prevention and Control procedures and equipment for face to face services. While most of the programme was delivered as planned, some services were downscaled or temporarily put on hold to enable Covid-related services to be stood up, while some other change proposals were deferred until after the pandemic.
- Unified prevention remained an important focus. This year, the RISE social prescribing service has gone from strength to strength. This is an innovative collaboration between the Council and the Rutland GP practices, which aims to support people facing mental and/or physical ill-health or other challenges to feel more empowered to manage their situation and to pursue personal wellbeing goals that matter to them. The Covid situation created strong demand for these services, as well as for the support provided under the banner of the Community Wellbeing Service. Council and VCF services have worked together closely across the year to support people facing a wide variety of

wellbeing-related issues. Plans to put in place a shared secure online referral system for social prescribing will be implemented next year when conditions are more favourable.

- Alongside mainstream community health and social care services, services to support people to remain living independently at home continued throughout the pandemic, including assistance from the expanded Admiral dementia nurse service, the Carers team, the Assistive Technology service and Housing MOT home checks. Delivery methods were adjusted across the year to ensure the safety of service users. The Disabled Facilities Grant was committed to home adaptation projects supporting independent living, but implementation of the majority of these projects was deferred due to lockdown rules and, when building was allowed, to challenges in working safely in people's homes or obtaining building materials. Projects deferred will be lined up for delivery in 2021/22. We are anticipating strong demand for services whose delivery had to be interrupted, such as strength and balance classes, as part of Covid recovery.
- Hospital avoidance and prompt discharge from hospital when medically fit have both been high priorities this year given the pressures on acute services caused by the pandemic. An amended Discharge to Assess process was embedded in which patients were discharged to interim care arrangements if required, while their care needs were confirmed. Micare has helped to facilitate this by providing 'safety net' care while needs were being confirmed and care commissioned. As part of this, Micare provided care services to Covid positive individuals when these were difficult to obtain through the provider market, enabling people to be cared for at home where this was appropriate.

1.21.27 During the pandemic, the Council worked closely with health colleagues to help to ensure the wellbeing of those vulnerable to coronavirus. The RISE team, working with others in the Council and beyond, undertook over 2000 'safe and well' calls to vulnerable people asked to shield during each of the three lockdowns to check that they were able to keep themselves safe and well. Issues faced included safe access to food, maintaining mental wellbeing and reducing social isolation, accessing care when informal carers could not visit, and dealing with financial or housing related difficulties. The Council has also helped to ensure that older people eligible for Covid vaccination but not contactable by their GP were contacted to come forward for vaccination, and that people diagnosed with Covid-19 were self-isolating as required.

Other Engagement

1.21.28 The Council undertakes public engagement and consultation on a range of matters. Outside of the matters discussed above, in 2020/21 this included:

- Barrowden & Wakerley Neighbourhood Plan
- 2020/21 Annual Budget Consultation
- Learning Disability Market Position Statement
- Armed Forces Survey

- Rutland Older People's Accommodation Market Position Statement
- Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment for Rutland
- Local Transport Plan
- Community Safety
- Housing Strategy
- Statement of Community Involvement

1.21.29 Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 the Council was in the process of developing its communications and engagement approach and this work is being revisited.

1.21.30 As indicated in paragraph 1.9.6 the Council has started its Future Conversation with residents.

1.22 Reporting

1.22.1 All formal meetings are held in public, and the reports and minutes of those meetings are published in accordance with the principles of openness and transparency, unless there are legal reasons for confidentiality. There are opportunities for members of the public to make deputations to, or ask questions at, meetings of the Council, Committees and Scrutiny Committees.

1.22.2 The Council publishes information relating to all of its expenditure on its website and also complies fully with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 which sets out the minimum data that local authorities should be publishing and the frequency it should be published and how it should be published. The information published can be found here.

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-council/transparency/>

Review of Effectiveness

1.23 Overview

1.23.1 The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of its effectiveness is informed by the work of senior managers within the Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, and also comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

1.24 Internal and Management Assurance

Internal Audit

1.24.1 Assurance - It is my opinion that Satisfactory Assurance can be given over the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's control environment for 2020/21. This control environment comprises of the system of internal control,

governance arrangements and risk management. This remains consistent with the overall opinion given in recent years.

- 1.24.2 Financial control - Controls relating to the key financial systems which were reviewed during the year were concluded to be generally operating effectively with no significant control weaknesses identified by audit testing.
- 1.24.3 Risk management - Established structures and processes for identifying, assessing and managing risk remained consistent during 2020/21. The strategic risk register was subject to a thorough review in 2020 and was reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee in February 2021.
- 1.24.4 Internal Audit work is targeted upon the Council's key areas of risk and work completed in 2020/21 has assessed assurances in relation to controls in some of the key areas highlighted on the register.
- 1.24.5 Governance - During 2020/21, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a number of restrictions and a range of additional responsibilities placed upon the Council to drive the national response and support to local communities. During this period, controls were promptly implemented to support transparent decision making and alignment with the Council's Constitution. This included a comprehensive record of delegated decisions - detailing the delegation applied, the reasoning and the consultation conducted. This log has been shared with Internal Audit on a weekly basis and informed an ongoing review of governance throughout the year.
- 1.24.6 Based on the findings of Internal Audit work in 2020/21, there are no significant governance issues that I wish to draw to the attention of the Council for inclusion in its Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.24.7 **Internal control** - For the audits completed in 2020/21, 100% of the opinions given in relation to the control environment and compliance have been of at least Satisfactory Assurance.
- 1.24.8 Internal Audit has not been made aware of any further governance, risk or internal control issues which would reduce the above opinion. No systems of controls can provide absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss, nor can Internal Audit give that assurance.

1.25 **Scrutiny**

- 1.25.1 The Council has three scrutiny committees, which within their respective areas of responsibility; Adults and Health, Children and Young People, and Growth, Infrastructure and Resources, influence policies, scrutinise decisions made by the Council and review services provided by the Council and its partners.
- 1.25.2 Decisions made by the Cabinet may be called in by a scrutiny committee in

accordance with the provisions of the scrutiny procedure rules laid out in the Constitution. (Procedure rule 206).

1.25.3 During 2020/21 Scrutiny meetings were put on hold during the early part of the pandemic but resumed from June.

1.25.4 Areas considered this municipal year include:

- The Local Plan, including the Statement of Community Involvement
- Adult Social Care response to Covid 19
- The response to the OFSTED and the Children Services Improvement Plan
- The Housing Infrastructure Fund Contract
- The Parking Strategy
- CQC Review of Safeguarding and Children Looked After Health Services
- SEND and Inclusion Service
- Participation and Engagement Strategy
- Experience of health and social care in Rutland during the Covid 19 lockdown

1.25.5 Scrutiny Committees also consider service area performance indicators in relation to their scope and remit as set out in the terms of reference for each committee.

1.25.6 In depth scrutiny reviews (task and finish groups) have not been undertaken this year due to the additional time demands this would make for officers already dealing with the pressures of Covid-19 work.

1.25.7 The work of last year's task and finish group on Biodiversity, which had been halted during the pandemic, has recently resumed.

1.25.8 The Scrutiny Commission continues to provide a platform for Chairs of each committee to meet and share best practice.

1.25.9 The Commission have sought views on improving the scrutiny process and will be outlining shared ideals in their end of year Annual Scrutiny Report to Council.

1.26 **Complaints**

1.26.1 Due to the pandemic, the Councils Annual Compliments, Comments and Complaints report had been delayed. A general Information Governance Annual report, including complaints, will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at the start of the new municipal year.

1.26.2 Stage 1 complaint response times show that 94% (62 out of 66) of stage 1 complaints are answered within the deadlines set within the complaints policies. Stage 1 complaints have further reduced by nearly a third (30%) on 20/21.

1.26.3 Improvement has been made with 100% (18 out of 18) of stage 2 complaints answered within the deadlines. Stage 2 complaints have also reduced by

nearly a third (29%).

1.27 Financial management arrangements

1.27.1 The Council undertook an assessment of its financial management arrangements against CIPFA's Financial Management Code. This exercise was done by the s151 Officer in consultation with the outgoing Portfolio Holder for Finance (changed from 23rd February). This assessment was then independently reviewed by the new Portfolio Holder for Finance and SMT. The key improvement areas are:

- The need to develop an Asset Management Plan that articulates the condition of the current asset portfolio, the corporate need/fit of assets and the Council's approach to asset management, disposal and acquisition;
- Increasing the frequency of budget discussions with Cabinet members (in between formal quarterly reporting) and then briefing Members;
- Completion of the effectiveness assessment of Audit and Risk Committee;
- Refresher finance training for budget managers and Members;
- Integrating financial management and operational performance management.

1.27.2 The Council will work up plans to address these issues over the next year.

1.28 Financial performance and resilience

1.28.1 Various financial reports on financial management were presented to Cabinet during the year. The reporting cycle did not follow the usual pattern of quarterly reporting until Quarter 2 with an update report in advance of that focusing on the impact of Covid-19.

1.28.2 The quarterly reports analysed the financial position against the approved budget but also explained what additional funding had been received and how this was used. The additional Covid-19 funding did enable the Council to respond appropriately to the pandemic in year and went along way to compensate the Council for increased costs and the loss of income.

1.28.3 At the year the Council was £2.2m underspent. A full copy of the Council's Outturn report can be found at:

<https://rutlandcounty.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s20051/Report%20No.662021%20-%20Outturn%20Report.pdf>

1.28.4 The underspend will be used in 21/22 to offset any further Covid impacts and increased service costs in future years.

1.28.5 Prior to Covid-19, the Council was already forecasting a financial gap (it plans to spend more than it receives in funding) of c£1.5m - £2m and this gap increased to £2.4m following the Local Government Finance Settlement which offered little new funding.

1.28.6 The 21/22 budget was therefore balanced using £2.4m of reserves. The s151 Officer gave the following advice in the budget report:

“The Council must commit to producing a balanced budget i.e. one that does not rely on reserves by 23/24. The Council must start work now to close the gap. It should aim to make savings in year and be underspent against its 21/22 budget by at least £1m. It should also commence work on other projects that will enable it to reduce reliance on reserves to a minimum of £1m by 22/23”.

1.28.7 Council members understand that this position is not sustainable in the medium term and is working on a range of strategies to address this position as part of its response. This involves:

- Starting a series of key strategic projects in critical service areas that will examine and revisit the current Council's offer
- Identifying options now to save money/generate income

1.28.8 This work will be brought through the governance processes in the first quarter of the 21/22 financial year.

1.29 Corporate performance

1.29.1 Performance of the Council towards achieving the objectives laid out in the corporate Plan is monitored through the use of a number of key performance indicators. At the end of 2020/21, despite the significant impact of the pandemic, performance across the authority remains good. Of those indicators where data is available 72% were achieved during the year. The areas where the Council is below target includes:

- Net additional homes provided.
- Number of affordable homes delivered.

1.29.2 The impact of Covid-19 on the national and local economy, including the restrictions on the construction industry during the national lockdown has contributed to the reduced performance for these indicators. There is evidence that the housing market in Rutland is still buoyant and with the continued easing of restrictions it is reasonable to assume that rates of housebuilding will rise from the level experienced in 2020/21.

- % of eligible children registered with Children's Centre.
- % of target families registered with sustained engagement.

The Children's Centre has been closed for the majority of the last year and this has impacted upon the number of families who are registering with the service face to face service delivery which has reduced engagement levels.

1.29.2 As indicated above, alongside a refresh of the Corporate Plan, the Council will review its performance management framework in the final quarter of 21/22. This will include various aspects:

- Aligning performance measures with new objectives/priorities

- Consideration of extending performance information to include areas not currently covered e.g. carbon footprint, staff wellbeing, customer information
- Bringing together financial information into the corporate performance report
- Reviewing performance systems to ensure they facilitate the efficient collection and reporting of information.

1.30 Information Governance and related issues

- 1.30.1 The Data Security and Protection Toolkit is an NHS online self-assessment tool that allows us to measure our Information Governance performance. Organisations that have access to NHS patient data and systems must complete this assessment to provide assurance that personal data is handled correctly.
- 1.30.2 Due to the pandemic the deadline for the completion of the 2020/21 submission has been delayed until June 2021.
- 1.30.3 Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) - Due to the pandemic the Councils Annual FOI report has been delayed. A general Information Governance Annual report, including complaints, will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at the start of the new municipal year.
- 1.30.4 1516 FOI and EIR requests were received by the Council in 2020/21; 88% answered within 20 days. No complaints have been reported to or investigated by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). 9 requests required an internal review. 7 reviews have been completed with satisfied with the outcome. A further 2 reviews are ongoing.
- 1.30.5 Personal Data Breaches – The Council recorded 17 reports of potential data breaches in 20/21. This is a 40% reduction on last year. All were investigated to satisfactory conclusion with actions and recommendations completed to mitigate further incidents of a similar nature. 2 data breaches were escalated to the ICO and in all cases the Council were found to have taken the appropriate measures with all actions completed.
- 1.30.6 Subject Access Requests (SAR's) – The Council received 46 SAR's in 2020/21 compared to 47 in 2019/20. With an average number of 952 pages for each response during 2020/21.
- 1.30.7 In March 2021 the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) undertook a remote inspection as part of their programme of inspections and covered the use of directed surveillance and covert human intelligence sources (CHIS) in accordance with the provisions of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the acquisition of communications data in accordance with the provisions of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. The full report has been presented to the Audit and Risk Committee in April 2021, with the following recommendations to be completed by April 2022.
- A refresh of the Policy

- Staff training updated

1.30.8 The Council continues to participate in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) programme and investigated possible matches in the following areas. For 2020/21 only Electoral Registration and Council Tax datasets were required, matches are then identified where households are getting single occupant discounts but other datasets possibly reflect that more than one resident is in the household. Rutland had 1,737 matches to review.

- Council Tax to Electoral Register - 957
- Council Tax rising 18s – 17
- Council Tax to other datasets – 22
- Council Tax to HMRC household composition - 741

1.30.9 The Council investigated all possible lines of enquiry and no matches suggested actual fraud had occurred.

1.30.10 Proactive work was undertaken in respect of Council Tax Single Persons Discounts. Recipients were contacted to confirm their ongoing eligibility. This has resulted in c£38.3k of savings as discounts have been withdraw where recipients have not responded or have confirmed their circumstances have changed.

Project Management

1.30.11 The Council has a Project Management Framework which includes the role of the Project Management Office, a scalable Project Management Methodology and Project Management Support. All new project managers coming into the Council are provided training on the methodology to ensure consistency of approach. The updated Project Management Methodology is in use for all corporate projects and has been useful in managing some of our more high-risk projects.

1.30.12 Progress on all projects is also monitored through SMT to understand and overcome any potential issues/risks before they become problematic. This provides an additional layer of challenge outside of the local governance structures put in place for each project (e.g. project boards), and allows for the independent escalation of issues.

1.30.13 The Council delivered the following projects in year.

Project	Outcome
Covid Recovery Programme	Series of projects/work to be carried out in response to the impact of Covid-19 on service areas
PCC Election	Deliver PCC election, ensuring that: - Voters can vote easily and know that their vote will be counted in the way they intended. - Candidates standing for election can find out how to get involved, what the rules are, and what they have to do to comply with these rules, and they can have confidence in the management of the process and the result.

Project	Outcome
Capita Cloud Hosting	Migration of the Capita system from an on premise server on to the Cloud platform
Digital Rutland – Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN)	To deliver full fibre upgrades to key public sector sites and provide stimulus to further commercial deployment of full fibre
MyAccount	Service Request management system developed and to be made available (in July) to customer to provide an online channel for them to raise their service requests.
Future Rutland	1) To understand what matters most to the people of Rutland (residents and businesses) for how they live their lives in the County 2) To develop a conversation with the people of Rutland to support the Council to establish a clear vision for the county that us used to inform decision making and key strategies 3) To engage more with people who do not normally engage with the council with Council communications or consultations
Rutland One Public Estate - St Georges (inc. HIF)	To develop a sustainable garden village following the closure of St George's barracks
Waste Contracts (inc. Contract Extensions)	Project to re-procure all of the waste services through a rationalised approach to determine synergies across services, starting with the extension of contracts to 2024
Leisure Contract (inc. Contract Extension)	Project to re-procure leisure services through a rationalised approach to determine the needs to the community before any decisions are made on the service to be provided
Highways Contract	Project to re-procure Highways Term Contract through a rationalised approach before any decisions are made on the service to be provided
Local Plan	To deliver a local plan that has been through the proper consultation process and approvals from Government
SEND Capital Programme	Project to commit DfE Special provision funds to provide SEND facilities and positively impact the High Needs Budget
Catmose Extension Project	The expansion of Catmose College to provide the ability to take on additional students

Business Continuity

1.30.14 Specific recovery plans are in place for the five key threats listed below.

- loss of key staff (skills/knowledge);
- loss of telephone system;
- loss of buildings.
- loss of ICT and
- loss of utilities.

1.30.15 The business continuity plans also consider the loss of key suppliers across areas, the impact on services and how quickly service provision can be restored through alternative arrangements.

1.30.16 Some aspects of the plans were put into place as part of the Council's response to Covid-19. As part of an ongoing lessons learnt exercise, Business Continuity Plans were reviewed by the Local Resilience Forum and highlighted some areas for improvement.

1.30.17 The improvements points included:

- Embed training and review of staff's allocated resilience roles to increase staff and organisational resilience
- Embed concurrent incident response with regards to internal response structure and staffing
- Implement business continuity plan gap analysis
- Review business continuity plans and amend to include additional information that may be required for response to a second wave of COVID- 19
- Review business continuity plans and include considerations regarding external contractor provision
- Reprioritise medium term working arrangements to anticipate COVID 19 response becoming part of normal service
- Maintain current staff wellbeing programme

1.30.18 The Council has now commissioned the LRF to help develop a new BC plan framework based on work they have already completed at some other Leicestershire districts.

Management Assurance

1.30.19 Managers have all completed an assurance statement highlighting whether there may be controls issues in their areas. As expected, there are areas where improvements are required as identified through audit reports or other work. None of the issues raised are considered to be Significant Control issues.

1.31 External Audit, Inspections and Reviews

External Audit

1.31.1 The Audit and Risk Committee has received and formally debated the Annual Audit Letter and External Audit Annual Plan. The new auditors Grant Thornton, in their Annual Governance Report for 2019/20 gave the Council an unqualified conclusion on the Statement of Accounts and Value for Money opinion. No concerns were reported regarding the Council's arrangements for securing financial resilience.

OFSTED

1.31.2 There has been no formal inspection activity undertaken by Ofsted in Rutland

since the ILACS inspection in March 2020. In January 2021, an annual engagement meeting took place with the Ofsted regional director and senior HMI to discuss Children's Services self-assessment and progress since the previous inspection. Ofsted are likely to undertake an ILACS focussed visit to Rutland Children's Services in May/June 2021.

- 1.31.3 As a result we have refreshed our Children's Services improvement plan which was signed off by the Children's Services Improvement Board in March 2021.

Ingson Review

- 1.32 In October 2021 we invited Ingson Consultancy to undertake a review of assessments and care planning for children subject to (i) child protection plans and (ii) children looked after in Rutland. The purpose of this was to review progress in relation to the Ofsted improvement plan and benchmark improvement since the inspection report published in March 2020.

Key findings:

- Voice of the child: Many plans, assessments and case notes offer good information about children and young people and descriptions of their life circumstances. The views and wishes of children were often paraphrased or written in adult language and the child's direct words had not always been recorded. This is a key focus for development for Rutland.
- Plans: The review identified work to be done on making and progressing plans highlighting that while some child protection plans are comprehensive, they sometimes leave little room for development of the plan by the core group. Good practice was noted in terms of looked after review meetings focusing on the important issues for children and actively progressing the plan.
- Assessments: In terms of analysis assessments reviewed in Rutland showed mixed practice in this area, with the majority showing some evidence of analysis which could have been expanded further. However, there was also some good practice in this area and examples of good analyses can be found in recent assessments.
- Management Oversight: The quality of the supervision recording was variable: some were reasonable or good, but others lacked depth and clear focus. Supervision and management oversight was seen to be better in the Child Protection Cohort.

- 1.32.1 As a result of this, we:

- Have strengthened our improvement actions plan to focus further on the areas of practice identified above.

- Workshops held with social work team on recording direct voice of the child to be led by Rutland participation and engagement lead
- Bespoke programme of mentoring and coaching for social work managers in relation to good supervision practice
- Investment in recording system for social care to reflect Signs of Safety methodology in assessments and plans

Regional Peer Challenge

1.32.2 In March 2021 Derbyshire County Council came to Rutland as part of the East Midlands Regional Sector Led Improvement programme. The focus of the peer challenge was the higher than average re-referrals to children's social care. The findings of this challenge confirmed our own analysis that there remained work to be done with our partners in their understanding of their responsibilities in early intervention and this is an area of focus for our children's services review. We are still awaiting the final report.

Public Services Network compliance

1.32.3 The Council must demonstrate compliance with the Public Services Network (PSN) on an annual basis. The PSN is an information assurance mechanism to support the connection of the Council's network to other government networks. The Council undertakes an IT Security Health-Check annually (carried out by an accredited third party) to identify any compliance issues. Once these have been addressed, the Council completes a PSN renewal submission. This check was carried out in January 2021 and the Council is expecting to submit a new PSN submission in May 2021.

2. Summary

This statement has been considered by the Audit and Risk Committee, who were satisfied that it is an accurate reflection of the governance framework and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework.

2.1 Significant Governance Issues

In the 19/20, the Council highlighted one significant governance issue.

"The Council has been undertaking work in relation to the management and administration of Community Infrastructure Levy. It has identified a historic significant governance issue and is preparing a report for Cabinet for December to consider the matters arising as they fall within its remit. Whilst details are still being finalised, for the purpose of the AGS, we deem the issue to be a Significant Governance Issue and can report the following:

- The full-time CIL Officer left the Council in 2017, and until recently, the management and administration of CIL has been undertaken by temporary interim agency support with periods when the post was not covered.
- This situation is now resolved with a full-time permanent member of staff in post.

- The new CIL officer has undertaken an internal review of the CIL process initially in operation between 2016 and 2019. This uncovered issues related to software connectivity between the planning application case management system and the CIL monitoring system, as well as some procedural “gaps” which resulted in a number of potential unclaimed CIL liabilities during this period.
- Each historic case has been researched in detail and then considered by a team led by the Director of Places with specialist external legal support and the Council’s Monitoring Officer.
- The above review has concluded that certain CIL liabilities can no longer be collected from developers i.e. CIL income which was due to the Council is effectively lost. The value is estimated at £150k but this could reach a figure of £181k.
- An improvement plan is in place, which has been informed by Internal Audit, and this will be detailed in the Cabinet report with a suggestion that the Audit and Risk Committee receive a further report detailing action taken to implement the improvement plan”.

An update on this significant risk was reported to Cabinet on 31st July 2020 with a follow-up report considered by Cabinet on 17th November 2020. At that meeting, it was noted that, as a result of the issues outlined in that report, a small number of Parish and Town Councils may have missed out on CIL Payments. As a consequence, (and in addition to the recommendations made in the Report) Cabinet considered that, as Parish and Town Councils had not received CIL payments they may otherwise have received, the County Council should make equivalent payments to the amount of CIL. This recommendation from Cabinet was considered and approved by full Council at its meeting held on 11th January 2021.

Following these decisions and as there is a continued implementation of the improvement plan, this matter is now considered closed.

Certification

As Leader and Chief Executive, we have been advised on the implications of the results of the review of effectiveness of the Council's governance framework, by the Audit Committee and Cabinet.

Our overall assessment is that the Annual Governance Statement is a balanced reflection of the governance environment and that an adequate framework exists within Rutland County Council to ensure effective internal control is maintained. We are also satisfied that there are appropriate plans in place to address any significant governance issues and in particular that changes made to planning procedures should minimise the risk of a similar problem reoccurring.

Signed: _____

Mark Andrews, Chief Executive

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Oliver Hemsley, Leader of the Council

Date: _____

Glossary

Agresso	Rutland County Councils finance software system
AGS	Annual Governance Statement
BAU	Business as Usual
CHIS	Covert Intelligent Human Sources
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance
CPR's	Contract Procedure Rules
CQC	Care Quality Commission
DfE	Department for Education
DMT	Directorate Management Team
EIR	Environmental Information regulations
ELRCCG	East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group
FOI	Freedom of Information
GP	General Practitioner
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HIF	Housing Infrastructure Fund
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office
ICS	Integrated Care System
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILACS	Inspections of local authority children's services
IPCO	Investigatory Powers Commissioning Office
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LLR	Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland
LRF	Local Resilience Forum
LRG	Local Resilience Group
LSCG	Local Strategic Coordinating Group
LTCG	Local Tactical Coordinating Group
MHCLG	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
MICARE	Rutland County Councils Supported Living and Day Opportunities Service – Adults Social Care
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MTFP	Medium Term Financial Plan
NHS	National Health Service
NFI	Nation Fraud Initiative
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PSN	Public Services Network
RALSS	Rutland Adult Learning Skills Service
RCC	Rutland County Council
RISE	Rutland Integrated Social Empowerment – Adults Social Care
RSCG	Rutland Strategic Commissioning Group
RTCG	Rutland Tactical Commissioning Group
SEND	Special Educations Needs and Disabilities

SMT	Strategic Management Team
SOLACE	Network for local government and public sector professionals
VCF	Voluntary Community Faith

DRAFT