

Budget and Corporate Services OSC – Actions Tracker

Agenda Item 3ii

Reference Number	Date of Committee/Request	Action	Response	Actioned/Response Received (Date)
FEB24(3)	29 February 2024 & 11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 84 Action (ii) &amp; Minute 17 Action (iii):</i> That the following recommendation now be referred to the next meeting of the Executive Committee:</p> <p><i>“The Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports the freeing up of another floor in Borough Hall and would wish to see work on an active travel plan for Borough Hall and all of its occupiers.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, the Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a reason as to why a response had not been received from the Mayor in relation to this matter.”</i></p>	<p>14 March 24 – Recommendation forward to the Mayor Office by the Senior Democratic Services Officer.</p> <p>26 June 24 – Email sent chasing up a response to this action.</p> <p>22 July 24 – Action sent to the Clerk for the Executive Committee.</p> <p><b>Response from Executive:</b></p> <p><i>Officers have already been looking at the use of space in Borough Hall and how space can made available for other occupiers to come into the building. An Active Travel Plan can be shared when the resources are in place to support the development of the plan. However, users of Borough Hall are already encouraged to look at options such as walking and cycling.</i></p>	12 Sept 24
FEB24(5)	29 February 2024 & 13 June 2024	<p><b>Linked to OCT24(8)</b></p> <p><i>Minute 85 Action (iv) &amp; Minute 4 Action (iv) – 13 June 2024:</i></p> <p>The Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that Bedford Borough Council progressed with the introduction of an Equality Impact Assessment Review Group and for equality impact</p>	<p>Note form HR: The introduction and running of a review group will not be able to be contained within existing EDI resource and will require further thought.</p> <p><b>Update 13 June 24:</b> An EDI Forum has been set up and will be launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024. Personnel Services is also in the process of recruiting EDI Champions from each Directorate/Services, who will advise on Equality Analysis for their area.</p>	

		assessments be reviewed after six months to see what impacts they have had, and that relevant resource should be allocated to conduct these reviews.	Reference sent to Clerk of the Executive – 26 June 2024.	
FEB24(8)	29 February 2024	<i>Minute 88 Action (ii):</i> That a referral be made to the Constitution Working Group in relation to ensuring a process was in place for receiving a response from the Executive when a recommendation was made to them by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Referral forwarded to relevant Democratic Services Officer – 14 March 2024.	
JUN24(1)	13 June 2024	<i>Minute 7 Action (ii):</i> That the following recommendation be referred to the next meeting of the Executive:  <i>“The Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee wished to express their concerns in relation to the continued use of reserves, and the long-term sustainability of the approach that is being taken”</i>	Recommendation forwarded to relevant Democratic Services Officer – 29 June 2024  <b><i>Response from Executive:</i></b>  <i>The Executive recognises the concerns of Scrutiny in relation to the level of reserves, and that the general fund balance is currently below the recommended range. The use of £2million reserves used to balance the budget were reserves that were planned to be utilised during 2024/25 on transformation projects, which are now funded using the flexible capital receipts mechanism. Earmarked reserves are set aside for specific purposes, and these have been used in the way that was intended. The Executive is taking action to mitigate the position in the current year to avoid using reserves to balance the budget and has made provision in the MTFS of £2.5million across the medium term to increase the general fund balance to bring greater financial resilience.</i>	12 Sept 24
JUN24(2)	13 June 2024	<i>Minute 8 Action (ii):</i>	Email sent to the Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services following up this request – 29 June 2024.	01/10/2024

		<p>That the Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services be requested to provide classification on the electoral canvass figures, in the form of a written response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gov3d - Electoral Canvas total response rate, Cllr Headley queried the methodology and the accuracy of the figures for this KPI, which didn't follow the usual pattern compared with previous years) i.e. are these meant to be cumulative in-line with the previous year.</li> </ul>	<p>Action chased – 23 September 2024.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p><i>Due to the changes nationally how the annual canvass is undertaken in all local authorities the current KPI figures are not the most accurate reflection of the response rate for the canvass. The process has changed whereby a national data match of electors with the national digital database is completed prior to the commencement of a canvass and this results in a figure for Route 1 properties who do not need to be canvassed because all details have remained the same as the national database for that household; and a figure for Route 2 properties that are required to be canvassed by the local authority. A subsequent local data match is undertaken against local databases eg. council tax, housing records which reduces the figure of Route 2 properties further. The number of Route 2 properties for Bedford Borough at the beginning of the canvass was 30% (24778 properties/ 39532 electors) who require contact either via a canvass form or an email. To date (1 October 2024) there has been a response on Route 2 properties of 41% and the canvass is ongoing with 14,619 properties to respond by the end of November with the publication of the Register of Electors on 1 December 2024. The personal canvass will commence on 10 October and a final reminder will be send to non responding households on 30 October 2024. The KPIs are due to be reviewed for future years to make them more reflective of the change in canvass processes but the response rate to date is broadly in comparison to previous years other than there has been an increase in electorate and therefore a percentage increase in non-responding households. The revised approach for carrying out the canvass does result in less cost as there are fewer contacts with each household.</i></p>	
--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

JUN24(3)	13 June 2024	<p><i>Minute 8 Action (iii):</i></p> <p>That the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) and Chief Finance Officer be requested to provide a written response in relation to performance indicator RB2A and provide clarification on why £1million worth of business rates had been received late and whether this was outside of the collection fund for 2023/2024.</p>	<p><i>The £1 million related in full to one rate payer. In the November 'Schedule of Alteration' received from the VOA a rateable value was assigned to the property and an Opening Demand Notice sent from the Authority to the ratepayer within a week of this notification. Instalments were then due to be paid in December, January and February. During December to March a number of communications occurred between the Collection Hub and the ratepayer to establish when the income would be received, with the payment being received in full on 5 April. As payment was received in April, it will be reflected in the 2024/2025 Collection Fund.</i></p>	11 July 2024
JUN24(3)	13 June 2024	<p><i>Minute 8 Action (iv):</i></p> <p>That the Manager for Performance, Analytics and Data Protection be requested to provide a written response in relation to VOL1i and whether this figure should be cumulative for the year to date, as there may be duplication of individual volunteers within this figure.</p>	<p><i>There is no system / technology in place to coordinate volunteer numbers accurately, the data is provided by the areas below:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archives</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• The Higgins</li> <li>• The Corn Exchange &amp; Markets</li> <li>• Moot Hall</li> <li>• Community Open Spaces</li> </ul> <p><i>The quarterly figure shown is the total number of volunteers within each quarter, It is therefore possible for an individual to volunteer in more than one area and be counted multiple times within a quarter, therefore the YTD/cumulative (i.e. the total of the 4 quarters added together) will count them more than once.</i></p>	01 July 2024
JUN24(4)	13 June 2024	<p><i>Minute 8 Action (v):</i></p> <p>That the Senior Democratic Services Officer be requested to add a report on Subject Access</p>	<p>Senior Democratic Services Officer has added item to the Committee's Work Programme – 29 June 2024.</p>	29 June 2024

		Requests to this Committee's Work Programme, with a focus on why there was blockages within this process and what the possible solutions could be to improve performance.		
JUL24(1)	11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 19 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the Manager for Asset and Estate Management be requested to include a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) Rating system in the next RAAC Surveys on Council Buildings update report, which provides more clarity on the status of a particular building.</p>	Included in the RAAC Update Report going to the 12 September 2024 Committee meeting.	12 Sept 24
JUL24(2)	11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 19 Action (iii):</i></p> <p>That the Manager for Asset and Estate Management be requested to provide a written response which gave clarity on which buildings were deemed to be critical and when all the buildings that were deemed to be critical would be inspected to see if it had RAAC. In addition, explain why buildings were highlighted in red in the report but were not considered to be critical.</p>	Included in the RAAC Update Report going to the 12 September 2024 Committee meeting.	12 Sept 24
JUL24(3)	11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 20 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the Manager for Asset and Estate Management be requested to provide a written response on what was to happen to the former Putnoe Lower School playing field; playing field in Riseley; and the Scout Head Quarters, once the options process had taken place.</p>	MB advised that the options process has not yet taken place. Once undertaken a written response will be provided – 30 August 2024.	

JUL24(4)	11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 20 Action (iii):</i></p> <p>That the Manager for Asset and Estate Management be requested to provide a written response to the Committee, which addressed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prebend Street Car Park had been listed for residential development, an update was requested on this and what active travel plan was to be put into place as a result; and</li> <li>- Inaccuracies included in the report, for example: Ashburnham Road Car Park listed as being no change to its status but was tied up with the East West Rail development; the land between 20 and 24 Costin Street which was no longer going to be open land available for use by the general public and was planned for gating; and in two listings it was highlighted that there was no available land at Riverside North but there had been one unit at this site which had been completely unoccupied since the development was built.</li> </ul>	<p>Prebend Street Car Park is allocated for Housing Development in the 2030 local plan. The provision of car parking will be considered as part of this development and also within the South of the River Design Code, which is also a policy within the 2030 Local Plan. The question that the Committee has raised regarding an active travel plan needs to be posed to the Chief Officer for Environment and the Manager for Passenger Transport and Sustainable travel, although it accepted that such a plan will have an impact on the demand for car parking in the vicinity of Prebend Street.</p> <p>The spreadsheet will be updated on a regular basis and any inaccuracies corrected. In response to the specific points raised in the meeting, the Committee is invited to note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ashburnham Road Car Park – This will be amended to reflect the possible impact of East West Rail; however, until the final details of the route are published, there are no definite plans for this car park.</li> <li>- Clarification on the current status of the land between 20 and 24 Costin Street is being sought and the records will be updated accordingly.</li> </ul> <p>The Riverside North development is subject to a headlease to one party and, therefore, from the Council’s landownership perspective, it is not available for alternative use. The fact that the head lessee has vacant units is outside of the scope of the report that was provided – <b>update received 10/09/24 (partial response).</b></p>	
JUL24(5)	11 July 2024	<i>Minute 20 Action (iv):</i>	Senior Democratic Services Officer added action to the Committee’s Work Programme.	30 August 2024

		<p>That the Manager for Asset and Estate Management be requested to provide a report at a future meeting of this Committee which supplied further information on the following Council owned properties and assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of all non-operational assets, including agricultural holdings and how proceeds were to be split with Central Bedfordshire (where relevant), as well as an update on the sale of Central Bedfordshire farms where proceeds were to be shared with Bedford Borough;</li> <li>- Opportunities around Borough Hall surplus office space and Enterprise House;</li> <li>- What surplus space was available at Council depots;</li> <li>- What surplus space was available at former school sites; and</li> <li>- The intentions for all of the Council's Community Centre buildings.</li> </ul>		
JUL24(6)	11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 21 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the Chief Officer for Finance be requested to provide a written response to this Committee in relation to service disruption and the likelihood of the climate breakdown increasing incidents, including severe winds and increased risk of flood. In addition, information was requested on when the risk assessment for this was last reviewed.</p>	<p><i>This risk was last reviewed on JCAD on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024</i></p> <p><i>The Council has a statutory duty as a Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to have in place sufficient emergency preparedness and business continuity arrangements to respond to emergency events and situations that require a coordinated and multi-agency response. Local Resilience Forums are statutory bodies, covering police force areas, that bring together Category 1 (emergency services, local authorities and NHS) and 2 (utility providers, Met Offices, Environment Agency,</i></p>	03 Sept 2024

			<p><i>Highways England). The Council is a member of the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum and its partners work together to plan and prepare for localised incidents and catastrophic emergencies. The Bedfordshire LRF have a suite of emergency plans for the County which includes a Multi Agency Flood Plan, National Power Outage Plan and a Severe Weather Plan. These plans are regularly tested through desktop exercises attended by all partners.</i></p> <p><i>In addition as a Category 1 responder the Council has to have in place sufficient emergency preparedness and business continuity arrangements to respond to emergency events and situations that require a coordinated and multi-agency response. The Council has an established Business Continuity Management System based on current legislation, regulations and guidance. The short-term objective of Business Continuity Management is to ensure that during disruption, at a minimum, critical services may continue uninterrupted. The longer-term objective of Business Continuity Management is to ensure that the Council can resume normal services as quickly as possible, with as little disruption as possible.</i></p> <p><i>The Council's Business Continuity arrangements aim to increase the Council's resilience and minimise as far as is practicable, the possible risk of disruption to services due to an incident or emergency event, regardless of the cause of the incident/event, to Council services.</i></p> <p><i>Business Continuity Plans focus on how services can respond to a disruption to its business as usual including those caused as a result of potential loss of staff, inability to access premises, loss of key I.T. systems/infrastructure and disruption to partners/suppliers, all of which could be triggered by an environmental issue such as a flood or extreme weather, but</i></p>	
--	--	--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

			<i>equally could be due to non environmental factors such as a pandemic, cyber-attack or economic factors.</i>	
JUL24(7)	11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 21 Action (iii):</i></p> <p>That the Chief Officer for Finance be requested to liaise with the owner of Risk 7 and obtain a written response in relation to governance risks and potential failures to prepare for new legislation and/or regulations being introduced, particularly in light of the new government taking up office and whether this risk had been reviewed as a result.</p>	<p><i>The risk has been reviewed. The control measures for this risk include horizon scanning and engagement with key sector organisations such as the LGA (Local Government Association). New legislation goes through a number of stages to allow local authorities time to prepare. An example is the consultation on the new National Planning Policy Framework before it becomes actual policy.</i></p> <p><i>In addition there is a regular meeting of Risk Champions from key directorates across the council where additional horizon scanning and cross functional co-operation can be sought in relation to managing change and identifying risks/controls.</i></p>	03 Sept 2024
JUL24(8)	11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 21 Action (iii):</i></p> <p>That the Risk Management Arrangements – Review of Strategic and Corporate Risk report be referred back to the Executive Committee along with the following recommendation:</p> <p><i>“The Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee wished to express their concerns about the shortcomings of the Risk Management Arrangements – Review of Strategic and Corporate Risk report and request that the Executive relook at this report as well as address the risks outlined by Members of Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the 11 July 2024 meeting (Minute 21 referred).”</i></p>	<p>Recommendation sent to the Clerk of the Executive – 24/07/24</p> <p><b><i>Response from Executive:</i></b></p> <p><i>I have discussed the Strategic Risk report with the s151 Officer, and received assurances that all the questions and queries raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been reviewed and actioned. It was noted that some risk mitigations had been incorrectly recorded in the risk management system and did not appear in the published report in error. I am satisfied that the necessary corrective actions have been taken and that the report does not need to be re-considered by the Executive.</i></p>	12 Sept 24

JUL24(9)	11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 22 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the following recommendation be referred to the next meeting of the Executive Committee:</p> <p><i>“The Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee wished to express their concerns in relation to the rate in which the Council’s reserves were being used and the diminishing level of reserves predicted to take place by the end of March 2025.”</i></p>	<p>Recommendation sent to the Clerk of the Executive – 24/07/24</p> <p><b>Response from Executive:</b></p> <p><i>The Executive recognises the concerns of Scrutiny in relation to the level of reserves, and that the general fund balance is currently below the recommended range. The use of £2million reserves used to balance the budget were reserves that were planned to be utilised during 2024/25 on transformation projects, which are now funded using the flexible capital receipts mechanism. Earmarked reserves are set aside for specific purposes, and these have been used in the way that was intended. The Executive is taking action to mitigate the position in the current year to avoid using reserves to balance the budget and has made provision in the MTFS of £2.5million across the medium term to increase the general fund balance to bring greater financial resilience.</i></p>	12 Sept 24
JUL24(10)	11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 23 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the Interim Monitoring Officer be requested to provide clarification on the Local Welfare Provision webpage on the Council's website and whether a telephone number as well as email address was available for residents to access, when required.</p>	<p><i>Further to the discussion at the Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee yesterday, I can advise that the webpage for Local Welfare Provision has now been updated to provide the telephone number and email address for the Local Welfare Provision Service.</i></p>	12 July 2024
JUL24(11)	11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 23 Action (iii):</i></p> <p>That the Interim Monitoring Officer be requested to provide a written response in relation to how</p>	<p>Written response followed up – 23 September 2024.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p>	09 Oct 2024

		<p>long the waiting list was for the Disabled Facilities Grant.</p>	<p><i>Using information extracted from the DFG software on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024, there were currently 18 cases on the HIT waiting list (unallocated), the oldest of which dated back to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024. Standard priority cases are allocated monthly to a Case Officer, so all cases received in June were allocated in August 24 and all those received in July were allocated by the end of September. All urgent priority cases are allocated to a case officer as they are received into the service and progressed accordingly. To ensure any Occupational Therapist referral is robust and enable the practical solutions to be identified to meet the Client's needs, a feasibility process has been introduced at the front end of the process for some referrals involving members from the Occupational Therapist and HIT team member. This ensures that expectations are suitably managed at the earliest opportunity so if minor/major adaptations are not viable, alternative solutions can be explored. It should be noted that each OT referral and DFG grant can be very different.</i></p> <p><i>Using data extracted from the Home Improvement Team software database the average time that any DFG case was open for those adaptations which were closed between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 was 43.7 weeks. This can be influenced by a number of factors such as delays in submission of essential paperwork, a change in circumstances, delays to sign off and approval of the proposed adaptations, complexity of the referral, a refresh of the MEANS test (Test of Resources), etc.</i></p> <p><i>It should be noted that within the DFG grants cited above there were 5 large adaptations which took over 2 years to process from receipt of referral to completion due to client delays, issues surrounding planning and a need to source additional funding to that available through the DFG and Housing Assistance Policy. There are also a further 2 cases which have been re-opened during the statutory timeframe, so within the figures are showing</i></p>	
--	--	---------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

			<p><i>as having taken 4 years but haven't as the client initially refused the mandatory works and then came back, so the team re-opened the original case rather than start a new one. If these complex cases are excluded, then the average time taken to process an adaptation is 38.2 weeks (including the waiting list time).</i></p> <p><i>It should be noted that these times are only from receipt of the referral into the HIT and do not take account of any time the resident has spent waiting for an OT assessment or being supported by social care prior to major adaptations referrals being made.</i></p>	
JUL24(12)	11 July 2024	<p><i>Minute 23 Action (iv):</i></p> <p>That the following recommendation be referred to the next meeting of the Executive Committee:</p> <p><i>"The Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee wished to express their view that any grant scheme (including the Local Welfare Provision and Council Tax Support schemes) provided by the Council should continue, at least in the short-term, until a decision had been taken."</i></p>	<p>Recommendation sent to the Clerk of the Executive – 24/07/24</p> <p><b>Response from Executive:</b></p> <p><i>The LWP Service's main focus has always been to assist residents in need by referring them to sources of assistance, financial or otherwise, including referrals to Bedford Foodbank. The LWP Service is continuing to take telephone enquiries and arrange food parcels through Bedford Foodbank and also referring people to other forms of assistance.</i></p> <p><i>The majority of grants awarded through LWP in recent years were made to homeless households who were in need of basic household items due to moving into temporary accommodation or settled housing. Funding has been allocated to the Housing Service from the Household Support Fund to enable this need to be met directly by the Housing Service.</i></p> <p><i>The Council's LWP Policy states that grants will only be awarded where sufficient financial resources allocated for that purposes by the Council are available. The Council may limit awards at any</i></p>	12 Sept 24

			<p><i>time in order to effectively manage the available resources to ensure that the Council retains the means to assist those most in need at any time throughout the financial year. There is currently £7,393 left in LWP grant reserve and therefore an award of a grant may be considered in exceptional circumstances whilst funds remain.</i></p> <p><i>No changes may be made to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in-year and any proposed changes for future years require the approval of Full Council.</i></p>	
SEPT24(1)	12 September 2024	<p><i>Minute 33 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the Senior Democratic Services Officer be requested to send the FACES and Bedford Foodbank presentations to Group Researchers and have them forward these to all Councillors.</p>	FACES and Bedford Foodbank presentations sent to Group Researchers as requested – 24/09/24	24 Sept 24
SEPT24(2)	12 September 2024	<p><i>Minute 33 Action (iv):</i></p> <p>That the following recommendations be added to the final recommendations report for the major review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That the LWP team be retained, as they have the expertise in helping residents requiring financial support.</li> <li>- That Council Officers that signpost individuals for financial support have the right training, knowledge, and</li> </ul>		

		<p>experience to undertake this role effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the internal processes to ensure that there was a seamless one-stop-shop approach for residents in crisis, and to ensure that they were not transferred from one part of the Council to another.</li> <li>- Look at the cooking facilities available in temporary accommodation, and more specifically the availability of microwaves in Travelodges <b>(to be actioned as soon as possible)</b>.</li> </ul>		
SEPT24(3)	12 September 2024	<p><i>Minute 33 Action (v):</i></p> <p>That feedback be received from other local authorities who have adopted a more active approach to identifying people in need of financial support or were in crisis, at a future meeting of this Committee.</p>	Added to Work Programme – 25/09/2024.	
SEPT24(4)	12 September 2024	<p><i>Minute 35 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the following questions be referred to the relevant Executive Portfolio Holder, with the request for a written response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In relation to Adult Services, the report stated that Bedford Borough had a higher proportion of working aged and older adults with complex and disability needs.</li> </ul>	Sent to the relevant Portfolio Holder, plus Mayor's Office – 25/09/2024	

		<p>However, what was it higher than? Furthermore, the comparative figures for this were requested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The two graphs detailed in the report which related to the Adult Services Social Care clients and costs did not have a baseline of zero. Therefore, an outline in the graphs on how the numbers related to demographic changes were requested.</li> <li>- The analysis of debt outstanding highlighted in the revenue budget had totalled £12million. However, the report had not detailed whether this was an increase or decrease to the outstanding debt or how long a debt was in arrears for. Therefore, it was asked whether the Executive had looked at this and if further detail on this could be provided to the Committee?</li> <li>- How confident was the Portfolio Holder in the measures that were being taken to bring the Council's budget back into balance?</li> <li>- In relation to the £100,000 available in the active travel capability funding, more information was requested on how this worked given the lack of staffing in this area.</li> </ul>		
--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--

SEPT24(5)	12 September 2024	<p><i>Minute 36 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the following questions be referred to the Finance Portfolio Holder, with the request for a written response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What was the Finance Portfolio Holder's intentions for the council tax rises, given the large gap identified in the MTFs?</li> <li>- Was the Finance Portfolio Holder on track to deliver savings proposals for Autumn 2024 and that confirmation be provided on the savings figure that was being aimed for?</li> </ul>	Sent to the relevant Portfolio Holder, plus Mayor's Office – 25/09/2024	
SEPT24(6)	12 September 2024	<p><i>Minute 37 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That a written response be provided explaining what was meant by "venues up by 14%" and "libraries stock issues are up 10%" on page 112 of the report. Were these related to existing Key Performance Indicators?</p>	<p>Request sent to relevant Officer – 26 September 2024.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p><i>"Venues up by 14%" relates to in-person visits to Culture &amp; Heritage sites (The Higgins Bedford, Bedford Borough Libraries and Bedfordshire Archives). The percentage increase figure is taken from the 'Key Achievements' section of the Regulatory Services &amp; Culture Service Plan 2024/25 (Service Plans). It is important to note that this was the position at Q3 2023/24 due to the date the Service Plan was written (and not the year-end figures), the 14% increase therefore represents the Q1-Q3 total for 2023/24 compared to the same period in 2022/23. This relates to Key Performance Indicator LC6 – see table below. This shows the percentage increase in 2023/24 from 2022/23 based on the</i></p>	30 Sept 2024

			<p>position at Q3 as stated in the Service Plan (yellow columns), as well as the full-year outturn figures (white columns).</p> <p>“Libraries stock issues are up 10%” relates to the total number of physical and digital library stock issues and renewals. The same points above regarding the Service Plan and totals for Q1-Q3 apply here. This relates to Key Performance Indicators LC4 and LC5 (combined total), which are also set out in the table below.</p> <p>The year-end figures are now available and have been included below (see end of Actions Tracker for table).</p>	
SEPT24(7)	12 September 2024	<p><i>Minute 37 Action (iii):</i></p> <p>That a written response be provided explaining what was meant by the Council being ranked second best for similar pupils and the best for pupils on free school meals? What did the second-best ranking relate to and was the Council giving out more free school meals than other Councils?</p>	<p>Request sent to relevant Officer – 26 September 2024.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p><i>Rated second best for similar pupils relates to the attainment of pupils (in 2024) at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and maths by disadvantaged pupils. We are ranked second best amongst our statistical neighbours for the <b>lowest percentage gap</b> between disadvantaged pupils and all other pupils meeting the expected standard in RWM combined.</i></p> <p><i>Best for FSM relates to the attainment of pupils (in 2024) at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and maths by free school meal eligibility. We are ranked first amongst our statistical neighbours for the <b>lowest percentage gap</b> (low is good) between pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and all other pupils meeting the expected standard in RWM combined.</i></p> <p><i>Note: Pupils who meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) are those who meet the expected standard in all three subjects. The expected standard in reading and maths</i></p>	30 Sept 24

			is a scaled score of 100 or above. The expected standard in writing is a teacher assessment of 'working at the expected standard' (EXS) or 'working at greater depth' (GDS).	
SEPT24(8)	12 September 2024	<p><i>Minute 37 Action (iv):</i></p> <p>That the Corporate Plan 2022/2026: Delivery Report 2023/2024 be referred back to the Executive Committee along with the following recommendation:</p> <p><i>“The Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee would like to express their concerns in relation to the quality of Corporate Plan 2022/2026: Delivery Report 2023/2024 as well as the downgrading of the Corporate Plan process. The Executive are urged to follow the process agreed by Full Council, in relation to performance monitoring.”</i></p>	<p>Reference sent to relevant SDSO and Mayor’s Office – 26/09/2024.</p> <p><b><i>Minute from the 16 October Executive Meeting:</i></b></p> <p><i>Councillor Headley, as Chair of the Budget and Corporate Services Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee, introduced a reference from the Committee on the Corporate Plan 2022-2026: Delivery Plan requesting Executive to reconsider the performance monitoring approach being adopted by the current administration.</i></p> <p><i>Councillor Headley reported that there were two primary issues of concern to the Committee, these being clarity of the report, with several statements that were unclear and therefore of little value to those trying to assess the Council’s performance (an example of this was reference to a statement on “second best for similar pupils”) and that there were no clear performance measures and targets presented as part of the report, solely a list of achievements made during the year, with no context. It was important for an outturn report to clearly demonstrate all areas of performance, whether good or bad.</i></p> <p><i>Councillor Headley quoted from the introduction of the Corporate Plan and emphasised that when it was adopted under former Mayor Dave Hodgson, it included clearly defined performance measures that were presented in a strategic dashboard to enable active management of the plan. It was these measures that had not been included in the current delivery plan report, even though it was identified as an integral part of the Corporate Plan process.</i></p>	16 Oct 24

			<p><i>The responsibility for approving the Corporate Plan was one for Full Council, and Councillor Headley expressed the view that it was difficult for Members to retain oversight and monitor performance against this key policy framework document if Full Council was not provided with detailed performance management data as had previously been the case.</i></p> <p><i>Executive was required to monitor performance against the plan annually and if it was not provided with this information, Councillor Headley failed to see how it could be fulfilling this requirement without having sight of performance monitoring framework. Therefore, he requested Executive to reconsider this and reinstate the performance framework as required by Full Council.</i></p> <p><i>Councillor Weir advised that the outturn report was prepared with the performance management information. In relation to the new draft plan, Executive was considering the concerns raised at the last meeting of Full Council and would be addressing these in the next report. He volunteered to share the draft performance indicators that would underpin the new Corporate Plan.</i></p> <p><u><i>RESOLVED:</i></u></p> <p><i>That the reference from the Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be received and the Committee be provided with the draft performance indicators for the 2024/25-2027/28 Corporate Plan to address concerns raised.</i></p> <p><u><i>Reason for Decision</i></u></p>	
--	--	--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

			<i>To consider and respond to references received from Council and/or Overview and Scrutiny Committees.</i>	
SEPT24(9)	12 September 2024	<p><i>Minute 41 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the Risk Register be added to this Committee's Work Programme, with a view to review the issues that were raised at the 11 July 2024 meeting.</p>	Added to the Work Programme as requested – 26/09/24	26 Sept 24
SEPT24(10)	12 September 2024	<p><i>Minute 41 Action (iii):</i></p> <p>That information in relation to the further thinking required on the Equality Impact Assessment Review Group, and who was looking into this matter, was requested to be received by the next meeting of this Committee.</p>	Action sent to relevant Officers and the Mayor's Office/PH seeking a response – 26/09/24	26 Sept 24
OCT24(1)	17 October 2024	<p><b><i>Linked to JUN24(2)</i></b></p> <p><i>Minute 46 Action (iv):</i></p> <p>That the Manager for Democratic Services and Electoral Registration be requested to provide an explanation on why an increase on the absolute number of the electorate would result in a proportion of people not responding.</p>	<p>Action sent to relevant Officer – 25/10/2024</p> <p>The overall Canvass response for 2024 Annual Canvass is 93% return which is comparable with previous years but due to the increase in electorate during 2023/24 this is an overall increase in response rate. There are still areas of the Borough that have a lower response rate and these areas are targeted via postcode targetting and the electoral services team continue to engage with residents to successfully complete their registration and this work continues throughout the year.</p>	
OCT24(2)	17 October 2024	<i>Minute 48 Action (ii):</i>		

		<p>That the following recommendations be added to the final recommendations report for this major review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To strengthen partnership working and communication with organisations.</li> <li>- Address the gap in Adult Social Care, specifically in relation to the needs assessment and the financial assessment (it was to be noted that work on this had commenced but should be completed).</li> <li>- There was a need for named contacts across the relevant Council departments.</li> <li>- A need to digitalise processes, whilst recognising that digital exclusion needed to be tackled. This included the need for paper and phone options for residents.</li> <li>- To try and bridge the gap for those people who were not eligible for Discretionary Housing Payments but still had housing arrears. This would be via the development of an improved Discretionary Housing Payments process.</li> <li>- To review the Discretionary Housing Payments and Local Welfare Provision forms and processes, with input from stakeholders.</li> <li>- To protect the Local Welfare Provision Service and reinstate this Service as soon as possible.</li> <li>- Personal Housing Plans should be rolled out further and more comprehensively.</li> </ul>		

OCT24(3)	17 October 2024	<p><i>Minute 50 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the Manager for Asset and Estate Management be requested to discuss possible priority works on the Queens Park Community Centre with Councillor Masud.</p>	Sent to relevant Officer – 30/10/2024	
OCT24(4)	17 October 2024	<p><i>Minute 50 Action (iii):</i></p> <p>That the Manager for Asset and Estate Management be requested to ensure that contact details for hiring the Faraday Community Centre be listed on the Council's website.</p>	Sent to relevant Officer – 30/10/2024	20 Nov 24
OCT24(5)	17 October 2024	<p><i>Minute 50 Action (iv):</i></p> <p>That the Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee wished to make the following recommendations to the Executive and Portfolio Holder in relation to the Council's Community Centres:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It was deemed important that the Community Centres be retained by the Council.</li> <li>2. The Budget and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed support for Community Centres and the management of these Centres.</li> <li>3. That the local community needs be reflected in any current or future</li> </ol>	Sent to relevant Senior Democratic Services Officer & Mayor's Office – 30/10/2024	20 Nov 24

		operational arrangements for the Community Centres.		
OCT24(6)	17 October 2024	<p><i>Minute 51 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the Chief Executive be requested to confirm when the training for the Equality Impact Champions was to be completed and whether these Champions were to receive extra pay for this role.</p>	<p>Sent to relevant Officer – 30/10/2024</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p><i>The Equality Analysis training for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions (Directorates) will be completed by April 2025. The Champions do not receive additional pay for undertaking this role but are provided with half a day per month away from their substantive duties to carry out this function.</i></p>	31 Oct 2024
OCT24(7)	17 October 2024	<p><i>Minute 51 Action (iii):</i></p> <p>That the Chief Executive be requested to confirm which Executive Portfolio Holder was responsible for equality impact assessments.</p>	<p>Sent to relevant Officer – 30/10/2024</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p><i>The Mayor has responsibility for Equality Impact Assessments.</i></p>	31 Oct 2024
OCT24(8)	17 October 2024	<p><b>Linked to FEB24(5)</b></p> <p><i>Minute 51 Action (iv):</i></p> <p>That the Chief Executive be requested to confirm the timescales for putting in place the risk process for reviewing completed equality impact assessments after six months of implementation.</p>	<p>Sent to relevant Officer – 30/10/2024</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p><i>Currently there is only one Council (Surrey County Council) that has a review group in place. It has a dedicated Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Officer whose role is solely to focus on Equality Analysis and reviews. It is recognised that this is good practice but it is not anticipated that this is a function of the Champions as they would not have the capacity to do so. The Council employs one fulltime Senior Officer, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion who does have responsibility for Equality Analysis, but this is part of a much wider role. At present, a review process is therefore an activity for consideration in the longer term. However, in the meantime to</i></p>	31 Oct 2024

			<i>provide the necessary assurance, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions will advise Officers in carrying out robust Equality Analyses and will ensure Officers review the actions and update these accordingly.</i>	
OCT24(9)	17 October 2024	<p><i>Minute 52 Action (ii):</i></p> <p>That the Manager for Performance, Analytics and Data Protection be requested to provide a written response detailing what was meant by “calls offered” in the customer services performance indicators.</p>	Sent to relevant Officer – 30/10/2024	20 Nov 24
OCT24(10)	17 October 2024	<p><i>Minute 52 Action (iii):</i></p> <p>That the Manager for Performance, Analytics and Data Protection be requested to provide a briefing note with the comparable data on customer service average waiting times from 2023/2024 as well as an update on why the current average waiting times were so high when residents called into the Council, at the next meeting of this Committee.</p>	Sent to relevant Officer & added to Work Programme – 30/10/2024	
OCT24(11)	17 October 2024	<p><i>Minute 53 Action (iv):</i></p> <p>That information in relation to the delays in Freedom of Information Requests be combined with the Subject Access Requests report scheduled to be received at the next meeting of this Committee.</p>	Sent to relevant Officer & added to Work Programme – 30/10/2024	

Appendix to Minute 37 Action (ii):

		2022/23 @Q3	2023/24 @Q3	Number Increase	% Increase	Outturn 2022/23	Outturn 2023/24	Number Increase	% Increase
LC 6	Number of visits to Libraries & Culture sites	286,099	325,119	39,020	14%	386,657	427,916	41,259	11%
LC 4	Digital media issues and renewals (online through Virtual Library)	459,479	511,046	51,567	11%	609,930	701,852	91,922	15%
LC 5	Physical stock issues and renewals (Libraries)	250,141	270,189	20,048	8%	326,405	354,059	27,654	8%
LC 4 + LC 5		709,620	781,235	71,615	10%	936,335	1,055,911	119,576	13%