

Birmingham City Council Audit Committee

21st February 2024



Subject: Stabilisation Plan Monitoring Arrangements

Report of: Marie Rosenthal, Interim Monitoring Officer

Report author: Amerdip Kaur, Head of Special Projects, Improvement and Delivery Unit

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report provides an update to the Audit Committee on the monitoring arrangements for the Stabilisation Plan.
- 1.2 A joint Birmingham City Council (BCC) and Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) Stabilisation Plan was produced following a review of governance conducted by CfGS and accepted at Cabinet on the 12th December 2023. The Stabilisation Plan contains recommendations and immediate actions to support the short-term stabilisation of governance at the Council over the next 6 months. Actions for longer-term improvement will be incorporated into the overall Improvement and Recovery Plan.
- 1.3 Arrangements have been set up to monitor progress on the recommendations and activities set out in the Stabilisation Plan. The monitoring and oversight arrangements will be overseen by the Interim Monitoring Officer, Marie Rosenthal supported by the Special Projects, Improvement & Delivery Unit.
- 1.4 Reports will be regularly reviewed by the Improvement and Recovery Board and the Co-Ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Audit Committee notes the arrangements in place to monitor the delivery of the Stabilisation Plan.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) undertook an independent review of governance at Birmingham City Council from July to November 2023. The purpose of the review was to assess key governance issues identified in various external reviews and judgements, the Council's response to them, and to recommend actions to further improve governance at the Council.
- 3.2 On the 12th December Cabinet agreed to accept the findings of the CfGS review, and the recommendations and actions contained within the Stabilisation Plan developed jointly by CfGS and Birmingham City Council.
- 3.3 The CfGS report identified a number of governance and cultural issues within the Council which need to be addressed. The Stabilisation Plan contains recommendations and immediate actions to support the short-term stabilisation of governance at the Council over the next 6 months. Actions for longer-term improvement will be incorporated into the overall Improvement and Recovery Plan.

Monitoring & Oversight Arrangements:

- 3.4 The monitoring and oversight arrangements will be overseen by the Interim Monitoring Officer, Marie Rosenthal acting as Senior Accountable Officer (SAO), supported by the Special Projects, Improvement & Delivery Unit. The Deputy Leader is the lead portfolio holder with political accountability for this area.
- 3.5 The Stabilisation Plan contains 13 recommendations consisting of several activities and key deliverables. Monthly milestones are being developed against each activity.
- 3.6 Lead Officers for each activity will provide monthly updates on progress against their respective milestones. Monthly Stabilisation Plan Board meetings will take place to review progress and Accountable Officers for each activity will attend to give updates where necessary.
- 3.7 A progress report will be reviewed at Corporate Leadership Team each month to provide assurance on the progress against actions in the Stabilisation Plan. This will include escalation of any risks, off track activity or matters for concern by exception.
- 3.8 There will be regular updates to the Leader & Deputy Leader and Portfolio holders. The Deputy Leader will also receive individual updates as lead portfolio holder for this area.
- 3.9 The Co-Ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee chaired by Councillor Sir Albert Bore will also monitor the progress of the Stabilisation Plan.
- 3.10 An introductory update on arrangements was provided to the Improvement and Recovery Board on the 17th January. A mid-point report will subsequently be provided on 13th March 2024 and final report on 17th July 2024.

4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal

- 4.1 This report is for information purposes.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The activities described in this report are covered under approved existing budgets. No further funding to specifically support the monitoring arrangements is being requested at this stage.

7 Public Sector Equality Duty

7.1 There was no identified significant impacts on any group or protected characteristic.

8 Other Implications

8.1 How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?

8.1.1 The CfGS report and 6 month Stabilisation Plan has been accepted and endorsed and Cabinet and is considered an urgent priority to stabilise the Council.

8.1.2 The monitoring arrangements for the Stabilisation Plan as set out in this report are key to ensure the agreed recommendations in the Stabilisation Plan are achieved.

8.1.3 The successful completion of the Stabilisation Plan will ensure a smooth transition to longer term actions being mapped out as part of the IRP.

9 Background Papers

9.1 Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Independent Review of Governance, Cabinet paper 12th December

9.2 BCC and Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Stabilisation Plan

10 Appendices

10.1 None