

Appendix 2

Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

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 2022 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 21/22 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 invoked the emergency delegation in the Constitution (11.10.5) which allowed 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." The Council also used the provisions in the Financial Procedure Rules (4.6) which allowed 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 Rutland Strategic Coordinating Group (RSCG) comprising of senior management and a Rutland Tactical Coordinating Group (RTCG) involving key officers from across the Council.

1.8.3 During 20/21 these corporate arrangements were still in place but by the end of the financial year and the start of 21/22 meetings were less frequent (weekly rather than several times a week) as the vaccination roll out progressed, Council services started to move back towards 'normal' and the Government had announced a four-stage plan for the lifting of lockdown measures. However, it was still necessary to maintain social distancing, wear masks and follow the various other safety measures that were needed to keep COVID in check and the Council's services was still heavily involved in Covid delivery including:

- Hosting the Rutland's vaccination centre in the Council Chamber;
- Running the testing centre at Oakham Enterprise Park which was still open for lateral flow tests;
- Operating temporary booking system for the HWRC until the full service was re-opened in July;
- Re-opening the libraries from April 12th;
- Organising the Community Collect network which was in place with tests available from local libraries;
- Operating a business grants scheme with the remaining balance of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) allocation of £202,000;
- Re-opening the Museum and Castle in May and introducing longer opening hours in July;

- Winding down testing at Oakham Enterprise Park from July and moving to a more community-focused testing service, with more testing kits distributed direct to residents through local volunteer organisations and community groups;
 - Work closely with health colleagues to facilitate hospital discharge and reduce the pressure on NHS services alongside direct contact with vulnerable people, to make sure they are receiving the right support; and
 - Continuing to operate a self-isolation payments scheme for those affected.
 - Running a new grant scheme following the onset of Omicron.
- 1.8.4 From a governance perspective, emergency powers continued but were used less frequently with the Council's calendar of meetings being reinstated albeit with most meetings being held virtually (under the virtual meeting regulations) except Council.
- 1.8.5 The Decision-Making Log which was created for the use of the emergency powers (and other delegated powers that were deployed during the crisis) was still used. This Log was created to record the decisions that had been made, who was consulted in relation to each decision and the powers that they have been made under. A redacted version of the Log was published on the Council's website.
- 1.8.6 Delivering a response to the pandemic continued to be fraught with challenges. The timing of Government guidance often created uncertainty and confusion which was compounded by the lack of detail when it did eventually arrive. This not only impacted the Council but businesses and other partners the Council were working with. One of the key challenges was also around resourcing – whilst staff were diverted from non-Covid activities, decisions about whether to bring in additional resource were made difficult by uncertainty about how long the pandemic would go on and uncertainty around future funding.
- 1.8.7 The impacts and consequences from the pandemic on the Council are difficult to separate out from Brexit, the onset of the war in Ukraine and other issues impacting the economy. The Council noted this as a key risk on its strategic risk register but has since deleted it and is tracking impacts through monitoring service challenges. The two key risks can be categorised as follows:
- Financial – the Council Government received funding to deal specifically with the response, some of which it was required to passport to providers. In general, funding has been sufficient to cover any short term costs. In terms of key income generating services then income was impacted but towards the end of March income levels started to return to pre Covid levels. The collection rate for council tax have held up but additional support was provided to the most financially vulnerable. Business rates income has not dropped as many businesses enjoyed rate relief and again this will be monitored into 22/23. Towards the end of the year, we began to see significant inflationary pressures (energy, staff costs from National Living Wage and National insurance rises) from suppliers as the cost of living crisis kicked in but it is difficult to attribute this solely to the pandemic.
 - Operational impacts – with key services stopped and resources diverted, officers have reinstated key services and are catching up on backlogs. To

date, it has been difficult to point to significant impacts, but the position continues to be monitored.

- 1.8.8 In December 2021 the Internal Audit team undertook a review of how the Council has responded to some aspects of the pandemic and gave positive assurance. This review was considered by the Audit and Risk Committee.

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 The Council has reported on performance against the Corporate Plan throughout 21/22 with high level performance reports provided to all Councillors on a quarterly basis with an in-depth report presented to Cabinet in quarter 2 and an annual report covering the full year, including Quarter 4, scheduled for Full Council in July.

Future Rutland Vision and new Corporate Strategy

- 1.9.5 The Future Rutland Vision (FRV) is a shared Vision for the County which reflects the aspirations of residents, captured following the Future Rutland Conversation - an extensive community engagement exercise.

- 1.9.6 The Future Rutland Conversation followed 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.

- 1.9.7 The Future Rutland Conversation was launched in April 2021 as an opportunity for the people of Rutland to have their say on how they would like the future of the County to look like. Between April and June 2021, more than 2,000 people took part in surveys and discussions to find out what they value most about life in Rutland. This information was then reviewed and published in a series of 10 summary reports that can be viewed online at: www.rutland.gov.uk/futurerutland. Later, residents were invited to review these reports and provide further feedback on what had been shared by others.

- 1.9.8 All of these views and comments have since been translated into a final Vision for the future of the County which was endorsed by Cabinet in March and

Council in April.

- 1.9.9 Members are in the process of developing a new Corporate Strategy to better reflect the needs of the County and the current landscape, following the pandemic. The Future Rutland Vision (FRV), alongside the Council's current strategic plans and commitments, provided the basis for the new Corporate Strategy which sets out how the Council will contribute to the aspirations contained within the FRV, outlined through a series of commitments against each of the four priority themes.
- 1.9.10 The new Corporate Strategy was approved by Cabinet for consultation and will be finalised for Full Council approval in July subject to feedback.

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-council/my-councillors/council-leaders-blog/our-new-corporate-strategy-23-may-2022/>

1.10 Political and Constitutional Arrangements

- 1.10.1 As of 1st April 2021 the political composition of the Council's Groups was as follows: 15 Conservative, 6 Independent and Green, 3 Liberal Democrats and 3 non-aligned. There were a number of changes to the political composition of the Council throughout the year, and these are covered below and in the Elections section of the statement.
- 1.10.2 In May at the Annual Council meeting, Councillor Jeff Dale (non-aligned Independent) was elected to serve as the Council's Chairman. Councillor Nick Begy (Conservative) was chosen to continue as Vice-Chairman.
- 1.10.3 Appointments for Councillors to chair individual Scrutiny Committees were also made at Annual Council, as follows:
- Councillor Samantha Harvey (Conservative) – Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee
 - Councillor Paul Ainsley (Conservative) – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Commission
 - Councillor June Fox (Conservative) – Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Committee
- 1.10.4 A number of changes to Cabinet roles were also confirmed at Annual Council. Councillor Ian Razzell joined the Council's Cabinet as Portfolio Holder for Planning. Councillor Karen Payne's portfolio was expanded to include Governance and Performance.
- 1.10.5 In November, Councillors Alan Walters and Paul Ainsley, Ward Members for Oakham Northeast, and Oakham Northwest respectively, left the Conservative group to sit as non-aligned Independents.
- 1.10.6 Councillor Walters also left Cabinet and was replaced by Councillor Samantha Harvey on 13 December 2021 with Councillor Gale Waller (Liberal Democrat) becoming the Chair of Adults and Health Scrutiny.
- 1.10.7 At this time Cllr Ian Razzell's portfolio was expanded to become Portfolio Holder for Planning, Highways and Transport. These services were transferred from Councillor Lucy Stephenson's portfolio who took on Leisure

instead.

1.10.8 The Annual Council Meeting in May saw significant changes after Council Leader Oliver Hemsley stood down. He was replaced by Lucy Stephenson (Conservative), who was elected by a majority of 18 Councillors. As the newly elected Leader of Rutland County Council, Cllr Stephenson named an alliance Cabinet made up of the following Elected Members:

- Cllr Marc Oxley (Independent and Green Group)
- Cllr Rosemary Powell (Independent and Green Group)
- Cllr Karen Payne (Conservative)
- Cllr David Wilby (Conservative)
- Cllr Sam Harvey (Non Aligned Independent)

1.10.9 There have been other political changes such that as at 26th May 2022, the political make up of the Council is: 7 Independent and Green, 6 Conservative, 5 Liberal Democrats, 4 Together4Rutland, 4 non-aligned, and one vacant seat

1.10.10 There have been a number of Political and Constitutional challenges throughout the year arising from the pandemic caused by the legislative framework being inadequate. The Government brought forward time-limited legislation to enable remote meetings early in the pandemic but wrote to Council's on the 25th of March 2021 informing them that it would not be extending the time limit meaning decision-making meetings were required to take place in person from 6th May 2021. As a consequence, the Council put in alternative arrangements to enable meetings to proceed whilst Covid restrictions remained. In essence, the Council held most meetings virtually (outside of Full Council and the Planning and Licensing Committee) with Portfolio Holders being given delegated authority to make executive decisions on behalf of Cabinet and other meetings being held in person if a formal decision was required.

1.11 Elections

1.11.1 Due to the pandemic, the scheduled Police and Crime Commissioner election was postponed from 7th May 2020 but was held on 6th May 2021, and at the same time two parish council by-elections were also held that had been previously postponed.

1.11.2 A further 3 County elections were held in the year including:

- Councillor Nick Woodley (Conservative) resigned and was replaced by Councillor Paul Browne (Liberal Democrat);
- Councillor Adam Lowe (non-aligned Independent) resigned and was replaced by Councillor Leah Toseland (Labour);
- Councillor Richard Coleman (Conservative) resigned and was replaced by Councillor Richard Wilson (Green Party); and
- A vacancy remains following the resignation of Councillor Miranda Jones (Green Party) who resigned in March, and an election took place in May 2022 with Stephen James Lambert (Liberal Democrat) elected.

1.11.3 A further 31 parish resignations were received during the year, with two vacancies requiring an election (one from a vacancy originally contested on

6th May 2021) for which there had been insufficient candidates (following which the election has now been called a further 6 times).

- 1.11.4 In July, the Council noted the proposals from the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) that would change the number of parliamentary constituencies in the East Midlands.
- 1.11.5 The proposals would see the total number of parliamentary constituencies in the region increase from 46 to 47. One of the effects of these proposals would be to merge Rutland and Stamford and into a single parliamentary constituency, encompassing Rutland and wards from South Kesteven District (including Stamford).
- 1.11.6 As all County Councillors are able to provide feedback through the BCE's process, it was decided that the County Council would not issue a formal comment on the proposals at this stage.

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 (now changed to Director of Legal and 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 was largely curtailed during the pandemic however this was picked up again in the second half of 21/22. Updates to the Constitution have been made on the following areas:
 - Committee Proportionality;
 - Officer Scheme of Delegation;
 - Terms of Reference of the Employment and Appeals Committee;
 - Register of Members of the Executive to reflect in-year changes;
 - Scheme of Member's Allowances; and
 - Members Code of Conduct.
- 1.12.5 A wide-ranging review of the Constitution and the Overview and Scrutiny

function has also been undertaken in 2021/2022 supported by the Interim Monitoring Officer.

- 1.12.6 A new overview and scrutiny function comprising a single strategic overview and Scrutiny committee was introduced to replace the existing three scrutiny committees and Scrutiny commission. This followed a detailed review including consultation with all members and officers with reference to guidance from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. Other changes included:

Revised Contents and Part 1 - Introduction to the Constitution

Revised Part 2 - Articles

Revised Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions

Revised Part 4 – Procedure Rules

Adding the revised Public Speaking at Planning and Licensing Committee Rules to Part 5

Removing the following Codes from Part 5:

- Counter Fraud Strategy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Monitoring Officer Protocol
- Scrutiny Function Protocol
- School Governor Protocol

- 1.12.7 More details can be found here.

<https://rutlandcounty.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=145&MId=2442>

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 Following a 12-month interim period, the Council appointed Mark Andrews permanently to the role of Chief Executive. This appointment was officially confirmed in June 2021. In July, the Council formally appointed John Morley to the position of Strategic Director for Adults and Health, and Dawn Godfrey to the position of Strategic Director for Children and Families. These officers alongside Director for Places (Penny Sharp), Director for Resources (Saverio Della Rocca) and the Director of Legal and Governance make up Corporate Leadership TeamTeam (CLT). From the end of September 2021, Marie Rosenthal was appointed as Interim Monitoring Officer. A new permanent Monitoring Officer was appointed in April, Angela Wakefield, and took up post in May.

- 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 CLT.). If approved, the matter is reported, with a recommendation to the Cabinet or other appropriate body.

- 1.13.4 The Director of Legal and 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 Director of Legal and 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 CLT on a regular basis and is formally reported to Scrutiny Panels and Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- 1.14.2 During 21/22, quarterly reports on corporate plan performance KPIs were switched to a mid-year and year-end report with pandemic priorities taking precedence. The mid and end year performance reports have been enhanced to provide further detailed information on the actions and developments in relation to key performance indicators and, where performance is off target, information on how this is being tackled.
- 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 in 20/21. No further work was undertaken in 21/22 but the Council made some changes to the frequency and the content of reports. Two mid-year revenue and capital report were produced with regular reporting in between. Regular reporting focused more on key risk budgets and staffing – which has been highlighted as a key risk.
- 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 CLT 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 2021/22 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 2021, the external auditors issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Authority's financial statements. The Value for Money opinion was also unqualified and given in April 2022.

<https://rutlandcounty.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=2370>

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 Portfolio for Finance is the lead member for risk management. Each risk is assigned a member of CLT as risk owner. CLT 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 Strategic Risk Register was reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee in July 2021 and then again in November. The Risk Management Policy was reviewed and updated in February 2022 before being approved in April 2022. The Policy included the requirement for risk registers at a Directorate level.
- 1.16.4 The Council used Zurich Municipal to support the development of Directorate risk registers and agreed that Internal Audit would support ongoing risk management work.
- 1.16.5 The pandemic response has continued to see 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.
- 1.16.6 Beyond the corporate risk register, the Council also has an Elections Risk Register and Fraud Risk register.

1.17 **Standards of Conduct**

- 1.17.1 During 21/22 the Monitoring Officer received 9 complaints of alleged councillor misconduct within the County compared to 5 that were received for 20/21. In 20/21, For 21/22, 5 complaints were raised against Rutland County Council members and 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 and was approved by the Conduct Committee in March 2022 and then Council in April.

1.18 **Counter-fraud and Whistleblowing**

- 1.18.1 The Council received no whistleblowing allegations during 21/22 and no reported frauds.

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. The addition of our Applicant Tracking System and Rutland Microsite have been pivotal in providing better technology and better systems to support the process.
- 1.19.2 As we move away from the consequences of the pandemic into 'Living with Covid', we are experiencing higher turnover and a broader range of challenges to recruitment (this is the same across the sector). We have endeavoured to keep abreast of workforce changes and developments as expectations of individuals in their 'world of work' has changed. Clearly having the right level of resource in the right place at the right time is crucial to our organisational effectiveness. We support this with continuing to prioritise recruitment whilst

also supporting our managers and services to ensure they challenge and seek alternative models to minimise risks and look for alternative delivery options, e.g. through partners.

- 1.19.3 Our Learning Management System has continued to be a key platform to support our induction of new staff. 2022/23 will see a further revamp of the learning materials (guides, best practice, e-learning etc) and how this meets development needs of staff. Further development and training for staff has been accessed through remote learning ahead of the face to face delivery being resumed – in part. Further training has been provided in 2021/22 for IT skills such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.
- 1.19.4 The focus of development work during 2020 and 2021 centred around support for wellbeing and also developing our understand and skills needed to manage a remote workforce. We commissioned sessions through Bailey and French and also undertook some of our own delivery. This will evolve in 2022 into a Leadership programme and a specific Management skills programme. Mandatory and essential training for staff continues to be financially supported through a training budget held by the Head of HR.
- 1.19.5 Whilst we saw a reduction in our turnover and sickness levels during 2020 as a consequence of Lockdown and c.65% of our staff working from home, we have experienced higher turnover rates and sickness absence in 2021/22. The Head of HR has produced reports and papers for our Employment and Appeals Committee relating to Recruitment, Retention and Turnover. We continue to monitor this data cautiously and ensure our policies and procedure enable us to respond and manage pressures.
- 1.19.6 The Council adopted a Hybrid Ways of Working during 2021 which enables staff to carry out their work both from home and from their workplace. We have carried out briefings with leadership teams, and staff in addition to two Pulse Surveys in November 2021 and April 2022 to inform our decision and policy going forward.
- 1.19.7 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

<u>Service area</u>	<u>Lead Authority Name</u>
Children's Social Care Out of hours	Leicestershire County Council
Public Protection	Peterborough City Council
Emergency Planning	Leicestershire County Council
Safeguarding Childrens Partnership	Leicestershire County Council
Health and Safety	Peterborough City Council
Planning system	South Kesteven District Council
Adoption Services	Lincolnshire 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 continued to work closely with several Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCF) organisations to support our residents during the ongoing waves of pandemic, helping those who were classed as clinically extremely vulnerable to shield, providing practical support enabling the vaccination programme to be rolled out at pace, and assisting people whose financial or other circumstances had changed because of the pandemic. Support around financial hardship and housing became more significant as government schemes such as furlough were progressively wound down.

1.21.2 As pandemic measures started to be lifted, there was a transition from a VCF sector pandemic working group coordinated directly by the Council to a more business-as-usual networking arrangement for the VCF sector. This is being led by Citizens Advice Rutland (CAR) under its contract, revised this year, to provide infrastructure support to the wider VCF sector. This infrastructure support enables smaller VCF organisations locally to access training, advice, funding links, and so on, to create a sustainable sector within Rutland.

1.21.3 The Council participates in the CAR-coordinated VCF network, including representing Rutland's online community directory, the Rutland Information Service. The network helps to develop ongoing working relationships and mobilisation in response to Rutland's needs, and is building additional capability around funding generation, service design and joint working which is a valuable contribution to a more resilient VCF sector in Rutland.

1.21.4 The VCF sector also helped to shape Rutland's new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy which was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board

in April 2022. They have a key role to play in their ability to engage and represent diverse communities across Rutland, including helping their needs to be fully factored into service design.

- 1.21.5 During this year, the wellbeing support provided by the VCF sector to local communities and funded by the Council was reviewed, resulting in new contracts for future years.

1.22 Working with Business

- 1.22.1 The year was again dominated by work on 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. In 21/22 over £4.3m has been paid to over 896 businesses via the Restart Grant, Additional Restrictions Grants and the Omicron Grant.

- 1.22.2 Rutland is now strategically aligned with Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Council. We are developing plans and bidding for external funding to support economic recovery and growth in 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/>

- 1.22.3 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/>

1.23 Working with Health

- 1.23.1 In line with the 2019 NHS Long Term Plan, the area covered by Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) Councils became an 'Integrated Care System' (ICS) in April 2021, enabling it to harness the collective power of its health and care stakeholders to deliver better services and tackle inequalities which can lead to unfair and avoidable differences in the health of local people. Across the remainder of the year, the three Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in LLR have been undertaking the groundwork to establish the Integrated Care Board (ICB) which will supersede the CCGs from July 2023, to shape strategic health services and provide leadership for the whole LLR health and care system. Alongside the ICB, a wider board of LLR partners will form the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP), ensuring that Local Authorities have a voice at strategic as well as local level.

- 1.23.2 At the next, more local tier in the health system, Rutland is both a 'place' (the Local Authority tier) and a 'neighbourhood' (mapped to the Rutland Health Primary Care Network of GP practices), with many health and care services designed and delivered at this scale to enable them to be tailored to local

needs. Here, joint work is guided, co-ordinated and overseen by the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB), a partnership of health, care and wellbeing stakeholders which meets quarterly in public, chaired by the Council's Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Care.

- 1.23.3 The HWB led the development of a new and ambitious Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) for Rutland to be delivered over the next 5 years (2022-27). Rutland's strategy was developed through wide collaboration across local partners, extensive use of a relevant data sources and engagement and consultation with the public and other stakeholders, including building on the findings of the Future Rutland Conversation, commissioning an engagement study from HealthWatch Rutland published under the title 'What matters to you?', and undertaking a more formal consultation on the draft JHWS. The JHWS will enable more decisions about how health and care services are structured and funded to be determined locally, guided by the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.23.4 The overall vision of the new JHWS, which was approved in April 2022, is to nurture safe, healthy, and caring communities in which people start well and thrive together throughout their lives. The essence of the strategy's goal is 'people living well in active communities'. The Strategy takes a life course approach, with seven priorities for coordinated or joint action: best start for life; staying well; living well with health challenges; access to services; planning for population growth and change; dying well; and a seventh priority for cross-cutting themes, namely addressing inequalities, improving mental health, and pandemic readiness and recovery). Local partners are jointly accountable for delivering the plan under the governance and oversight of the HWB.
- 1.23.5 Prevention will be a stronger dimension of joint working, as will using population health data and management to better shape and target services, including for people already living with ill health, and reducing health inequalities. Bringing services closer to home wherever possible, and ensuring services are sufficient for a growing and ageing population are also critical areas of work that are high priorities for Rutland's population.
- 1.23.6 In parallel, the local Better Care Fund (BCF) programme for 2021/22, accounting for £3m of integrated health and care spend, was delivered against the backdrop of the ongoing pandemic. Council, NHS, and community sector partners continued to provide integrated health and social care approaches tailored to the Rutland context, adapting delivery to the circumstances. Most of the programme was delivered as planned, addressing three key priorities: prevention and staying well; living well with multi-morbidity; and hospital flows (avoiding hospital admissions and ensuring prompt and safe hospital discharge). Some services were downscaled or temporarily put on hold at points in the year to enable Covid-related services to be resourced, while the commissioning of an online social prescribing platform for Rutland partners was undertaken following the end of pandemic measures in Q1 of 2022-23. Activity levels for the delivery of technology supporting people to live independently at home were lower than provisioned for the year as a result of challenges in working with vulnerable people in their own homes, while ongoing challenges with building supplies and safe access meant that Disabled Facilities Grants were awarded at a healthy pace, but some adaptations took longer to implement than anticipated. Modest 'enablers'

funding, earmarked for things like analysis, technology, and engagement, will also be carried forward, helping to improve the conditions for successful delivery of the 2022/23 BCF plan and the JHWS.

1.24 Local Plan

- 1.24.1 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.
- 1.24.2 On 1st September, Full Council voted to withdraw the current Local Plan. The decision to withdraw the Local Plan meant that the Council began work on a new Plan. It is anticipated this will take around four years to prepare. Councillors also voted to set aside almost £1.4million to cover the cost of making a new Plan and operating without one during this period.
- 1.24.3 In November a cross party working group of councillors representing each of Rutland County Council's three political groups was formed as part of the early stages of developing a new Local Plan.
- 1.24.4 The cross-party group is chaired by Rutland County Council's Chief Executive, Mark Andrews, will act as an advisory board and meets as appropriate to provide guidance and monitor the implementation of the Local Plan process, as well as identifying any issues that may arise and discussing solutions. This is an internal working group and, as such, has no formal powers. Rutland County Council's Cabinet is the body responsible for preparing the Local Plan for Full Council to approve.
- 1.24.5 The group will make sure all Rutland County Councillors and the communities they represent are kept informed as the Local Plan is developed. This is expected to take four years.
- 1.24.6 In February 2022, the Council has issued a 'Call for Sites' as one of the very first steps in the process to develop a new Local Plan. This will be followed by the 'Issues and Options' stage of Local Plan-making, which is due to take place in summer 2022. This is critical to the development of the Local Plan and will outline the long-term strategic planning issues facing Rutland, such as housing, employment, services and facilities, climate change and carbon reduction, and impact on infrastructure. An Issues and Options consultation will ask residents, businesses, and other stakeholders whether they agree with the issues that have been identified and, importantly, which options provide the best solutions to those issues.

1.25 Consultation and engagement

- 1.25.1 The Council undertakes public engagement and consultation on a range of matters. Outside of the matters discussed above, in 2021/22, this included:
 - Future Rutland Vision
 - 2022/23 Annual Budget Consultation
 - Early Education and Childcare Provision
 - Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
 - Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy
 - Bus Service Improvement Plan

- Carers Strategy
- Faster Broadband Survey
- Waste Strategy
- Waste Service Options
- Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
- Grounds Maintenance and Forestry Services
- Parking Policy
- Healthy Child Programme
- School Travel
- Burley Road Cycle and Footway Improvements

1.25.2 Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, the Council was in the process of developing its communications and engagement approach. This has now been completed and a new RCC Communications and Engagement Strategy 2022-27 was approved by Cabinet in April 2022.

1.26 Reporting

1.26.1 All formal meetings are held in public (or virtually with residents able to join online), 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.

1.26.2 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

1.27 Overview

1.27.1 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.

1.28 Internal and Management Assurance

1.28.1 Assurance - It is the Head of Internal Audit's opinion that Satisfactory Assurance can be given over the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's control environment for 2021/22. 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.

- 1.28.2 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.
- 1.28.3 Risk management - An audit of Risk Management was performed by Internal Audit in 2021 and concluded an opinion of Satisfactory Assurance for control design and Good Assurance for compliance with controls. Following this, work has been underway to develop Directorate level risk registers to ensure a robust framework; and training on risk management has also been delivered by the Council's insurers.
- 1.28.4 Internal Audit work is targeted upon the Council's key areas of risk and work completed in 2021/22 has assessed assurances in relation to controls in some of the key areas highlighted on the register.
- 1.28.5 Governance - During 2021/22, Internal Audit reviewed the Council's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and implications for governance. This resulted in assurance opinions of Substantial Assurance and Good Assurance for control design and compliance, respectively.
- 1.28.6 Based on the findings of Internal Audit work in 2021/22, there are no significant governance issues that the Head of Internal Audit wishes to draw to the attention of the Council for inclusion in its Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.28.7 Internal control - For the audits completed in 2021/22, 100% of the opinions given in relation to the control environment and compliance have been of at least Satisfactory Assurance.
- 1.28.8 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.

1.29 **Scrutiny**

- 1.29.1 The Council had 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.
- 1.29.2 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).
- 1.29.3 During 2021/22 Scrutiny meetings resumed as normal from June. 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

- 1.29.4 The work of last year's task and finish group on Biodiversity, which had been halted during the pandemic, resumed with the final report presented to the Growth and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee on the 18th of November 2021. Proposals for a Biodiversity Strategy were outlined, and these were incorporated into the work undertaken by the Climate Action Network Group, chaired by Councillor L Stephenson. Update reports from this group are presented to the Growth and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.29.5 This year's cross-party Task and Finish Group focused on Rutland residents' access to primary care and the increasing demand for GP services. The Group, Chaired by Councillor P Ainsley, gathered information from residents before making a number of recommendations in the final report. The final report was presented for approval to the Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee on the 31st of March 2022, the Rutland Health, and Wellbeing Board on the 5th of April 2022 and then Council on the 11th of April 2022.
- 1.29.6 Mandatory government Statutory Guidance was published in May 2019 under the provisions of section 9Q of the Local Government and Housing act 2000 and Schedule 5A of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Constriction Act 2009 encouraging all councils to cast a critical eye over their existing arrangements and, above all, ensure they embed a culture that allows overview and scrutiny to flourish. The Council agreed terms of reference for a review of the scrutiny function in line with the statutory guidance.
- 1.29.7 The review involved an all-member survey, an analysis of the work of the scrutiny committees over the last three years. On the 11 April 2022, Council agreed proposals to relaunch the scrutiny function by moving away from the existing 3-committee and Commission arrangements to a single Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.30 **Complaints**

- 1.30.1 The general Information Governance Annual report, including complaints, will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on 27 September 2022.
- 1.30.2 Stage 1 complaint response times show that 99% (59 out of 60) of stage 1 complaints are answered within the deadlines set within the complaints policies. Stage 1 complaints have further reduced 9% on 21/22.
- 1.30.3 Improvement has been made with 100% (23 out of 23) of stage 2 complaints answered within the deadlines. Stage 2 complaints increased by nearly a third (28%).

1.31 **Financial management arrangements**

- 1.31.1 The Council undertook an assessment of its financial management arrangements against CIPFA's Financial Management Code in 20/21. Progress on the key improvement areas are as follows:

- 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 – this is in progress with a condition survey now completed. The Council is now processing the findings which will inform decisions about whether to retain, sell or repurpose assets. Further progress will be made in 21/22.
- Increasing the frequency of budget discussions with Cabinet members (in between formal quarterly reporting) and then briefing Members – changes to financial reporting were made in year with a Mid-Year Capital Report, more frequent informal revenue reporting and in-depth focus on high-risk budgets in reporting. Finance issues are also covered in monthly Director briefings.
- Completion of the effectiveness assessment of Audit and Risk Committee – this was started in April but will be completed when the new Committee has been in place for a year.
- Refresher finance training for budget managers and Members – for Officers various exercises have been undertaken including documenting forecasting approach in key areas.
- Integrating financial management and operational performance management – more of this has been done in new Revenue reporting.

1.32 Financial performance and resilience

1.32.1 Various financial reports on financial management were presented to Cabinet during the year. There was increased financial reporting in the year outside of quarterly reporting albeit public reporting began with a Mid-Year Revenue and Mid-Year capital report.

1.32.2 The revenue reports were changed in style with a new Question and Answer Executive Summary, a focus on high-risk budgets and overall staffing position. Reports analysed the financial position against the approved budget but also explained what additional funding had been received and how this was used.

1.32.3 The Council started 21/22 with a key priority of reducing reliance on General Fund reserves in particular. The 21/22 budget was originally balanced using £2.4m of reserves of which £1.1m was General Fund (hence the Council was projecting a £1.1m loss. The s151 Officer gave the following advice in the budget report:

“The Council must...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”.

1.32.4 In July the Council approved a series of savings projects (£710k) and agreed to use some ring-fenced reserves (£240k) which reduced the projected budget deficit in 21/22 to £438k. It also committed to tight spending controls in year with the aim of underspending its budget alongside continuing work on savings in key areas like social care.

1.32.5 Throughout the year, the Council has underspent its budget and by Outturn the underspend was £3.382m. This comprised a combination of planned savings (c£1m), unexpected income of £1.3m and unplanned net savings of

c£1m.

1.32.6 A full copy of the Council's Outturn report can be found at:

<https://rutlandcounty.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=2589>

1.32.7 The Council set a revenue budget for 22/23 which relied on General Fund reserves of £7k. This was better than the £1m target originally set. Since budget setting, the global and national environment has heightened risk uncertainty to unprecedented levels. The Covid-19 pandemic, the cost of living crisis, the impact of Brexit, labour shortages, the Governments reform agenda and now the war in Ukraine have added to the complexity of the local government landscape and had a significant impact on the 22/23 budget.

1.32.8 The upshot means that significant budget revisions are required which will need to be funded from reserves. Importantly, the £3.3m 21/22 underspend will go a long way towards meeting these costs. Emerging pressures in 22/23 comprise:

- a £1m historic liability associated with the special educational needs budget will need to be provided for;
- demand for key services continues to be volatile as shown in the Outturn and early signs for 22/23 indicate pressures in social care (current projections indicate a £520k pressure. Continued pressures in areas like transport mean additional cost of £300k are expected);
- the cost of living crisis experienced by households applies equally to us. Utility costs are expected to increase by £250k and inflation on key contracts are expected to be £210k;
- labour shortages are expected to accelerate pay inflation and an increase of our pay provision from 2% to 4% could cost c£347k;
- workload pressures from business as usual or new responsibilities that the Council has to prepare for are emerging and will need to be funded (albeit some will be offset by new burdens funding. Estimated costs are £535k but will offset by vacancy savings.

1.32.9 The financial problems being faced now by the Council are acknowledged by its members and officers. Whilst there is still a strong view that the Council is being treated unfairly by the overall financial settlement, the Council recognises that it has a responsibility to address this issue.

1.32.10 Against this backdrop, the Council must focus on what it can control – prudently managing its budget whilst reviewing all areas of expenditure so it can prioritise funds and identify where savings can be delivered.

1.32.11 Despite action taken to date and careful management of the 21/22 budget, the Council's financial position worsens and that whatever action it might take it may not be enough without further Government intervention and funding. This position is not unique to Rutland.

1.33 **Corporate performance**

1.33.1 Corporate 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 2021/22, despite the significant impact of the pandemic, performance across the authority remains good. Of those indicators where data is available 76% were achieved during the year, 46/62 indicators.

1.33.2 Examples of some of the key areas where the Council is below target include:

- Net additional homes provided.
- Number of affordable homes delivered.
- 5-year housing supply.
- Domestic waste and recycling.
- Assessment timescales for children with special educational needs and or disabilities.
- % of eligible children registered with Children's Centre.
- % of target families registered with sustained engagement.

1.33.3 All of the indicators above have, to an extent, been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, closures to face to face services have reduced children centre reach. Restrictions on construction industry has led to delays in house building and a greater volume of people at home has resulted in higher levels of domestic waste – reflecting a national trend.

1.33.4 As indicated above, alongside a refresh of the Corporate Strategy, the Council is reviewing 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; and
- Reviewing performance systems to ensure they facilitate the efficient collection and reporting of information.

1.34 **Information Governance and related issues**

1.34.1 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.

1.34.2 The deadline for the completion of the 2021/22 submission is 30th June 2022.

1.34.3 Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI), The general Information Governance Annual report, including complaints, will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on 27 September 2022.

- 1.34.4 1455 FOI and EIR requests were received by the Council in 2020/21; 95% answered within 20 days. 1 complaint was reported to/or investigated by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). 9 requests required an internal review. 6 reviews have been completed with satisfied with the outcome. A further 3 reviews are ongoing.
- 1.34.5 Personal Data Breaches - the Council recorded 14 reports of potential data breaches in 21/22. This is a 18% reduction on last year. All were investigated to satisfactory conclusion with actions and recommendations completed to mitigate further incidents of a similar nature. 1 data breach was self-referred to the ICO, and the Council were found to have taken the appropriate measures with all actions completed.
- 1.34.6 Subject Access Requests (SAR's) - the Council received 31 SARs in 2020/21 compared to 46 in 2020/21. With an average number of 865 pages for each response during 2021/22.
- 1.34.7 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 recommendations completed in April 2022.
- A refresh of the Policy - this is being reported to Cabinet on 5 April 2022
 - Staff training updated
 - RIPA Authorising Officer Training was held on 7th December 2021.
- 1.34.8 The Council continues to participate in the *National Fraud Initiative* (NFI) programme and investigated possible matches in the following areas. For 2021/22, Rutland had 897 matches to review. Main matches:
- Blue Badge Parking Permit to DWP Deceased – 64
 - Concessionary Travel Passes to Benefits Agency Deceased Persons Council Tax – 260
 - Council Tax Reduction Scheme to Pensions – 99
 - Duplicate records by amount and creditor reference – 309
- 1.34.9 The Council investigated all possible lines of enquiry and no matches suggested actual fraud had occurred. Proactive work was undertaken in respect of Blue Badge Parking Permit to DWP Deceased. This has resulted in c£6.3k of savings.
- 1.35 **Project Management**
- 1.35.1 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.

1.35.2 Progress on all projects is also monitored through CLT 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.

1.35.3 The Council delivered the following projects in year.

Project	Outcome
Covid Recovery Programme	Series of projects/work carried out in response to the impact of Covid-19 on service areas
Police and Crime Commissioner Election	Delivered PCC election, ensuring that: - Voters could vote easily and know that their vote will be counted in the way they intended. - Candidates standing for election could find out how to get involved, what the rules were, 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.
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 was made available (in July) to customer to provide an online channel for them to raise their service requests.
Future Rutland	The Council completed the Future Rutland Conversation which sought to: 1) understand what matters most to the people of Rutland (residents and businesses) for how they live their lives in the County 2) 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) engage more with people who do not normally engage with the council with Council communications or consultations. The outcome of this work is covered in Section 1.9.
Rutland One Public Estate - St Georges (inc. HIF)	The aim was to develop a sustainable garden village following the pending closure of St George's barracks. This project was stopped when the Council chose not to proceed with its Local Plan.
Waste Contracts (inc. Contract Extensions)	This is an ongoing 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)	This is an ongoing project to re-procure leisure services through a rationalised approach to determine the needs to the community. The Council has agreed to close the

Project	Outcome
	swimming pool and tender for a contractor to run dry side leisure facilities at zero cost to the Council.
Highways Contract	This is an ongoing project to re-procure Highways Term Contract through a rationalised approach before any decisions are made on the service to be provided
Local Plan	This is an ongoing project to deliver a Local Plan that has been through the proper consultation process and approvals from Government
SEND Capital Programme	This is a project to commit DfE capital funds to provide SEND facilities and positively impact the High Needs Budget
Catmose Extension Project	The expansion of Catmose College to provide 180 additional secondary places over a 5 year period from September 2022. Building works are ongoing.

1.36 **Business Continuity**

- 1.36.1 In 21/22, the Council commissioned a review of its Business Continuity arrangements from the Resilience Partnership Team which commenced in February 2021. The report concluded with the recommendation to take a “fresh start” approach, eventually to replace all existing documentation with new and bespoke policy documents and BC plans.
- 1.36.2 All service areas have completed a BC plan using a standard template to ensure consistency across Resilience Partnership members. The templates focus on typical BC scenarios but included loss of IT (cyber risk) as a specific consideration.
- 1.36.3 The Resilience Officer met with all service area managers in August and September to discuss the templates and is now in the process of reviewing their draft BC plans. All service plans were reviewed and signed off by Directors by the end of March alongside the overall BCP.
- 1.36.4 The next phase of work will be to undertake a test of plans in an exercise with management. Alongside the BCP the Council undertook in conjunction with DLUHC Cyber team a review of its Cyber resilience and was successful in securing £150k of funding to invest and upgrade the Council’s network infrastructure, back up arrangements and security systems towards best in class. This work continues in 22/23.

1.37 **External Audit, Inspections and Reviews**

External Audit

- 1.37.1 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 20/21 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

1.37.2 In January 2022 Ofsted undertook a focused visit to review children's services. In a formal letter detailing the inspectors' findings, Ofsted confirmed that Rutland County Council is maintaining a clear focus on protecting children and improving the quality of social work practice in the county. Inspectors also noted that senior leaders within Rutland's Children's Services know their services well and have succeeded in improving care for children and young people despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following key points were noted in Ofsted's main findings:

- Children in care are seen regularly by social workers who know them well. This has continued despite the various COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.
- Rutland social workers spend time with children and make sure their views inform decision-making.
- Rutland social workers work effectively with colleagues and partners to identify and meet children's needs.
- Rutland social workers are resourceful in ensuring the right support is in place for children, with well-planned transitions when children move home or school.
- Assessments are timely, thorough, and informed by the child's voice, helping to make sure that plans are child centred.
- Children (including disabled children) who are looked after in Rutland live in homes which meet their needs well.
- Most children are settled where they are living and do not experience unnecessary moves.

1.38 Ofsted highlighted just one area for improvement – the need to further improve the way in the which data is recorded and reviewed in instances where children are absent from care. However, inspectors also acknowledged that the Council already has plans in place to address this.

Public Services Network

1.38.1 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 completed the PSN renewal processes during early 2021 and has a valid certificate until September 2022.

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.

F Governance Issues

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: _____

Signed: _____

Mark Andrews, Chief Executive

Lucy Stephenson, Leader of the Council

Date: _____

Date: _____

Glossary

Agresso	Rutland County Councils finance software system
AGS	Annual Governance Statement
BAU	Business as Usual
BCF	Better Care Fund
CAR	Citizens Advice Rutland
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CHIS	Covert Intelligent Human Sources
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance
CLT	Corporate Leadership Team
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
HWB	Health and Wellbeing Board
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office
ICB	Integrated Care Board
ICP	Integrated Care Partnership
ICS	Integrated Care System
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILACS	Inspections of local authority children's services
IPCO	Investigatory Powers Commissioning Office
JHWS	Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LLR	Leicester, Leicestershire & 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
SOLACE	Network for local government and public sector professionals
VCF	Voluntary, Community and Faith