

Appendix A

Gloucester City Council Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2019/20 Improvement Plan – Progress Report

AGS Review Reference	Governance matters identified / actions taken	Target Date and Lead Officer
AGS Assurance Framework	<p>Future Financial Sustainability / Efficiency Savings / Covid-19 Impact</p> <p>The Money Plan sets out the Council's strategic approach to the management of its finances and presents indicative budgets and Council Tax levels for the medium term. It also comments on the significant financial risks facing the Council in the forthcoming years and explains what the Council is doing to reduce those risks. The Money Plan forecasts indicate the need for a continued delivery of savings in each year of the Plan.</p> <p>In February 2020, Council approved the implementation of the target savings for the Money Plan 2020-25. No additional savings targets were put in place across the life of the plan. With the inclusion of settlement figures for 2020/21 and the assumption of further formula grant reductions over the life of the plan, further savings may be required. The Council will be renegotiating outsourced contracts over the life of the plan to deliver further efficiencies. The financial gap is £0.048m in 2020/21.</p> <p>Due to the high levels of further savings required, the Council put in place a transformation programme called 'Together Gloucester' to deliver required efficiencies in line with the Council's Money Plan. The Council's challenge is to continue this journey of transformation to fully implement Together Gloucester and designed outcomes. The Council has moved to Shire Hall and the digital transformation journey is continuing to deliver the required transformation and savings.</p>	Head of Policy and Resources 31 st March 2021

	<p>In addition, lost income and additional cost pressures as a result of the economic impact of the coronavirus lockdown is being dynamically managed and monitored. As the long term implications for the Council become more apparent our financial planning will be updated accordingly.</p> <p>Actions taken in response to the above: Close monitoring of budgets will be carried out in each financial year. Continuous monitoring of service pressures and ongoing focus on preventative support.</p>	
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Position as at December 2020

Close monitoring of budgets has been and will continue to be carried out in each financial year. Continuous monitoring of service pressures and ongoing focus on preventative support will continue. The Council has continued to lobby and work with Government for additional Covid funding and will continue to do so. *Head of Policy and Resources.*

AGS Review Reference	Governance matters identified / actions taken	Target Date and Lead Officer
AGS Assurance Framework	<p>Covid-19 Impact on Governance</p> <p>In late March 2020 the Government announced a national lockdown and advised that all employees should work from home except those engaged in essential services who were unable to work from home. The Council implemented home working during the week commencing 16th March 2020.</p> <p>There were a number of consequences that impacted upon the governance of the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ City Council elections due to be held on 7th May 2020 were postponed until May 2021, councillor terms of office were extended and by-elections suspended for the period. ➤ Council and committee meetings were suspended until further notice. ➤ Decisions due to be taken at full Council on 21st March 2020 were taken under emergency/urgency delegations. ➤ The Managing Director met weekly with all Group Leaders and Deputies to share information and seek agreement on matters which might ordinarily require formal Cabinet or Council approval. ➤ Where possible, operational decisions were taken using existing Cabinet Member or Officer delegations. Where that was not possible then emergency/urgency delegation powers were used. ➤ To respond quickly to the emerging needs some of the Council's procurement procedures were waived in accordance with the contract and financial regulations. ➤ Senior Management Team (SMT) met daily (remotely and reducing over time to 2/3 times per week) to share information and direct the Council's response to the pandemic. 	<p>Multiple.</p> <p>Actions, target dates and lead officers confirmed within the actions taken column.</p> <p>Lead officer: Corporate Director</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council Officers contributed to national, regional, county-wide and city response and resilience groups to co-ordinate the response to the pandemic. ➤ A major community led response to providing support and assistance to the vulnerable and those in need was developed and operated through the City's Councillors, community and commercial organisations and individuals. ➤ Communications channels were opened to keep Councillors and staff informed as the pandemic, and the Council's response developed. <p>The Council has responded by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Putting measures in place to re-establish democratic decision-making and Overview and Scrutiny using digital/remote technologies. <i>Policy and Governance Manager. June 2020.</i> ➤ Fast-tracking the roll out of laptops and headsets to Councillors to enable remote meetings. <i>Head of Policy and Resources. April 2020.</i> ➤ Documenting when delegations and waivers have been used to facilitate full reporting once governance norms are re-established. <i>Policy and Governance Manager. From March 2020.</i> ➤ Maintaining delivery of the majority of Council Services via home working. <i>Senior Management Team (SMT). From March 2020.</i> ➤ Supported and co-ordinated a significant community led response to the pandemic including the administration of a £80k community fund, local delivery of a Community Help Hub and support to a network of street champions. <i>Corporate Director. From March 2020.</i> ➤ Developing and implementing a Recovery Plan to return (restart suspended services), retain (keep and sustain any improved new ways of working), resist (resist the temptation to simply return to doing things as before) and reimagine (consider new ways of delivering services after the pandemic). <i>Corporate Director. From March 2020.</i> 	
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Position as at December 2020

- Measures put in place to deliver democratic decision-making and Overview and Scrutiny using digital/remote technologies remain operational and effective, enabled by fast-tracking the roll out of laptops and headsets to Councillors to enable remote meetings. *Policy and Governance Manager.*
- Delivery of the majority of Council Services via home working continues. *Senior Management Team (SMT).*
- Supported and co-ordinated a significant community led response to the pandemic including the administration of a £80k community fund, local delivery of a Community Help Hub and support to a network of street champions. *Corporate Director.*
- Since October 2020 the transfer of focus from response to recovery was reversed and the Council has supported new initiatives to respond to the second wave of infection transmission including the deployment of Community Support Officers, financial and in-kind support to ensure continued access to food, grants to voluntary organisations, making land available for local testing, advice and support (and enforcement) to businesses and the provision of grants. *Corporate Director.*
- An eight-strand Recovery Plan was adopted to return (restart suspended services), retain (keep and sustain any improved new ways of working), resist (resist the temptation to simply return to doing things as before) and reimagine (consider new ways of delivering services after the pandemic) Council Services. All eight strands have been subject to Overview and Scrutiny. *Corporate Director.*

AGS Review Reference	Governance matters identified / actions taken	Target Date and Lead Officer
AGS Assurance Framework	<p>Marketing Gloucester Ltd (MGL)</p> <p>In January 2020 MGL, a company wholly owned by the City Council, went into administration. The Administrator is working to identify the full extent of the debts owed by MGL and the creditors to whom money is owed. Gloucester City Council will be amongst the creditors. Significant financial difficulties at MGL became apparent at MGL in late summer/early Autumn 2020. The City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee has taken a lead in scrutinising the events leading up to the collapse of MGL.</p> <p>The City Council responded by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Minimising potential conflicts of interest by replacing Cllr Paul James with Cllr Jennie Watkins as the Council's appointed director and the chair of the Board of MGL. ➤ Engaging external consultants to undertake a strategic, operational, governance and financial review of MGL. ➤ Engaging an interim chief officer at MGL following the departure and eventual dismissal of the Chief Executive of MGL. <p>Following the collapse of MGL the Council has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commissioned and received a report into the next steps in delivering Place Marketing in the City. <i>Corporate Director. March 2020.</i> ➤ Brought the commissioning of City Festivals and Events back in house. <i>Head of Cultural and Trading Services. February 2020.</i> ➤ Employed displaced MGL staff into the City Council. <i>Head of Cultural and Trading Services. February 2020.</i> 	<p>Multiple.</p> <p>Actions, target dates and lead officers confirmed within the actions taken column.</p> <p>Lead officer: Corporate Director</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Engaged in the establishment of a Strategic City Events Forum alongside key city stakeholders like Gloucester BID, Gloucester Cathedral, Gloucester Culture Trust and Gloucester Quays. <i>Head of Cultural and Trading Services. March 2020.</i> ➤ Engaged with GFirstLEP and others to repurpose and deliver the desired outcomes connected with the UK Digital Retail Innovation Centre. <i>Head of Place. March 2020.</i> ➤ Made £200k additional financial provision to support the re-establishment of an effective place marketing function for the City. <i>Head of Policy and Resources. February 2020.</i> 	
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Position as at December 2020

- The report into the next steps in delivering Place Marketing in the City was presented to Cabinet and endorsed. *Corporate Director.*
- Commissioning and delivery of City Festivals and Events is being delivered in house. A number of Covid-secure events have taken place during 2020 (Of Earth and Fire, Bright Nights) and a 2021 Tall Ships events delivery partner has been procured. *Head of Cultural Services.*
- Employed displaced MGL remain deployed into the City Council and a new post of Tourism and Destination Marketing Manager has been created and appointed and joined the Council in December 2020. *Head of Cultural Services.*
- The re-established Strategic City Events Forum was temporarily repurposed to serve as the Visitor Economy and Culture Recovery Board and has engaged positively with key city stakeholders like Gloucester BID, Gloucester Rugby, LVA, Hoteliers, Gloucester Cathedral, Gloucester Culture Trust and Gloucester Quays. *Head of Cultural Services.*
- Engaged with GFirstLEP to agree a position statement on the future use of the former UKDRIC offices in the Eastgate Shopping Centre. *Head of Place.*