

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

	Theme	Characteristics of a well-functioning council	RAG	Comments	CWC Lead
1	Continuous Improvement	There is an organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement, with frequent monitoring, performance reporting and updating of the corporate and improvement plans.	Green	Our City: Our Plan performance framework is reported quarterly to Cabinet and Scrutiny Board. The performance framework is aligned to budget monitoring and the strategic risk register.	Charlotte Johns (James Amphlett)
		There is some form of established transformation function or programme.	Green	The Council has a well-embedded 'Corporate' Programme Management function which provides advice and guidance on a range of transformation approaches including programme, project and change management. There are specific transformation programmes which have been established (such as Transforming Children's Services, Wolves at Work) that utilise key aspects of the framework in their governance approach. These programmes benefit from the support, guidance and resource available through this Corporate Project Management function	David Pattison (Steven Cartwright)
		The authority arranges a corporate or finance peer challenge at least every five years, acts promptly on any recommendations given, and publishes the report of that review and progress updates.	Amber	A Corporate Peer Review was last held in 2017 and a Finance Peer Review 2016. There has been active engagement with the LGA on this matter, and a Peer Review now scheduled for Autumn 2024.	David Pattison
		The authority is willing to work with the external auditor to proactively identify areas for improvement and responds promptly and effectively to recommendations.	Green	The Council already works with an external Auditor who provides an Auditor's Annual Report in compliance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.	David Pattison

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

		<p>Professional development and appraisal at all staff levels is built into day-to-day work, with poor performance identified, monitored and effectively addressed, and good performance recognised.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>A professional conversation process exists alongside 1-2-1 meetings to support employees to carry out their role effectively with managers working with HR/OD services to improve or address any performance concerns as per our capability Procedure.</p> <p>The Council has a number of mechanisms in place to reward and recognise good performance, including the Chief Executive briefings acknowledging achievements of teams and individuals and colleagues are able to nominate peers for recognition through this channel, long service recognition ceremonies are undertaken on an annual basis and Senior management team visits to thank teams for their contributions and dedication take place.</p> <p>The Reward and Recognition offer is currently under review following engagement with our workforce and will be included in the refreshed Our People Strategy.</p>	<p>David Pattison (Joanna Grocott)</p>
		<p>The Annual Governance Statement, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/ SOLACE Good Governance Framework, is the culmination of a meaningful review designed to stress-test both the governance framework and the health of the control environment.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>The Annual Governance Statement (which covers the control environment and the broader governance framework) is updated as part of the Council's annual accounts closedown and audit procedures and is independently reviewed by External Audit who have raised no issues.</p> <p>This Council goes further and also produces a mid-year review of the Annual Governance Statement to show the progress being made against the relevant Annual Governance Statement.</p>	<p>James Howse (Alison Shannon)</p>

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

		Innovation is encouraged and supported within the context of a mature approach to risk management.	Green	<p>The Council has in place a Risk Management framework that reflects best practice within the sector. It also recently refreshed its strategic risk register, which is presented quarterly to its Senior Management Team, Cabinet and the Audit and Risk Committee.</p> <p>The Audit and Risk Committee will regularly call-in selected risks for a more detailed deep dive, with the respective Risk Owner in attendance.</p> <p>One recent innovation is the inclusion of other sources of assurance into the risk register, with links taking readers directly to various Council, or independent sources of assurance.</p> <p>The risk register is published and transparent.</p>	James Howse (Ian Cotterill)
		The authority shares a sense of collective responsibility for the performance of the sector and supports other authorities to improve.	Green	<p>Collaborative working with DLUHC and other Government departments to pilot new policy/pathfinder activity.</p> <p>Key partner at the West Midlands Combined Authority and other regional bodies.</p>	Charlotte Johns (Laura Collings)
2	Leadership	Members provide quality leadership by setting a clearly articulated, achievable and prioritised vision for officers to follow that puts place and local people at its heart. Senior officers have the capacity and capability to provide the authority with effective strategic direction.	Green	Cabinet Member priorities refreshed annually, and the process is supported by Senior officers. Cabinet member briefings, scrutiny and other mechanisms ensure members have clear routes to shape and inform the vision for the city and its residents.	Charlotte Johns (Laura Collings)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

	<p>The authority's corporate plan is evidence based, current, realistic and enables the whole organisation's performance to be measured and held to account. Strategic priorities are aligned with the authority's financial strategy and delivery arrangements, and respond appropriately to local need, including the plans of partners and stakeholders.</p>	Green	<p>Six overarching priorities with supporting performance framework. Clear objectives and outcomes aligned to each priority. Annual refresh of Our City Our Plan (OCOP) to ensure it reflects the needs of local people as well as extensive partner engagement.</p>	Charlotte Johns (Laura Collings)
	<p>Members and officers, particularly those with statutory responsibility, including the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers, uphold their duties and speak truth to power.</p>	Green	<p>The Section 151 and Monitoring Officers are members of the Senior Executive Board (SEB) and have influence on all material business decisions, and also ensure financial and legal implications are provided on all reports.</p>	David Pattison James Howse (Alison Shannon)
	<p>Strong financial management and reporting runs throughout the whole organisation.</p>	Green	<p>Budget Managers and Heads of Service with support from Strategic Finance undertake monthly revenue budget monitoring, and quarterly capital monitoring.</p> <p>Quarterly updates are reported and discussed at Leadership Teams and SEB ahead of reports going to Cabinet and Scrutiny Board. Monitoring reports bring together performance, finance and risk.</p>	James Howse (Alison Shannon)
	<p>Robust systems are in place and "owned" by members for identifying, reporting, mitigating and regularly reviewing risk.</p>	Green	<p>Each risk on the Council's strategic risk register identifies the respective risk owner and the relevant Cabinet Member, who are responsible for ensuring that actions are taken to ensure that each risk is being appropriately mitigated.</p> <p>The strategic risk register is also presented to Cabinet, Scrutiny Board and the Audit and Risk</p>	James Howse (Ian Cotterill)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

				Committee on a quarterly basis.	
		Effective succession planning, with the recruitment and nurturing of officers with the necessary skills, ensures organisational resilience.	Amber	<p>A new Recruitment and Retention Team has been introduced to embed succession planning into the organisation, further improving current arrangements.</p> <p>The council has a culture and commitment to 'growing our own' and developing employees – we have a range of programmes/packages of development that support this, like Brilliant Leaders, Aspiring into Management programme and coaching and mentoring programmes.</p>	David Pattison (Joanna Grocott)
		Members and senior officers maintain constructive relationships and engage effectively with external stakeholders and the wider local community.	Green	<p>The council has communications strategy that aligns to ensure effective engagement with external stakeholders and the wider community.</p> <p>The communications strategy is refreshed on an annual basis to reflect the latest corporate priorities.</p> <p>It is developed via direct engagement with members of the Strategic Executive Board and their respective cabinet member. This ensures the comms strategy and action plan is aligned to the council plans (Our City Our Plan) and corporate priorities.</p> <p>Communications and engagement activity focuses on city residents as primary audience. Communications is also delivered to a network of stakeholders both in the city and across the</p>	Ian Fegan (Richard Wyatt)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

				region.	
		A demonstrable commitment to leadership development.	Amber	<p>The council has a culture and commitment to 'growing our own' and developing employees – we have a range of programmes/packages of development that support this, like Brilliant Leaders, AIM programme, Breaking Through Programme and coaching and mentoring programmes.</p> <p>The Council has a Leadership and Management Development programme that is currently being refreshed and revised following employee feedback and a refresh of the Our People Strategy.</p>	David Pattison (Joanna Grocott)
		The authority has moved from multiple to all-out elections within the four-year cycle, which has enhanced stability and reduced ongoing campaigning that can hinder improvement.	Red	<p>The Council considered a report and recommendation from Governance and Ethics Committee in October 2021 and 2022 – and it was agreed that the electoral cycle would continue to be done in thirds.</p> <p>The Council carefully considered the options allowed under the legislation and opted to retain elections by thirds for the reasons set out in the detailed report considered by Council in 2021.</p>	David Pattison (Laura Gittos)
3	Governance	Effective procedures are in place and followed to ensure members and officers at all levels comply with the Nolan Principles and relevant codes of conduct and policies. This includes adequate protections and support for whistle-blowers.	Green	<p>Whistleblowing: The Council has a Whistleblowing policy which includes the protections for whistleblowers. The Council has also entered into an arrangement with a third-party organisation SeeHereSpeakUp where concerns can also initially be independently raised with them, and they then approach the Council directly on the</p>	David Pattison (Laura Gittos) Ian Cotterill

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

				behalf of those raising a concern, and ensure that each concern is appropriately dealt with.	
		The authority's scrutiny function is challenging, robust and contributes to the efficient delivery of public services.	Green	<p>Scrutiny is designed around the OCOP themes and have detailed work programmes that focus on key issues emerging from OCOP and otherwise, including as a result of the Council's detailed performance/risk and budget management.</p> <p>Members always ask challenging and insightful questions in official Scrutiny meetings and in preparation meetings. Effective questioning by Members has helped to inform Policy and ensure that Services are improved for our residents.</p> <p>Members are supported by a dedicated Scrutiny Team of two Scrutiny Officers, a Scrutiny Team Leader and a Manager. This team is able to assist Members with Research and administering the Scrutiny function.</p> <p>Members have made key recommendations in Scrutiny meetings. As an example, the Health Scrutiny Panel has made a number of recommendations on improving access to GP Appointments. Recommendations are always effectively monitored as can be seen on the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review Group on the Wolverhampton Pound, which has been monitored by Scrutiny Board and the Resources and Equalities Scrutiny Panel.</p>	David Pattison (Laura Gittos)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

				<p>Each year a Scrutiny Annual Report is presented to Full Council which highlights the key work of Scrutiny throughout the year.</p> <p>The Express and Star Newspaper regularly reports on the outcomes of Scrutiny meetings, which helps to demonstrate the Scrutiny function is looking at issues which are important to the general public.</p>	
		Risk awareness and management informs every decision.	Green	The Council has a detailed Risk Management Framework which includes reference to the Council's risk appetite and its overall approach to risk management. Consideration of risk is embedded in all decisions made.	James Howse (Ian Cotterill)
		Full Council alongside the Audit Committee takes an effective overview of the systems of control, audit and governance.	Green	<p>Audit and Risk Committee meet regularly to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.</p> <p>The External Auditors annual report is also presented at Full Council. The report by the auditor's considers whether the Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources. The auditor's report also reports on the Council's overall arrangements,</p>	David Pattison (Laura Gittos)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

				<p>as well as key recommendations on any significant weaknesses in arrangements identified during the audit.</p> <p>Annually a report is presented to Full Council which highlights the key areas of work of Audit and Risk Committee throughout the year.</p>	
		Appropriate financial, commercial and legal expertise is obtained, including from external sources, and due diligence completed on any key or novel decision.		<p>Finance and legal colleagues regularly review cabinet reports and decisions and provide legal implications on reports and IEDN's. Where necessary external legal advice is sourced to ensure robust decision making and reduce risk. In addition, legal are members of various project boards, and attend leadership teams when necessary.</p>	David Pattison (Tracey Christie)
		Committees and individuals charged with governance have the appropriate experience, skills and expertise to perform their role.	Amber	<p>Members Selection for Committees and Scrutiny Panels is agreed amongst the political groups. Many of the Members have been at the Council for some time, have developed skills and experience needed. For any new Members or Members new to committees or panels, training and development is sort. Also offered support from leading Directors for the area they are aligned to.</p> <p>Officers The officers across governance are a high skilled workforce, with many years of experience. There are dedicated teams to Committees and Scrutiny Panels. The teams often attend key development and conferences to enhance the way they work</p>	David Pattison (Laura Gittos)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

		<p>There is proper member oversight (as shareholders) of companies and partnership bodies, in accordance with the Local Authority Company Review Guidance and their existence is regularly and independently reviewed.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>There is a detailed process in place for oversight for Council companies and partnership bodies – the Governance and Ethics Committee agreed a formal Code on Governance of Linked Bodies in November 2022. In November 2023 there was an update on the compliance with the code.</p> <p>There is a commitment to carry out a deep dive every 3 years and a report to scrutiny each year on each body. An update is sent to cabinet members and the leader of the opposition on each of the companies and bodies every 6 weeks setting out compliance with the business plan for the body and key performance indicators.</p> <p>In the municipal year 2023-24 oversight to members was shared on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YOO Recruit • Wolverhampton College • WV Living • Wolverhampton Homes • Help to Own <p>.</p> <p>Other meetings where this has been shared are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and Ethics Committee – November 2023 • YOO Recruit tabled for Resources and Equality Scrutiny Panel – March 2024 	<p>David Pattison (Laura Gittos)</p>
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Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

		Performance management information measures actual outcomes effectively and is frequently interrogated.	Green	<p>There is a robust performance framework aligned to OCOP, reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny Board quarterly alongside budget and risk information. OCOP indicators reviewed annually. This is aligned to Oflog data and wider sources of assurance including regulatory inspections and qualitative data.</p> <p>As part of our continuous improvement plan work continues to further develop operational data reporting and analysis, utilising the council's strength in data analysis through the PowerBi system</p>	Charlotte Johns (James Amphlett)
		Lessons are learned from complaints.	Green	<p>The complaints team report on performance in relation to complaints on a regular basis via the Leadership Teams, Children's and Adults services Quality Assurance groups and the Governance and Ethics Committee.</p> <p>Performance for each service area and as a Council is reviewed and feedback is received on how services have learned and responded to complaints – further improving service delivery, these are directly referred to in the reports to Governance and Ethics Committee.</p>	Laura Phillips (Anna Zollino-Biscotti)
4	Culture	Members and officers promote and demonstrate the highest ethical standards and appropriate working behaviours through established shared values and ways of working.	Amber	<p>The constitution outlines codes of conduct for both Members and Officers of the Council.</p> <p>At least once a year the Monitoring Officer (and deputies) hold sessions to go over the code of conduct for Councillors, reinforcing the ethical standards and appropriate behaviours. This also covers the Nolan Principles.</p> <p>If there are any concerns about the behaviour</p>	David Pattison (Laura Gittos)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

			<p>of an elected member there is a process in place for the Monitoring Officer to review complaints.</p> <p>The process is reviewed regularly and issues with behaviours are also raised through the group leaders where this occurs.</p>	
		<p>A culture of cooperation, respect and trust between and within members and officers exists, along with a commitment to transparent decision-making.</p>	<p>Green</p> <p>Members and Officers have created an environment where trust and respect is paramount.</p> <p>All key decisions and IEDN's for the business are shared and published online – ensuring not only transparency with Members but also our residents.</p> <p>All exempt reports have a public version produced.</p>	<p>David Pattison (Laura Gittos)</p>
		<p>Civil working relationships (and communication) between Group Leaders despite political disagreements</p>	<p>Amber</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer work closely with both Leaders to ensure a fair sharing of information. As well setting key meetings where both come together to agree a way forward on key business and committees.</p>	<p>David Pattison (Laura Gittos)</p>
		<p>A commitment to promoting transparency and sharing information with the public.</p>	<p>Green</p> <p>Papers available publicly can be accessed via the Council website, which hosts our committee system (Modern.Gov). All exempt reports now have a version that the public can view with the key areas redacted.</p> <p>All committee and scrutiny meetings are webcasted live and recorded to be viewed later.</p>	<p>David Pattison (Laura Gittos)</p> <p>Ian Fegan (Richard Wyatt)</p>

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

				There is no legal requirement, but CWC is committed to webcasting to ensure transparency with the public. We have just installed new webcasting functionality to improve the offer	
		Respect for a councillor's right to know and enquire.	Green	<p>The Governance service offers a unique dedicated support function to Councillors regarding enquiries.</p> <p>The Councillor Enquiry Unit (CEU) was established in May 2021. All councillors can submit an enquiry for any area of the business. The team ensure this is logged, shared and tracked to resolution. Councillors are also given access to a live dashboard showing them where the enquiry is at and any key updates.</p> <p>All Councillor Briefings take monthly regularly throughout the municipal year – focusing on key themes or reacting to emerging priorities. Service areas update councillors direct, and there is always a chance for questions and answers.</p> <p>A councillor weekly briefing email is sent from the Chief Operating Officer to all councillors. The email covers key updates from the week and week coming from the business. As well as links to upcoming papers and meetings.</p> <p>Cabinet Member briefings take place on a weekly basis with Directors/Heads of Service to ensure the Executive are sighted on all elements of their portfolios and upcoming reports/decisions.</p>	David Pattison (Laura Gittos)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

				Regular briefings of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition take place.	
		The existence of a proactive and welcoming attitude to external challenge and scrutiny.	Green	<p>The Council has a Scrutiny Board and six Scrutiny Panels, which ensure the effective Scrutiny of the Council and external partners. In addition to these standing Panels, Scrutiny review groups are also setup when required. Examples of Scrutiny review Groups in recent years include one's on Fire Safety, Flooding, Mental Health, the Wolverhampton Pound and SEND.</p> <p>Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, including Directors, regularly attend Scrutiny meetings to give evidence and to be held account as decision makers. In the Municipal Year 2023-2024, a total of 40 official Public Scrutiny meetings have been held or are schedule to be held.</p> <p>Regular meetings are held with the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs and the Lead Director for each Scrutiny Panel to ensure Scrutiny is run effectively.</p>	David Pattison (Laura Gittos)
		Appropriate processes are in place to address issues such as harassment and bullying	Green	The council has an established Dignity at work policy to prevent or address harassment and discrimination claims. In addition employees can use the grievance process and an anonymous platform (Safe Space) to air their issues. The council also has a whistleblowing policy. Issues can be addressed using a well-established discipline process.	David Pattison (Suky Mattu)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

		An accessible whistleblowing policy, of which there is wide awareness and confidence that it will work.	Green	The Council has a published Whistleblowing policy, and in the first instance consideration of whistleblowing concerns are reviewed by Audit Services. The Council has also entered into an arrangement with a third-party organisation SeeHereSpeakUp where concerns can also initially be raised with them, and they then approach the Council directly on the behalf of those raising a concern, and ensure that each concern is appropriately dealt with.	James Howse (Ian Cotterill)
		Demonstrable steps to engage openly and honestly with staff.	Green	<p>The council engages with employees using several mechanisms – Staff equality forums, employee surveys, chatty cafés, panel events, drop in sessions, Information on the intranet and extranet, communication pages and videos from the Chief Executive. Engagement with frontline services take place and we are currently reviewing how we can further improve this.</p> <p>Representative from Equality Staff Forums also attend and contribute to the decision making that takes place at the weekly Strategic Executive Board.</p>	David Pattison (Suky Mattu)
5	Use of resources	The financial strategy and budgets are clearly aligned with strategic priorities and there is a robust process for reviewing and setting the budget.	Green	<p>The Council's approach when setting the budget and MTFS is to align resources to Our City; Our Plan. This is reported to Cabinet and Full Council.</p> <p>In addition, regular performance and budget monitoring reports are reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny Board, integrating performance, risk and finance.</p>	James Howse (Alison Shannon)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

		Human resources and fixed assets are managed efficiently and effectively.	Amber	Robust capital programme to invest in our fixed assets supported by strategy (Strategic Asset Plan) as well as transformation programme (Fleet). New People Transformation programme launched to oversee new approach to HR and OD.	Laura Phillips (Suky Mattu) Julia Nock (Stuart Rutherford)
		A robust system of financial controls and reporting exists, which provide clear accountability and ensure compliance with statutory requirements and accounting standards.	Green	<p>The Council's Constitution details Cabinet / Committee functions, elected members and officer delegations. It also includes the Financial and Contract Procedure Rules and sets out the responsibilities of Officers.</p> <p>All reports require the financial implications to be signed off by Strategic Finance and key decisions are reported through Leadership teams and SEB for approval prior to being considered by Cabinet.</p> <p>As required by legislation the Council sets a balanced budget on an annual basis, which is presented to Full Council for approval.</p> <p>The annual statement of accounts are produced in compliance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.</p> <p>In addition, treasury management activities are underpinned by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management.</p>	James Howse (Alison Shannon)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

	Compliance with the Prudential Framework, a clearly presented Investment Strategy, Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy exists.	Green	<p>The Treasury Management Strategy presented to Cabinet and Full Council on an annual basis provides details of the Annual Investment Strategy, Prudential and Treasury Management indicators, MRP policy, disclosure of certainty rate and treasury management policy statement and practices</p> <p>In addition, the Capital Strategy is also presented to Cabinet and Full Council on an annual basis.</p> <p>Quarterly reports are also presented to Cabinet (Resources) Panel, Cabinet, Full Council and Scrutiny Panel on performance against prudential and treasury management indicators</p>	James Howse (Alison Shannon)
	A clear strategy exists to maintain adequate reserves.	Green	The Council's Reserves Strategy was approved by Full Council on 1 March 2023 and a refreshed version will come to Council on 28 February 2024.	James Howse (Alison Shannon)
	There is collective accountability for the budget and medium-term financial plan, rather than a siloed approach to management.	Green	The Strategic Executive Board and Cabinet drive a cross council approach to budget setting. Positive assurance received from external audit with regards to the Council's financial management.	James Howse (Alison Shannon)
	There are regular financial reports to Cabinet and training for all members on finance.	Green	<p>Cabinet receive regular reports throughout the year on performance, budget , risk and the MTFS. Reports area also presented to Scrutiny Board.</p> <p>New Councillors are also offered finance induction training</p>	James Howse (Alison Shannon)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

		Robust systems are in place to identify, report, address and regularly review financial risk.	Green	This forms part of the Risk Management Framework, and key financial risks are included in the strategic risk register (for example the MTFS appears as a red risk). As indicated above, the risk register is then reviewed quarterly by the Senior Management team, Cabinet and the Audit and Risk Committee.	James Howse (Ian Cotterill)
		Sustainable, competitive corporate functions including procurement and IT which deliver value for money.	Green	<p>Procurement have recently completed the Commercial Standards and Continuous Improvement Framework which is a per review via central government which looks at all stages of the procurement cycle and governance structures, the Council scored either good or better in all 8 themes and are now working through phases of continuous improvement to strengthen our offer.</p> <p>The Council is also one of five anchor institutions that have committed to 'the Wolverhampton Pound' to maximise benefits including social value from procurement.</p> <p>A new Procurement strategy has now been approved which re-iterates the need for value for money by incorporating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation of Whole Life Costs must be undertaken to ensure value for money is obtained to release the benefits of a service or product. • Identify the correct route to market • Ensure make or buy options are considered • Utilise outcome specifications to drive innovation 	James Howse (John Thompson) Charlotte Johns (Jai Ghai)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

				We have also produced a Supplier code of conduct to ensure suppliers know and work to our values.	
		The Audit Committee has the knowledge, skills and independent expertise to provide robust challenge and ensures effective controls are in place and issues addressed.	Green	Training is provided to the Audit and Risk Committee (and is offered to all members). The Council recently hosted a regional Audit Committee event attended by various audit committee members across the region, alongside members of the Council's Audit and Risk Committee members. Regular updated on audit matters are also provided to the committee by both the internal and external auditors. The Audit and Risk Committee also has two experienced independent members to help it with its knowledge and skills mix.	James Howse (Ian Cotterill)
		The purposes of companies are carefully considered and regularly reviewed, with effective governance and oversight arrangements in place.	Green	The companies and bodies we have are reviewed regularly and have effective governance and oversight arrangements in place as detailed above.	James Howse (Parvinder Uppal)
		Effective project management of projects to enhance governance and effective use of resources	Green	Through the Council's Corporate PMO function (Projects and Change Service) a wide range of guidance and experienced resource is available to support services to deliver successful projects. This includes an agreed project methodology, supporting tools and a regular project assurance group made up of a wide range of core services subject matter experts (legal, finance, procurement, commercial etc) to advise project leads in how to establish effective project and programme governance. Evidence to support this can be found within the	David Pattison (Steven Cartwright)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

				<p>Council's shared project documentation system, Verto and in the archive documentation of the Project Assurance Group. Recent external audits have also highlighted good practice across Council projects.</p> <p>The role of the chair of the Project Assurance Group transferred (in January 2024) to the Council's Chief Operating Officer, reflecting the organisation's ongoing commitment to this important component of corporate project assurance.</p>	
6	Service Delivery	Service plans are clearly linked to a local authority's priorities and strategic plans – a golden thread that runs through to individual objectives and accountability.	Amber	New approach to service planning rolled out in 2023 to ensure a consistent approach to service planning across the organisation, linked to OCOP and ensuring a 'golden thread'.	Charlotte Johns (Laura Collings)
		Service delivery is evidence-based, customer and citizen focused, and meet the needs of different groups within the community.	Green	Regular consultation and engagement process embedded to ensure resident priorities are captured and shape future policy. We have an evidence based approach strategy and policy development with a strong data and analytics function.	Charlotte Johns (Laura Collings)
		The authority has an effective and accessible complaints process and provides appropriate redress.	Green	Supported by a Corporate Complaints policy. The council has an accessible central complaint function which addresses all corporate and social care statutory requirements, whilst maintaining the council's standards and reputation. The council continues to adopt best practice in line with the Ombudsman guidelines	Laura Philipps (Anna-Zollino Biscotti/Sarah Campbell)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

			<p>which is embedded into the council's complaint functions.</p> <p>As detailed elsewhere in the report the Governance and Ethics Committee is updated twice a year on complaints.</p>	
	There are clear and effective mechanisms for scrutinising performance across all service areas. Performance is regularly reported to the public to ensure that citizens are informed of the quality of services being delivered	Green	OCOP performance is published quarterly and presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny Board each quarter, Yearly OCOP performance is taken to scrutiny panels with data deep dives taken when analysis indicates changing performance	Charlotte Johns (James Amphlett)
	Procurement processes are economic, efficient and ensure the outcomes of efficient contract procurement and management.	Green	<p>Procurement have recently completed the Commercial Standards and Continuous Improvement Framework which is a peer review via central government which looks at all stages of the procurement cycle and governance structures, the Council scored either good or better in all 8 themes and are now working through phases of continuous improvement to strengthen our offer.</p> <p>The organisation has also mandated contract management training for officers and are in the process of implementing a contract management system which will enable monitoring of contract outcomes.</p>	James Howse (John Thompson and Parvinder Uppal)
	The authority achieves the best balance of cost and quality, considering the resources available, in delivering services, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.	Green	The Council's Project Assurance Group (PAG) provides assurance that the Council's projects and programmes are operating in line with expected outcomes standards. PAG provide scrutiny of business cases, ensuring that they are robust and demonstrate a clear understanding of time, costs, scope, risks /	James Howse (Alison Shannon)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

				<p>benefits. Value for money is a key aspect of the business case.</p> <p>The Council's external auditors provide an annual report which considers whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. In respect of 2022-2023 the External Auditors reported that they had found no significant weaknesses in their Annual Report - reported to Council on 24 January 2024.</p>	
		The local authority takes an innovative approach when considering how services will be designed and delivered in the future.	Green	Well established transformation programmes across the organisation, with a clear focus on digital transformation and low carbon design of future services.	Charlotte Johns (Laura Collings)
7	Partnerships and community engagement	The authority provides effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships with external stakeholders	Green	As below.	Charlotte Johns (Laura Collings)
		An organisational culture exists that recognises the value of working with local partners to achieve more efficient and effective policy development, local economic growth and investment, better services, and customer-focused outcomes.	Green	Role as part of the West Midlands Combined Authority, Black Country Integrated Care System and other partnership networks/board e.g. Wolverhampton Anchor Network.	Charlotte Johns (Laura Collings)
		There is early and meaningful engagement and effective collaboration with communities to identify and understand local needs, and in decisions that affect the planning and delivery of services. In some cases, this involves co-	Green	Annual refresh of the Council Plan including consultation process aligned to budget setting.	Charlotte Johns (Laura Collings)

Appendix 2 Best Value Guidance

Review of 'Characteristics of a well-functioning council'

	design of services.			
	Evidence of joint planning, funding, investment and use of resources to demonstrate effective service delivery, but transparent and subject to rigorous oversight.	Green	Clear evidence of joint planning across regional and city partners through a range of mechanisms. Shared investment and service transformation to benefit local people e.g. CLQ.	Charlotte Johns (Laura Collings)
	Partners and local residents are involved in developing indicators and targets, and monitoring and managing lack of performance. The authority may be beginning to experiment with more participative forms of decision-making.	Green	The authority uses Citizens Space to consistently offer residents the opportunity to have their say on new strategies and policies. The team are engaged with partner agencies, national bodies and regional experts to ensure KPI's are a true reflection on current priorities.	Charlotte Johns (James Amphlett)
	The authority drives social and environmental value in their place through mechanisms like procurement and employment.	Green	Procurement have developed a sustainability framework which looks to assess the carbon reduction plans of potential suppliers, based on the government model but with a higher benchmark of contracts above £2Million. The process was signed off by central government and internal stakeholders. A new social value framework and strategy is in the final stages of seeking approval through the internal governance process.	James Howse (John Thompson) Laura Phillips (Suky Mattu) Charlotte Johns (Louise West)