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OVERVIEW PANEL

Day: Tuesday
Date: 1 August 2023
Time: 4.00 pm
Place: Committee Room 1 - Tameside One

Item No.	AGENDA	Page No
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive any apologies for the meeting from Members of the Panel.	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Panel.	
3.	MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Panel held on 21 November 2022 to be signed by the Chair as a correct record.	1 - 4
4.	OVERVIEW PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 To consider a report from the Chair of the Overview Panel.	5 - 6
5.	SCRUTINY ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMMES To consider a report of the Chair of Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel / Chair of Children's Services Scrutiny Panel / Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel / Head of Policy and Communications (Statutory Scrutiny Officer).	7 - 12
6.	SCRUTINY - REVIEW AND MONITORING OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2021 TO 2023 To consider a report of the Chief Executive.	13 - 18
7.	CONSULTATION ON STATUTORY GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON BEST VALUE DUTY To consider a report of the Executive Leader / Chief Executive.	19 - 66
8.	MORE HOME TRUTHS - LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT To consider a report of the Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods.	67 - 100
9.	CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCORECARD	101 - 110

From: Democratic Services Unit – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Natasha Matthews, Senior Democratic Services Officer, to whom any apologies for absence should be notified.

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To consider a report of the Executive Leader / Chief Executive.

10. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any additional items the Chair is of the opinion shall be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Overview Panel is scheduled to take place on 26 September 2023.

OVERVIEW PANEL

21 November 2022

Commenced: 14:00

Terminated: 14:20

Present:

Councillors Naylor, M Smith, N Sharif, T Sharif, Cooney, Fairfoull, North and Billington

In Attendance:

Sandra Stewart	Chief Executive
Caroline Barlow	Assistant Director of Finance
Paul Radcliffe	Policy and Strategy Lead
Tom Hoghton	Policy & Strategy Service Manager

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Cartey, Kitchen and Ryan

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16. MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview Panel meeting on the 26 September 2022 were approved as a correct record.

17. SCRUTINY UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive. The report provided a summary of the work undertaken by the Council's Scrutiny Panels for September to November 2022.

It was reported that on the 20 September 2022 the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel met with the Executive Member for Town Centres, Communities, Corporate Land & Community Assets and the Assistant Director for Development and Housing. The Panel received a strategic overview and proposals on the next steps for Tameside town centres and regeneration. On the 1 November 2022, the Panel met with the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Homelessness and Inclusivity and the Assistant Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods to receive an update on past scrutiny activity and recommendations on Homelessness and Housing. In addition, the Panel receives a letter of the Scrutiny Chairs to the First Deputy for finance, Resources and Transformation in response to the mid-year budget update sessions held on 3 October 2022.

On the 21 September 2022 the Children's Services Scrutiny Panel met with the Executive Member for Education & Achievement and the Director of Education to receive a response to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Focus Report 'Out of School, out of sight? Ensuring children out of school get a good education', published 2022. Further, the Panel met with the Assistant Director of Children's Social Care self-evaluation (SEF). On the 2 November 2022 the Panel met with the Assistant Director of Children's Social Care, Head of Service for Cares for Children, Head of Commissioning to receive an update on placement strategy and capacity across in-house and external provision, including fostering recruitment. The Panel also received a letter of the Scrutiny Chairs to the First Deputy for Finance, Resources and Transformation for information. The letter was in response to the mid-year budget update sessions, which were held on 3 October 2022.

Members were advised that the Head and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel on the 22 September 2022 met with Population Health to receive an overview of strategic priorities for local health outcomes and inequalities, considering aspects of rising cost of living and poverty, future priorities and work streams. On the 3 November 2022, the Panel met with the Chief Executive of Tameside & Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust, to receive an update on health system recovery,

winter pressures and locality plans, including the planning and delivery of neighbourhood and community health care. The Panel also received a letter of the Scrutiny Chairs to the First Deputy for Finance, Resources and Transformation for information. The letter was in response to the mid-year budget update sessions, which were held on 3 October 2022.

It was reported that Mid-year budget update sessions for all Scrutiny members took place on 3 October 2022. The update was provided by Councillor Jacqueline North, First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation); and Caroline Barlow, Assistant Director of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer).

The Executive had received a formal response of the Scrutiny Chairs, capturing a range of points and highlighting any concerns and specific areas for consideration in supporting the Council's ongoing work in this area. The response letter was tabled in a separate report to Overview Panel on 21 November 2022.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted.

18. SCRUTINY MID-YEAR BUDGET UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Chair of Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel / Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel / Chair of Children's Services Scrutiny Panel / Chief Executive. The report provided a summary and feedback based on the recent scrutiny engagement on the mid-year budget position for 2022/23 and future planning.

It was reported that all Scrutiny Panel members were provided with an opportunity to attend one of two mid-year budget update sessions delivered on 3 October 2022. This year the invitation included all non-executive members of Overview Panel. The sessions enabled members to seek assurance on the Council's approach to managing and mitigating budget pressures, known risks and future uncertainty. A response letter of the Scrutiny Chairs to the First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation), could be viewed in the attached Appendix 1.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted.

19. SOCIOECONOMIC DUTY

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member for Education, Achievement and Equalities / Assistant Director, People and Workforce Development, which set out the local and national context, policy recommendations, case studies, key terms and other considerations in adopting the socioeconomic duty in Tameside, in line with work taking place in other local authorities in Greater Manchester and across England..

It was explained that, in recent years the rise of poverty had emerged as a major policy issue. This has made adopting the socioeconomic duty and other anti-poverty measures a matter of urgency. Local and National statistics were provided in an appendix to the report and key issues for consideration was detailed as follows:

- Tameside had the 5th best male Life Expectancy and Healthy Life Expectancy in Greater Manchester, but the 9th best female Life Expectancy and Healthy Life Expectancy. Life Expectancy (at birth) in Tameside was 77.57 years for men and 80.7 years for women, while Healthy Life Expectancy (at birth) was 61.9 years for men but only 58.3 years for women.
- In the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Tameside was ranked as the 28th most deprived of 317 Local Authority districts in England, and the 5th most deprived local authority in GM. Within Tameside, 11 of the borough's 141 lower layer super output areas (LSOAs) are also within the most deprived 5% of such areas nationally.

- The Trussell Trust end of year data for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 showed that their foodbanks in Tameside had given out the 4th most parcels in GM. This equated to 11.1% of their total food parcels for Greater Manchester, 10.6% of their parcels for adults in GM, and 12% of their parcels for children in GM.
- According to the Resolution Foundation, the real incomes of the poorest quarter of households nationally were set to drop by 6% in 2022/23, putting an extra 1.3 million people, including 500,000 children, into absolute poverty. This would be the first recorded incident of a rise in absolute poverty in Britain outside of a recession.

Members were advised that, whilst the precise details of implementation of the socioeconomic duty could vary, research by a number of organisations had identified key practical steps in all cases.

Short-Term Recommendations - Simple measures that could be implemented quickly.

1. Identify Senior Members and Officers to take on the role of “Designated Leads” of the Socioeconomic Duty;
2. Integrate Socioeconomic Disadvantage into Equality Impact Assessments using appropriate proxy indicators and review processes; and
3. Consolidate existing poverty-related data held by the Council and partners.

Long-Term Recommendations – More involved measures that would require an element of discretion.

4. Develop internal guidance and training for officers to consider how they could meet the Socioeconomic Duty at a service delivery level, on a day-to-day basis, outside of formal Equality Impact Assessments;
5. Collaborate with residents, civil society and voluntary and community sector organisations to build awareness and understanding of the Socioeconomic Duty and people’s lived experience of socioeconomic disadvantage;
6. Embed accountability for the implementation of the Socioeconomic Duty through monitoring, evaluation, and sharing of best practice; and
7. Deliver the Living Wage for all council staff and contracted employees, and introduce mechanisms to promote uptake of the Living Wage among other local employers.

Successfully implementing the socioeconomic duty in Tameside would deliver a number of benefits, including but not limited to:

- Reducing the inequalities of outcome which result from socioeconomic disadvantage;
- Supporting coordination and partnership working, both within the Council between service areas and externally with partners in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors;
- Raising awareness of existing socioeconomic inequalities in Tameside within the Council and among our partners;
- Securing a widespread commitment from council services to consider their impact on local socioeconomic inequalities while carrying out their day-to-day functions;
- Actively encouraging the participation of low-income residents in decisions that affect them, especially in the context of any proposed cuts or changes to services;
- Achieving greater consistency in practice in both the short-term and in the long-term across political administrations and turnover of staff;
- More rigorous and systematic approaches to Equality Impact Assessments and general assessments of policy and practice;
- Strengthening data gathering and analysis practices, especially in the context of Equality Impact Assessments, thereby strengthening the council’s evidence base and accountability to residents and partners; and
- Supporting the effective and efficient allocation of limited resources in medium and long-term planning.

RESOLVED



That the report be noted.

20. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

CHAIR

Agenda Item 4.

Report To:	OVERVIEW PANEL
Date:	1 August 2023
Chair / Reporting Officer:	Councillor Jack Naylor – Chair of Overview Panel
Subject:	OVERVIEW WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24
Report Summary:	To receive for information, the annual work programme of the Council's Overview Panel.
Recommendations:	That Overview Panel note the content of the work programme and planned activity.
Links to Corporate Plan:	Topics included within the work programmes remain linked to the Council's corporate priorities. Overview and Scrutiny activity seeks to support effective decision-making and to improve outcomes for residents and service users.
Policy Implications:	The work programmes comprise activity that seeks to check the effective implementation of council policies and if appropriate make recommendations to the Executive with regards to development, performance monitoring, outcomes and value for money.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)	There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. Any changes to policy or service delivery arising from recommendations made through the Overview Panel will be subject to separate reports.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	<p>Overview Panels were introduced in 2000 as part of new executive governance arrangements to ensure that members of an authority who were not part of the executive could hold the executive to account for the decisions and actions that affect their communities asset out in sections 9F to 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>Overview Panels have statutory powers to scrutinise decisions the executive is planning to take, those it plans to implement, and those that have already been taken/implemented and to play a valuable role in developing policy.</p>
Risk Management:	The Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Scrutiny Panels will be informed of the progress in implementing the work programmes.
Access to Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Simon Brunet, Head of Policy and Communications by:
	 Telephone:0161 342 3542
	 e-mail: simon.brunet@tameside.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Tameside Overview and Scrutiny Panels publish an annual work programme of planned activity for the municipal year ahead. That programme of work will cover a two-year rolling period to be reviewed, updated and agreed on an annual basis.
- 1.2 Overview and Scrutiny activity aims to reflect priority issues across the council and external partners. Discussion with the Executive and the three Scrutiny Panel chairs has informed the list of topics identified in the work programme below.
- 1.3 There is a range of options available to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels as to how activity is planned and undertaken. Chairs will work closely with panel members in order to adopt a combination of approaches to review service and performance updates, respond to formal consultations, in-focus reports of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and areas in need of more in-depth review. This includes a responsibility for:
- Research and insight on a particular issue, including desktop reviews
 - Review of decisions and recommendations
 - Follow-up (from previous review / recommendations)
 - Engagement and consultation – to provide responses to pre-decision activity
 - Consideration of decisions and reports of the LGSCO
 - Receive updates on key issues as they arise
 - Active monitoring of national and regional policy and substantive variation to services
- 1.5 Overview and Scrutiny in practice will be mindful of the suitability and appropriateness of timings, with regard to the impact and value of planned activity. This includes the selection and order of topics and updates during the year. The work programme is ambitious and it is not expected that all topics will be covered during the year, but more an agreed list from which to select work items.

2. WORK PROGRAMME – 2023 to 2025

- 2.1 The work programme is outlined below. The list of topics does not reflect the order in which activity will be selected or undertaken.

• Corporate Plan – monitoring and delivery progress (incl. key projects)
• Supporting strategies underpinning the Corporate Plan.
• Performance and assurance framework – effectiveness.
• Performance updates on council services – corporate and thematic scorecards.
• Transformation / improvement programme – scope and progress updates.
• Financial strategy – long term financial resilience plan.
• Workforce development – recruitment & retention of staff in key services and the training & upskilling of the workforce (in particular in systems and IT).
• Key learning from external challenge – e.g. complaints (incl. LGSCO), inspections (incl. Ofsted, CQC), peer reviews (incl. LGA), new Best Value and Oflog framework.
• Systems, IT and digital – forward plan and key projects to modernise council infrastructure – e.g. data science, single customer record.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As set out on the front of the report.

Agenda Item 5.

Report To:	OVERVIEW PANEL
Date:	1 August 2023
Scrutiny Chair / Reporting Officer:	Councillor Claire Reid – Chair of Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel Councillor Hugh Roderick – Chair of Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel Councillor Naila Sharif – Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel Simon Brunet – Head of Policy and Communications (Statutory Scrutiny Officer)
Subject:	SCRUTINY ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMMES 2023/24
Report Summary:	To receive for information, the annual work programmes of the Council’s three Scrutiny Panels.
Recommendations:	That Overview Panel note the content of work programmes and planned activity of the Scrutiny Panels.
Links to Corporate Plan:	Topics included within the work programmes remain linked to the Council’s corporate priorities. Scrutiny activity seeks to support effective decision-making and to improve outcomes for residents and service users.
Policy Implications:	The work programmes comprise activity that seeks to check the effective implementation of council policies and if appropriate make recommendations to the Executive with regards to development, performance monitoring, outcomes and value for money.
Financial Implications:	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
(Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)	The recommendations from the content of the work programmes and planned activity of the Scrutiny Panels and any associated reports could have financial implications where policy or service delivery changes are implemented as a result. Any changes, and the associated financial implications, will need to be the subject of separate reports
Legal Implications:	The Overview Panel supports the role that scrutiny plays in holding the authority’s decision-makers to account making it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy by ensuring the efficient delivery of public services and driving improvements within the authority.
(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	In reviewing the summary of the work undertaken, the Panel can consider how the scrutiny function is being supported by the annual work programme. Both Overview and Scrutiny have statutory powers to scrutinise decisions the executive is planning to take, those it plans to implement and those that have already been taken/implemented.

Recommendations from such scrutiny enable improvements to be made to policies and how they are implemented. Overview and Scrutiny also play a valuable role in developing policy.

Risk Management:

The Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Scrutiny Panels will be informed of the progress in implementing the work programmes.

Access to Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Paul Radcliffe, Policy and Strategy Lead by:



Telephone:0161 342 2199



e-mail: paul.radcliffe@tameside.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Tameside Scrutiny Panels are required to publish an Annual Work Programme of planned activity for the municipal year ahead. The programme of work will cover a two-year rolling period to be reviewed, updated and agreed on an annual basis.
- 1.2 Scrutiny activity aims to reflect priority issues across the Council and external partners. Work will continue to improve the flexibility, responsiveness and reporting methods of all scrutiny activity undertaken during 2023/24. Discussion from Scrutiny Panels held in June 2023 has directly informed the list of topics and planned updates 'check and challenge', for the year ahead.
- 1.3 Each year a range of emerging topics and issues may require the attention of Scrutiny. It is therefore important to ensure efforts are best placed to support and influence effective decision-making, with a focus on improving outcomes for residents and communities.

Scrutiny activity in Tameside

- 1.4 There is a range of options available to each Scrutiny Panel as to how activity is planned and undertaken. Scrutiny Chairs will work closely with panel members in order to adopt a combination of approaches to review service and performance updates, respond to formal consultations, focus reports of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and areas in need of more in-depth review. This includes a responsibility for:
 - Research and insight on a particular issue, including desktop reviews
 - Review of decisions and recommendations
 - Follow-up (from previous review / recommendations)
 - Engagement and consultation – to provide responses to pre-decision activity
 - Consideration of decisions and reports of the Ombudsman
 - Receive updates on key issues as they arise
 - Active monitoring of national and regional policy and substantive variation to services
- 1.5 The work programme is ambitious and it is not expected that all topics will be covered during the year, but more an agreed list from which to select items. Scrutiny will remain mindful of budget pressures, regulatory frameworks and the demand on statutory services. Through each work programme, the scrutiny of key partners will be planned where appropriate and relevant. At times, Scrutiny may also consider work and outcomes associated with individual delivery panels of the Executive.
- 1.6 In addition to the work programme, all panel members will continue to receive a regular update email to inform of upcoming activity, access to scrutiny resources, engagement and consultation with regard to local, regional and national decision-making. This provides a direct opportunity for scrutiny members to contribute and respond to the range of activity taking place both within the Council and across partners.

2. WORK PROGRAMMES

- 2.1 The Scrutiny meetings held in June 2023 provided members with the opportunity to comment and contribute to the list topics included in the annual work programmes.
- 2.2 Scrutiny activity will continue to be undertaken outside of the formal meetings and through working groups, with all findings and recommendations presented to the full panel for comment and approval. This flexibility can allow responsive and timely work to be undertaken, creating an enhanced opportunity to both influence and inform the impact of decisions. It is also necessary to monitor and evaluate outcomes from past activity and to review the implementation of recommendations.

2.3 Where deemed appropriate, the wider development of scrutiny may include project support and service development work undertaken at the request of the Executive as a critical friend.

Planned activity

2.4 In order to prevent delay, Scrutiny Panels agreed topics to be considered at the next round of public meetings in July, as detailed below.

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel – 25 July 2023

- Neighbourhood Enforcement
(Invitation to the Executive Member for Climate Emergency & Environmental Services)

Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel – 26 July 2023

- Services for Care Leavers
(Invitation to the Deputy Executive Leader – Children and Families)

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel – 27 July 2023

- Domestic Abuse
(Invitation to the Executive Member for Population Health & Wellbeing)

2.5 On occasion a topic may require the attention of more than one scrutiny panel in order to examine a range of impacts. At such a time, a decision will be made to assign a lead panel based on both remit and the subject matter. All aspects of activity will be made available to panel members to consider and respond.

3. SCRUTINY ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMMES 2023/24

3.1 The work programmes below capture the input and discussion of panel members from meetings held in June 2023. The list of topics does not reflect the order in which activity will be selected or undertaken.

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

3.2 The Scrutiny Panel recognises that topics specific to growth, investment and regeneration may be closely linked and best considered in conjunction with others.

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel
• Neighbourhood Enforcement – policy and the effectiveness of strategic, operational and place-based approach to fly tipping, street scene/cleanliness and parking etc
• GMP – implementation of the neighbourhood model / Community Safety Partnership
• Transport for Greater Manchester – Rochdale-Oldham-Tameside Bus Transit programme and emerging public and active travel schemes
• Housing / Registered Provider Partnership – coordination update to include housing partners around homelessness strategy and accommodation
• Town Centres – consultation / development and delivery phases
• Local Plan – Places for Everyone (strategic <u>not</u> operational planning)
• Poverty / cost of living and vulnerability – cross cutting and strategic response
• Climate change actions / Environment Strategy implementation
• Access to work – NEET / Routes to Work / vulnerability
• The Panel to receive regular updates during the year regarding new and emerging areas
Follow-up on past activity
• Homelessness and housing

Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

- 3.3 The Scrutiny Panel will undertake core assurance activity across improvement activity, to include:
- Children's Social Care Improvement Plan
 - Safeguarding Partnership
 - Ofsted activity and reports

Children's Services Scrutiny Panel
• Children's Social Care Improvement Plan / Ofsted Monitoring
• Effectiveness of services and support to care leavers
• Quality and consistency of social work practice / voice of the child / timeliness of plans and assessments across the service
• Development of the Adolescence Hub – Youth Services and provision
• Mental health support / assessment (incl. CAMHS)– crisis and ongoing
• Child exploitation – joint commissioning and intervention activity
• Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools / education investment areas – future vision and pathway - Impact of Covid-19 on transition
• SEND – NHS investment
• The Panel to receive regular updates during the year regarding new and emerging areas
Follow-up on past activity
• Children's Workforce Strategy – social worker recruitment and retention

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel

- 3.4 The Scrutiny Panel will undertake core assurance activity with health partners during the municipal year and receive timely briefings, to include: CQC inspection framework
- GMIC model
 - Tameside & Glossop NHS Integrated Care Foundation Trust
 - Pennine Care NHS Mental Health Foundation Trust

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel
• Mental Health pathway – crisis support and ongoing secondary care – Pennine Care discharging Care Act duties
• Domestic Abuse (JSNA)
• Tameside Carers – assessment and support for unpaid carers (Health and Care Act 2022)
• Strategy development – input to emerging strategies – e.g. Adults Social Care; and Carers
• Learning disabilities – living at home model – offer and focus on journey, support and outcomes for service users (inc. accommodation). Engagement – Big Chat
• Adult Social Care - Market Position Statement (capacity and demand)
• Tameside Provider Partnership (TPP) / GM Integrated Care (GMIC) – incl. GM, ICFT, Primary Care and TMBC reps.
• Health inequalities – improvement and prevention programmes
• Access to GP appointments (incl. Primary Care Access Service)
• Elective waiting lists – post Covid-19 impact on waits
• Access to Dental Services
• The Panel to receive regular updates during the year regarding new and emerging areas

In-year monitoring

- 3.5 Each Scrutiny Panel will plan and undertake additional oversight and in-year monitoring, to include the following activity.

Additional in-year monitoring
• Budget updates – annual and mid-year
• Feedback and learning from complaints (LGSCO)

- Performance monitoring against corporate priorities (incl. Children's Social Care)

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 As set out on the front of the report.

Agenda Item 6.

Report To:	OVERVIEW PANEL
Date:	1 August 2023
Reporting Officer:	Sandra Stewart – Chief Executive
Subject:	SCRUTINY – REVIEW AND MONITORING OF CHILDREN’S SERVICES 2021 TO 2023
Report Summary:	To receive for information, a summary of activity undertaken by the Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel, specific to the oversight and monitoring of Children’s Services for the period 2021/22 and 2022/23 municipal years.
Recommendations:	That Overview Panel is asked to note the content of the report and summary of scrutiny activity.
Links to Corporate Plan:	Scrutiny work programmes are linked to the Council’s corporate priorities. Scrutiny activity seeks to support effective decision making and priorities across Tameside.
Policy Implications:	Scrutiny work programmes comprise activity that seeks to check the effective implementation of the Council’s policies and if appropriate make recommendations to the Executive with regards to development, performance monitoring, outcomes and value for money.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)	Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report, it should assist Members in making decisions around the allocation of resources and assessing value for money.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	<p>The role of the overview and scrutiny committees is to hold executive and cabinet members to account over decisions that are made by way of reports and recommendations which advise the cabinet and the council on its policies, budget and service delivery. They also support the work of the council as a whole in the improvement of public services.</p> <p>Overview and scrutiny committees were established in English and Welsh local authorities by the Local Government Act 2000 and the current legislative provisions for overview and scrutiny committees for England can be found in the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>This report provides the Panel with an overview of the scrutiny activity with regards to children’s services.</p>
Risk Management:	Regular updates to Overview Panel provide assurance that scrutiny is progressing with an effective work programme, supporting good decision making and service improvement.
Access to Information:	<p>The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Paul Radcliffe, Policy and Strategy Lead by:</p> <p> Telephone: 0161 342 2199</p> <p> e-mail: paul.radcliffe@tameside.gov.uk</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In May 2022, the Council added a third scrutiny panel with a remit dedicated to Children's Services. A significant amount of agreed activity for the newly formed Children's Services Scrutiny Panel aims to deliver 'critical friend' challenge to the Council's Executive specific to Children's Social Care and Ofsted improvement.
- 1.2 It is an ongoing priority for Scrutiny to seek assurances on methods aimed to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. Planned activity includes regular oversight of the Children's Social Care Improvement Plan, statutory services, Early Help, Youth Services, the safeguarding partnership, Education and SEND.
- 1.3 Prior to May 2022, the scrutiny of Children's Services was included within the remit of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel. The panel had instructed a fixed Children's Working Group to consider matters on Children's Services and Education. The working group actively sought assurances on the lived experience of children and young people about the services they receive.
- 1.4 A previous report titled, Review and Monitoring of Children's Services 2018 to 2021, was tabled at the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 10 February 2021.
- 1.5 Scrutiny members remain informed of published findings from Ofsted and approach of the Council's Executive in responding to significant challenges and external pressures. Scrutiny continues to review the operational and strategic priorities and required improvements from the most recent Ofsted inspection and subsequent focused visits.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Scrutiny in practice remains mindful of the suitability and appropriateness of timings with regard to the impact and value of planned activity. This includes the selection and order of topics and updates received during the year. The annual work programme creates a structured pathway informed by performance monitoring, past findings and insight to challenges for the year ahead.
- 2.2 This paper aims to provide a comprehensive summary of scrutiny activity related to Children's Services across the two municipal years 2021/22 and 2022/23. The information has been categorised into the following areas:
 - Scrutiny activity and formal meetings of the Scrutiny Panels, including the Children's Working Group
 - In-depth review (feedback and reporting to the Executive)
 - Assurance reviews of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
 - Scrutiny budget consultation
 - Training and development

3. SCRUTINY ACTIVITY 2021 TO 2023

- 3.1 Scrutiny activity continues to adopt a combination of approaches to review service and performance updates, respond to formal consultations, focus reports of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and areas in need of more in-depth review. This includes a responsibility for:
 - Engagement and consultation – to provide responses to pre-decision activity
 - Research and insight to a particular issue
 - Review of decisions and recommendations

3.2 Scrutiny activity continues to be undertaken outside of the formal meetings, with all findings and recommendations presented to the full panel for comment and approval. The flexibility allows for speedier and timelier work to be undertaken, creating an enhanced opportunity to both influence and inform the impact of decisions being made. It is also necessary to monitor and evaluate outcomes from past activity and to review the implementation of recommendations.

Scrutiny Activity

3.3 Tables 1 and 2 provide a summary of activity of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel and the Children’s Working Group during the 2021/22 municipal year. Table 3 provides a summary of activity undertaken by Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel for the 2022/23 municipal year. The content provides detail of dates, topics and any reporting that has taken place.

Table 1: Scrutiny activity and oversight 2021/22

Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel	
Date	Activity
10 June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual work programme developed. Includes priority topics related to Children’s Services and Education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported to Overview Panel.
29 July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance of the Deputy Executive Leader (Children and Families); and Director of Children’s Services to present findings from the Ofsted focused visit that took place on 12 and 13 May 2021.
13 January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance of the Executive Member (Lifelong Learning, Equalities and Culture); and Director of Education, to receive an update on the SEND inspection outcomes and actions. Assurance review of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Focus Report – <i>HELP! Learning to improve council services for domestic abuse victims</i>, published November 2021.

Table 2: Activity 2021/22

Children’s Working Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering marketing and recruitment Children’s sustainability projects Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan

Table 3: Scrutiny activity and oversight 2022/23

Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel	
Date	Activity
27 July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual work programme developed. Includes priority topics related to Children’s Services and Education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported to Overview Panel Attendance of the Deputy Executive Leader (Children and Families); and Director of Children’s Services to receive an update on key issues and outcomes related to Ofsted and next steps for the Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan.

21 September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance of the Executive Member (Education & Achievement); and Director of Education; to receive a response to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Focus Report – Out of school, out of sight? Ensuring children out of school get a good education, published in July 2022. • Attendance of the Director of Children’s Services to provide a verbal update on the Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) and improvement priorities. • Children’s performance Scorecard.
2 November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance of the Assistant Director and heads of service to receive an update on placement strategy and capacity across in-house and external provision, including fostering recruitment.
11 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance of the Deputy Executive Leader (Children and Families); Director of Children’s Services; and Tameside Divisional Commander, GMP; to update on local partnership arrangements directly linked to statutory guidance for local authorities and their partners to stop children going missing and to protect those who do. • Progress update on the Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan. • Children’s performance scorecard. • Scrutiny report on Children’s Workforce Strategy – Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers.
8 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance of the Executive Member (Education & Achievement); Director of Children’s Services; and Assistant Director of Education, to receive an update on SEND improvements. • Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership – Annual Report 2021/22. • Children’s performance scorecard.

In-depth Review

- 3.4 The Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel has recently completed the following in-depth review.
- Children’s Workforce Strategy – Social Worker Recruitment and Retention.
 - Findings and recommendations reported to the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 8 February 2023.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

- 3.5 Complaints raised by the public and service users can be an important source of information to help councillors identify issues that are affecting local people. The learning available from complaints can therefore play a key part in supporting the scrutiny of public services.
- 3.6 Scrutiny continues to review decisions and focus reports of the LGSCO, to inform in-year work priorities. The aim is to ensure learning opportunities be shared with services in a timely manner and for a formal response and/or position statement to be returned to the appropriate Scrutiny Panel within agreed timescales.

- 3.7 The Scrutiny Panel has completed assurance reviews for the following LGSCO reports.
- Focus report – HELP! Learning to improve council services for domestic abuse victims (published in November 2021).
 - Focus report and response of the Executive Member tabled at the joint meeting of Cabinet and Overview Panel on 9 February 2022.
 - Focus report – Out of school, out of sight? Ensuring children out of school get a good education (published in July 2022).
 - Focus report and response of the Executive Member tabled at Overview Panel on 26 September 2022.

Scrutiny Budget Consultation

- 3.8 The independence of Scrutiny enables members to seek assurances on budget planning, process and monitoring. It is appropriate for budget priorities to inform future Scrutiny activity and work programmes.
- 3.9 The Scrutiny annual budget meeting is part of the Council's formal consultation and budget setting process. The meeting primarily focuses on Scrutiny's input to the budget for the year ahead, with a view to reflect on the information received during the year and to inform future priorities. A mid-year budget update also forms part of Scrutiny monitoring and feedback to the Executive each year.
- 3.10 The most recent Scrutiny mid-year budget update took place on 3 October 2022. The First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation), received a formal response of the Scrutiny Chairs, capturing a range of points for consideration in supporting the Council's ongoing work in this area. The letter was tabled in a report to the meeting of Overview Panel on 21 November 2022.
- 3.11 Scrutiny annual budget meetings held on 16 January 2023, with a response letter of the Scrutiny Chairs sent to the First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation); and Interim Director of Finance – Section 151 Officer. The letter was tabled in a report to the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 8 February 2023.
- 3.12 The sessions have enabled members to seek further assurances on the Council's approach to setting a balanced budget and to mitigate risk or exposure to any external or unforeseen financial pressures. Scrutiny activity of Children's Services has highlighted demand pressures and challenges associated with long-term financial sustainability.

Training and development

- 3.13 There is an ongoing commitment to ensure all scrutiny members receive a suitable level of training and guidance. In addition to online resources, it is important that new and existing members have access to external provision based on scrutiny principles, national guidance and expectations.
- 3.14 Detail below on training, development and benchmarking sessions delivered during the 2022/23 municipal year.
- **20 July 2022** - Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Scrutiny and Overview Panel invited to attend an afternoon training session delivered by the LGA and Councillor Bryony Rudkin (Political Peer).
 - **5 September 2022** - All Scrutiny Panel members invited to attend a training session delivered by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) - Essentials of Effective Scrutiny.

- **12 September 2022** - All members of the Children's Scrutiny Panel invited to attend an online training session on Children's Safeguarding, delivered by the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team within Tameside Children's Services, to include scene setting delivered by the Assistant Director.
- **14 September 2022** – All members of the Children's Scrutiny Panel invited to a visit of Children's Social Care Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) / Early Help access point.
- **29 November 2022** - Benchmarking exercise - Tameside Scrutiny Chair and Deputy Executive Leader (Children's and Families) met with the Scrutiny Chair and Executive Member for Children's Services at Manchester City Council.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 As set out on the front of the report

Report to :	OVERVIEW PANEL
Date :	1 August 2023
Report of:	Cllr Gerald P. Cooney – Executive Leader Sandra Stewart – Chief Executive
Subject :	CONSULTATION ON STATUTORY GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON BEST VALUE DUTY
Report Summary :	<p>The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has launched a consultation regarding new statutory guidance on the Best Value duty. The draft guidance and the consultation questions are attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively. The guidance outlines 7 key principles of Best Value and provides a set of characteristics of well-functioning authorities and indicators of failure (pages 15-21). Similar to the old Audit Commission approach, albeit less wide-ranging and not part of a formal process of regular assessment and rating. Rather the guidance will be used by the department to gain assurance, and to identify appropriate levels of engagement (pages 22-28) or intervention where necessary (pages 29-35, and Annex A).</p> <p>It is clear from the draft guidance and the establishment of the new Office for Local Government (Oflog) that DLUHC are taking a more proactive approach to oversight and assurance of local government – including a tighter role for the Local Government Association (LGA) and their peer challenge framework (which Tameside Council is due to have later this year). Similarly it provides a clear framework for local authorities to self-check and assure.</p> <p>The council will make a formal organisational response. The Overview Panel are asked to review the draft guidance and highlight any thoughts they want to be reflected in the council response to DLUHC.</p>
Recommendations :	That the Overview Panel note the report and provide feedback to be included in the Tameside Council response to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
Links to Corporate Plan:	The new guidance will inform the development and ongoing monitoring and delivery of the Corporate Plan.
Policy Implications :	The report has policy implications in a number of areas across the whole council as it outlines the key principles of good governance and Best Value that all services need to give due regard to.
Financial Implications : (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. Any changes to policy or service delivery arising from the new guidance will need to be accommodated within existing budgets and/or be subject to a separate report.
Legal Implications : (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	<p>Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999 (“the 1999 Act”) defines the Best Value Duty as requiring councils to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”</p> <p>The scope of this duty is wide including delivering a balanced budget, providing statutory services, including adult social care and children’s</p>

services, and securing value for money in all spending decisions.

Risk Management :

A codified, clearly understood and effectively implemented strategic delivery and performance framework contributes to good governance and the achievement of better outcomes. The absence of such a framework risks service failure for residents and reputational damage for the council. The council is development a new strategic delivery and performance framework which will sit alongside and pay due regard to this new guidance.

Access to Information :

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Simon Brunet, Head of Policy.



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Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Best Value Standards and Intervention

A statutory guide for best value authorities

DRAFT

July 2023
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities



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July 2023

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Ministerial foreword



Local councils are the frontline of democracy. They play a vital role in our communities and are critical partners as we level up the nation. We need our councils to support everyone, including the most vulnerable. They must be able to make our towns, cities, villages and communities great places to live where every citizen, no matter their circumstances, can thrive. That means providing the effective and efficient local services – from schools, social care and waste collection – that people want and deserve. To do that, they must make the most of every penny they receive from taxpayers to achieve better results for the communities they serve.

Councils in this country tend to have a robust record of transparency, probity, scrutiny and accountability – a reputation worth protecting. Most councils are also committed to continuous improvement and transformation, and strive to achieve value for money when carrying out their functions. Yet as well as celebrating the best of local government, we must also act when the high standards we expect are not met. The cause of devolution and decentralisation is set back by the glaring failures of some councils. It is right that the Government intervenes in these circumstances using powers under the Local Government Act 1999. The Government recognises the importance of councils' independence and accountability to communities, and does not use these powers lightly. At the same time, we will take all necessary steps to protect residents and uphold the good name of local government.

Under the 1999 Act, local authorities must legally deliver what is termed 'Best Value' – a council must be able to show that it has arrangements to secure continuous improvement in how it carries out its work. This guidance provides more clarity on the use of powers under the Act where this Best Value Duty is not, or is at risk of not, being met. And where these standards are not upheld, it sets out the models of statutory and non-statutory intervention available, with stages of escalation.

This guidance has been developed for local authorities, including combined authorities and combined county authorities, in England, but I encourage all best value authorities to bear its principles in mind. Prompt intervention to identify and address challenges is always the better approach. When we collectively put appropriate support in place before failure takes root, we can protect citizens and taxpayers from more severe consequences.

It is also the case that in tackling weaknesses earlier, we can expect to see more inspections and locally instigated reviews. This transparency and challenge should be welcomed by all councils that seek continuous improvement – the core aim of the Best Value Duty.

Already, residents fortunate to live in the very best, flagship authorities benefit from a culture relentlessly focused on achieving best value across all public services, even where current performance is good. This guidance will help all authorities in their efforts to reach the same high bar.

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

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1. Introduction

1. Local authorities are democratically elected bodies that exercise a range of statutory and discretionary functions for the benefit of local communities, and which operate in accordance with a range of statutory requirements. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring proper democratic accountability, transparency, public scrutiny and audit of their activities, and are subject to external scrutiny from their external auditor and a number of government bodies including Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. The department, the local government sector and others are responsible for oversight of different aspects of local government accountability and assurance. The department's Accounting Officer is responsible for ensuring a sector-wide local accountability system is in place and that it remains robust. The department's Accounting Officer and officials provide the Secretary of State with advice and analysis on the sector's risk and instances where central government intervention is necessary.
2. The Best Value Duty relates to the statutory requirement for local authorities and other public bodies defined as best value authorities in Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999 ("the 1999 Act") to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". In practice, this covers issues such as how authorities exercise their functions to deliver a balanced budget (Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992), provide statutory services, including adult social care and children's services, and secure value for money in all spending decisions.
3. Best value authorities must demonstrate good governance, including a positive organisational culture, across all their functions and effective risk management. They are also required, pursuant to section 3 of the 1999 Act, to consult on the purpose of deciding how to fulfil the Best Value Duty. The annual process of setting the authority's budget, the corporate plan and the medium-term financial plan provides a key opportunity to conduct such consultation. This is the stage at which consultation will best assist the authority in deciding how to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement.
4. Failure to deliver best value can occur within any aspect of governance, the delivery of services or financial management. To help local authorities to achieve best value, government funds a programme of improvement support, primarily via the Local Government Association, that includes a wide range of sector-led support activities, including peer challenges, mentoring and the dissemination of best practice. Government expects local authorities to participate in the sector-led improvement initiatives available to them, to take up any offers of sector support or seek their own bespoke support if they require, and to be open to challenge. Government also expects all local authorities to have a corporate or finance peer challenge at least every five years, to publish the outcomes and deliver on the recommendations of that review, and to complete a progress review within a year. Improvement support is also provided for specific service areas such as in social care, public health, planning and transport. For example, the Sector Led

Improvement Partners Programme for Children's Social Care, where local authorities can request support from high-performing peers to help them improve.

5. Where, over a period of time, continuous improvement is not demonstrated sufficiently, the 1999 Act grants the Secretary of State powers to intervene to ensure compliance with the Best Value Duty. These powers include taking action to protect the public purse and ensure significant or long-term failings are corrected and performance is raised to an acceptable and sustainable level.
6. This statutory guidance on the Best Value Duty is issued to local authorities in England under section 26 of the Local Government Act 1999 and they are required to have regard to this guidance under the 1999 Act. Local authorities include county and district councils, London borough councils, combined and county combined authorities, the Common Council of the City of London, the Greater London Authority so far as it exercises its functions through the Mayor and the Council of the Isles of Scilly.
7. However, all best value authorities should be mindful of the principles set out in this document in order to ensure they deliver the Best Value Duty, defined in Part 1 of the 1999 Act. In exceptional cases, and recognising the existence of other inspection and intervention regimes across Government, the Secretary of State may intervene in these authorities as listed below where there is clear and significant failure:
 - National Park authorities (for National Parks in England),
 - The Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a police authority,
 - Fire and rescue authorities,
 - London Fire Commissioner,
 - Waste disposal authorities,
 - Integrated transport authorities,
 - Combined authorities and economic prosperity boards,
 - Sub-national transport bodies,
 - Transport for London.
8. This guidance provides greater clarity to the local government sector on how to fulfil the Best Value Duty by describing what constitutes best value, the standards expected by the department and the models of intervention at the Secretary of State's disposal in the event of failure to uphold these standards. It supplements statutory guidance issued setting out reasonable expectations of the way authorities should work with voluntary and community groups, and small businesses¹ on the making and disclosure of Special Severance Payments² and non-statutory guidance on digital infrastructure³. This guide should not be taken

¹ [Revised Best Value Guidance](#) (March 2015)

² [Statutory guidance on the making and disclosure of Special Severance Payments by local authorities in England](#)

³ [Guidance on access agreements](#)

as a definitive guide to the interpretation of the legislation, which is reserved for HM Courts.

2. Office for Local Government

9. This guidance is published as the [Office for Local Government](#) (Oflog) is being established.
10. Oflog will provide an authoritative and accessible source of information about the performance and health of the local government sector. The department's best value analysis to inform judgements to inspect or intervene will be improved through Oflog's objective to increase transparency of performance in the sector.
11. Both Oflog and the department are committed to high standards, which are frequently met by authorities, and to identify early indications of failure. To support this, alongside the publication of this guidance the department is consulting on what indicators should be prioritised in informing engagement with authorities to ascertain compliance with the Best Value Duty and what quantifiable metrics would be appropriate to consider.
12. The standards and models for interventions set out in this guidance belong to the department. This guidance may be updated as Oflog's role continues to develop.

3. Best value powers

13. The Secretary of State has powers under section 10 of the 1999 Act to appoint a person to carry out an inspection into an authority's compliance with the Best Value Duty. This power may be exercised to provide evidence for the Secretary of State to make a judgement on whether to intervene, but an inspection is not formally required prior to statutory intervention (see section 8 of this guide for the various models of statutory intervention).
14. Where the Secretary of State is satisfied that an authority is failing to carry out its functions in compliance with the Best Value Duty, section 15 of the 1999 Act provides powers for the Secretary of State to intervene on a statutory basis in that authority. These powers include the ability to:
 - direct a local inquiry to be held into the exercise by the authority of specified functions,
 - direct the authority to carry out a review of its exercise of specified functions,
 - direct the authority to take any action which the Secretary of State considers necessary or expedient to secure its compliance with the requirements of the Best Value Duty, and
 - direct that a specified function or functions of the authority be exercised by the Secretary of State or a person nominated by them (referred to as "commissioners" in previous interventions) for a specified period.
15. The Secretary of State's decision to intervene, when, and what form that intervention should take relies on the analysis of a complex set of data and circumstances, set out in section 5 of this guide. Weighing up the degree and impact of failure on local residents requires an element of judgement and consideration of the confidence in a local authority's capacity, capability and commitment to lead its own improvement.

4. Principles

16. Government's approach to ensuring all authorities carry out their functions in compliance with the Best Value Duty is based on the following principles:

Local accountability

17. Accountability should primarily be to local residents and businesses. Statutory intervention will only be used when there are significant and extensive indications of failure and authorities are not delivering to the high standards which their local communities have a right to expect. As far as possible, Government will look to existing local checks and balances in the system to mitigate risks of failure. Where there are indications that the local authority is not complying with these checks and balances, Government may seek additional assurances or intervene to secure compliance with the Best Value Duty.

Continuous improvement

18. Every best value authority must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The reference to "making arrangements" makes it clear that the Best Value Duty is concerned more with intentions, namely securing improvement in the way in which an authority performs its functions, than outcome. This means that authorities are not expected to be perfect, but rather that they should prioritise learning and development throughout the organisation and always strive to learn from past mistakes, address under-performance, and avoid continuing in a direction where failure is evident. Errors and poor performance should be clearly isolated and exceptional rather than repeated or systematic, and should not be significant in value, governance, or have wider implications. Persistent mistakes and poor performance should be promptly addressed, and steps taken to remedy clearly documented.

Openness to challenge and support

19. Best value authorities are responsible for their own performance. Government expects these authorities to make their own arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which their functions are exercised. This includes being open to external challenge and scrutiny, including in the form of regular peer challenges and participating in the broad range of formal and informal improvement initiatives available to authorities. It also means being responsive to challenge from the press, public and local communities more generally. Authorities should be transparent in their Annual Governance Statements about how they are delivering improvements over time against any recommendations made by external parties. Authorities are also expected to have a sense of collective responsibility for the performance of the sector as a whole and engage in sector-led support to other councils and benchmarking.

Expectations

20. Government should be clear in its expectations of an authority to demonstrate it is securing best value in key areas such as governance, culture, finances and statutory services (see section 5 of this guide on the department's best value themes). These expectations, clarified in this guidance, should be shared with the sector and reflect what most local authorities already do or are striving to achieve. Authorities need to demonstrate that they are making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in all these areas on an ongoing basis and at the necessary pace. An inability or reticence to acknowledge clear failings and/or resistance to external challenge or scrutiny is indicative of failure to secure best value. However, it is the Secretary of State's decision to ascertain whether the Best Value Duty is being met and judgements will be made based on the circumstances of each case.

Prevention

21. Government will engage early with authorities showing signs of not complying with the Best Value Duty and will encourage local authorities to come forward and ask for targeted support, to prevent challenges from escalating. It will act swiftly to investigate significant indications of failure and determine the appropriate support or model from a range of statutory and non-statutory options. Local authorities should take responsibility for identifying early warning signs and act appropriately to address potential failures at the earliest opportunity by participating in the sector-led improvement initiatives available to them. This guidance highlights relevant indicators and signals of potential failure, but this should not be taken as an exhaustive list as each local authority and the context it operates in is different.

Meeting the cost of failure

22. Whilst most authorities want to do the right thing, if Government was to reward failure by funding necessary improvement where there is best value failure, this could risk introducing a financial motive to fail. Leaders, both official and elected, should take responsibility for their actions rather than being bailed out by Government. While local leaders are held to account for the impact of their decisions at the ballot box, authorities should apply performance management procedures in line with their usual policies where there is failure. Local authorities are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to meet the financial cost of failure locally.

Default commissioner powers and de-escalation

23. Lessons learned from past interventions have shown that when failure in a local authority has been more widespread than first thought, the requirement to expand commissioner powers has delayed improvement. In cases where there have been significant failure in a particular functional area or areas and where commissioners have been appointed, the department will make a default presumption that failure

may be more pervasive. In such cases, commensurate powers relating to governance and senior appointments will be automatically provided to commissioners on appointment, unless there is good reason not to provide the default powers. Such powers may not need to be used but will empower commissioners to accelerate the discovery phase of an intervention to ensure potential failure in any function is quickly identified, and to promptly address any additional issues that may arise in order to accelerate improvement. This ultimately should support the intervention ending within the fastest possible timeframe. A statutory intervention should de-escalate over time and finish in accordance with the anticipated end date, extendable if necessary. This should be based on an agreed exit strategy, with clear indicators of success, which should be developed by the commissioners and the authority together as early as possible in the intervention, but which should be sufficiently flexible to reflect the journey that the local authority is making.

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5. Defining best value

24. The Best Value Duty is concerned with making arrangements to secure continuous improvement. To provide greater clarity to the sector on how to fulfil the Best Value Duty, this statutory guidance sets out seven overlapping themes of good practice for running an authority that meets and delivers best value. These seven best value themes build on the lessons learned from past interventions, including those which the department published in June 2020, and reflect what most local authorities already do or are striving to achieve. While these themes are all interdependent, strong governance, culture, and leadership underpin effective partnerships and community engagement, service delivery, and the use of resources. Continuous improvement is the outcome of all the themes working well together.

Diagram 1: Seven best value themes



25. There is no single version of ‘good’ – different aspects might look different in different areas – but these seven themes represent the key areas where authorities should be able to demonstrate they are making effective arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised. Inspection and intervention, described in later sections, are contingencies for the Secretary of State to use in the event that they consider these themes of good practice are not, or are at risk of not, being met.

26. Local authorities are not expected to perform perfectly, given the complex set of legal responsibilities and inherent levels of risk authorities must manage, but should strive for excellence and be able to demonstrate they are making effective arrangements to secure continuous improvement in each of these areas.
27. A detailed description of these themes, including characteristics of a well-functioning local authority and indicators used to identify challenges that could indicate failure, is set out below. This is an illustrative list of indicators including both qualitative and quantitative data and no single metric automatically leads to inspection or intervention. Decisions to intervene pursuant to the 1999 Act are based on a holistic judgement of all available information and considered engagement with authorities to understand the environment they are operating within and their capacity, capability and commitment to lead their own improvement.
28. There is significant variation in the functions of individual combined authorities, as well as those local authorities which have agreed individual devolution deals, which will need to be considered when assessing their performance. In addition, combined authorities typically have fewer services to deliver and have more of a focus on strategic delivery and developing partnerships and community engagement, as well as local assurance frameworks, which will be considered when assessing the different themes, although all still apply. For constituent councils of combined authorities, working with their devolution partners will be of particular note when considering Partnerships and Community Engagement.

1. Continuous improvement

Description	Characteristics of a well-functioning authority	Indicators of potential failure
<p>Making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance and outcomes is a core requirement for achieving best value.</p> <p>Any organisation with a duty of best value needs to make effective arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which all its functions are exercised on an ongoing basis and at pace.</p> <p>These arrangements will include inviting independent external challenge and scrutiny, in the form of regular service specific as well as corporate or finance peer challenges, engaging with sector support initiatives on offer and informal experience sharing among peers.</p> <p>Local authorities should also have a sense of collective responsibility for the performance of the sector and help other authorities to improve.</p> <p>The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) / Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework, along with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and Localis Governance Risk and Resilience Framework can help authorities to identify, understand, and act on risks to good governance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement, with frequent monitoring, performance reporting and updating of the corporate and improvement plans. • There is some form of established transformation function or programme. • 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. • The authority is willing to work with the external auditor to proactively identify areas for improvement and responds promptly and effectively to recommendations. • 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. • 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. • Innovation is encouraged and supported within the context of a mature approach to risk management. • The authority shares a sense of collective responsibility for the performance of the sector and supports other authorities to improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of denial and lack of openness to constructive advice and challenge. • A lack of awareness and reluctance to acknowledge weaknesses and engage with the sector support on offer (such as no corporate peer challenge in the past five years or alternative external assessment). • Evidence that attempts at improvement have not been effective over a sustained period of time. • The Annual Governance Statement is not used as an improvement document, is developed by officers without member oversight, is not kept up to date and/or is generic in tone and content. • Lack of engagement with and/or poor quality or non-existent member and officer training and development offer.

2. Leadership

Description	Characteristics of a well-functioning authority	Indicators of potential failure
<p>Effective political and administrative leaders who have a clear vision and set of priorities for their area, are key to building local economic growth, social cohesion and a healthy local democracy.</p> <p>When they model positive and effective leadership behaviours at all levels, this can be beneficial to a local authority's overall culture and governance.</p> <p>It is essential that all officers with statutory responsibility, including the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers, uphold their duties, both individually and collectively and, in accordance with good practice, report directly to the Chief Executive and, as necessary, to full Council. Statutory officers must work effectively together and all must have a voice for key decisions.</p> <p>An authority that either fails to recruit to its statutory officer posts on a permanent basis over an extended period of time or has a high turnover in these roles indicates instability and potential wider cultural concerns.</p> <p>When this is compounded by many senior positions being appointed to on an interim basis over an extended period, this can signal a problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. • Members and officers, particularly those with statutory responsibility, including the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers, uphold their duties and speak truth to power. • Strong financial management and reporting runs throughout the whole organisation. • Robust systems are in place and "owned" by members for identifying, reporting, mitigating and regularly reviewing risk. • Effective succession planning, with the recruitment and nurturing of officers with the necessary skills, ensures organisational resilience. • Members and senior officers maintain constructive relationships and engage effectively with external stakeholders and the wider local community. • A demonstrable commitment to leadership development. • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of corporate capacity or capability, resulting in a lack of strategic direction, oversight and sense of accountability. • Leadership losing sight of the authority's role and function as a leader of place and provider or enabler of services to local residents and businesses. • A lack of understanding of public sector standards, the Nolan Principles and appropriate behaviour. • Corporate plan is out of date, unrealistic and unaffordable and/or has too many priorities. • Poor ownership and accountability by the Section 151 Officer, leading to poor quality financial management. • Section 151 and Monitoring Officers do not report directly to the Chief Executive or are not involved in key decisions. • Risk management ownership and discussion is limited to the Audit Committee rather than across the organisation. • A lack of political and/or organisational stability, with high leadership turnover, key posts remaining vacant or an overreliance on interim officers, creating a lack of continuity and/or decisions in the long-term interests of the authority. • Leadership at both political and managerial levels is distracted and involved to an unhealthy extent on internal battles. • The absence of both a fit for purpose and regularly reviewed people plan, procurement strategy and IT strategy. • A loss of stakeholder and public confidence. • A sense of insularity, a failure to tolerate internal or external challenge, and to recognise the need for improvement.

3. Governance

Description	Characteristics of a well-functioning authority	Indicators of potential failure
<p>A well-run council will have clear and robust governance and scrutiny arrangements in place that are fit for purpose, appropriate to the governance arrangements adopted locally (executive/committee system), understood by politicians and staff alike and reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Decision-making processes, within clear schemes of delegation, should be transparent, regularly reviewed, clearly followed and understood, enabling decision-makers to be held to account effectively. There should also be evidence of the decisions following good public law decision making principles (reasonableness, proportionality, fairness, etc.).</p> <p>Codes of conduct and HR processes should be to sector standard and ensure effective support for whistle-blowers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • The authority's scrutiny function is challenging, robust and contributes to the efficient delivery of public services. • Risk awareness and management informs every decision. • Full Council alongside the Audit Committee takes an effective overview of the systems of control, audit and governance. • Appropriate financial, commercial and legal expertise is obtained, including from external sources, and due diligence completed on any key or novel decision. • Committees and individuals charged with governance have the appropriate experience, skills and expertise to perform their role. • 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. • Performance management information measures actual outcomes effectively and is frequently interrogated. • Lessons are learned from complaints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant weaknesses identified in annual audit reports, and/or statutory recommendations or a public interest report issued. • Credible allegations of corruption or maladministration. • Political or ideological activity by council officers visible. • Key decisions are made in informal meetings and are not effectively recorded, leading to a lack of clarity on who is responsible for them. • Decisions made without seeking appropriate advice. • Political indecision, with key decisions not being fully implemented and/or decisions being frequently reversed. • Scrutiny functions are undermined and there is a lack of pre-decision scrutiny. • Internal audit does not meet PSIA standards and fails to consider identified high risks. • Audit Committee's brief is too wide, meets infrequently, and its effectiveness is undermined. • There are no meaningful risk registers at a corporate level and risks are not owned by senior leaders. Risk registers appear to downplay some risks and lack action to mitigate risk. • Performance management information is not consistently used, does not measure outcomes where relevant and underperformance is not effectively addressed. • No independent oversight or members of relevant committees in accordance with good practice. • Excessive secrecy and failure to accept councillors' right to know. • Member/officer codes of conduct and arrangements for reviewing standards complaints, are not regularly reviewed.

4. Culture

Description	Characteristics of a well-functioning authority	Indicators of potential failure
<p>The culture of a local authority is determined by its shared values, ethics and beliefs, how decisions are made, as well as how elected members and officers behave, interact and carry out their roles.</p> <p>Political and administrative leaders that model strong and effective leadership are beneficial to a local authority's overall culture.</p> <p>An agreed set of shared corporate values which are effectively implemented and modelled across the authority are also essential to maintaining positive organisational culture.</p> <p>The existence of an outward facing, transparent and open culture, where challenge is welcome and acted upon are indicators of a modern authority and is also essential for ensuring continuous improvement runs throughout the organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members and officers promote and demonstrate the highest ethical standards and appropriate working behaviours through established shared values and ways of working. • A culture of cooperation, respect and trust between and within members and officers exists, along with a commitment to transparent decision-making. • Civil working relationships (and communication) between Group Leaders despite political disagreements. • A commitment to promoting transparency and sharing information with the public. • Respect for a councillor's right to know and enquire. • The existence of a proactive and welcoming attitude to external challenge and scrutiny. • Appropriate processes are in place to address issues such as harassment and bullying. • An accessible whistleblowing policy, of which there is wide awareness and confidence that it will work. • Demonstrable steps to engage openly and honestly with staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A widespread failure to follow due process, the constitution and codes of conduct. • Risks are covered up rather than identified to protect reputations. • Credible allegations of corruption or maladministration. • The respective roles of members and officers, and the interface between them, are rejected or misunderstood, and over-involvement of members in operational decisions or of officers in setting strategic political vision. • A culture of bullying, distrust and broken relationships exists. • The organisation is paralysed by a large number of procedural issues. • Under- or non-engagement of the standards regime, with doubt cast on its credibility and legitimacy. • Disciplinary and complaints systems are not deployed, leading to a sense that certain individuals can act improperly with impunity. • High numbers of staff grievances and staff turnover due to morale issues. • High numbers of standards complaints by members against members are upheld. • Poor outcomes identified from staff surveys. • A culture of secrecy and overuse of urgency arrangements, confidential or delegated action reports and a failure for such reports to be reported in a form which allows scrutiny. • Members and officers have limited understanding of declarations of interest and of gift and hospitality registers, which are not monitored or regularly updated. • A website that is difficult to navigate, where key documents are either missing or drafted in a way that information is inaccessible to the public.

5. Use of resources

Description	Characteristics of a well-functioning authority	Indicators of potential failure
<p>An authority must have in place and properly deploy an effective internal control environment to safeguard the use of resources, and clear and effective processes to secure value for money.</p> <p>It must have appropriate financial management, reporting and regulation arrangements in place, in accordance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code, to govern the strategic and operational management of its investments, funding, assets and companies.</p> <p>This includes ensuring it has the appropriate skills and capacity in place, commensurate with the complexity of its finances, using specialist expertise when needed.</p> <p>Authorities must appropriately comply with the Prudential Framework in making investment and borrowing decisions and not take on excessive risk. They should have effective systems for identifying, reporting, addressing and reviewing financial risk and have consideration of CIPFA's Financial Resilience Index.</p> <p>Investment decisions must have a commensurate level of scrutiny, transparency and approval to make sure that officers and members fully understand the risks.</p> <p>Financial management and reporting should be supported by robust financial systems, record keeping and quality assurance, with appropriate use of specialist expertise when needed.</p> <p>Authorities should respond to audit recommendations and address issues identified in a timely way.</p> <p>Capacity constraints should be identified and recruitment to fill key posts prioritised. Succession planning needs should be considered, with a longer-term view as to when there might be a gap in senior, experienced officers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial strategy and budgets are clearly aligned with strategic priorities and there is a robust process for reviewing and setting the budget. • Human resources and fixed assets are managed efficiently and effectively. • A robust system of financial controls and reporting exists, which provide clear accountability and ensure compliance with statutory requirements and accounting standards. • Compliance with the Prudential Framework, a clearly presented Investment Strategy, Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy exists. • A clear strategy exists to maintain adequate reserves. • There is collective accountability for the budget and medium-term financial plan, rather than a siloed approach to management. • There are regular financial reports to Cabinet and training for all members on finance. • Robust systems are in place to identify, report, address and regularly review financial risk. • Sustainable, competitive corporate functions including procurement and IT which deliver value for money. • The Audit Committee has the knowledge, skills and independent expertise to provide robust challenge and ensures effective controls are in place and issues addressed. • The purposes of companies are carefully considered and regularly reviewed, with effective governance and oversight arrangements in place. • Effective project management of projects to enhance governance and effective use of resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of a deliverable and clear medium-term financial plan, approved by the authority's Cabinet or finance committee (as appropriate) and full council. • Consistent overspends, frequent use of virements, and no credible plan to reduce unaffordable debt and maintain sustainable finances, and recurrent non-delivery of savings plans. • Avoidance of/failure to implement difficult budget decisions. • No evidence of transformation to create efficiency savings. • Inadequate reserves, savings not achieved and poor benefits realisation. • Consistent reliance on reserves to balance an outturn position. • Unlawful or excessively risky borrowing and investment practices with no adequate risk management strategy in place for financial losses. • Failure to manage the risks associated with companies. • An authority that has issued a Section 114 Notice. • Significant weaknesses identified in the annual audit report for financial sustainability, and/or statutory recommendations or a public interest report is issued. • High dependency on high-risk commercial income for service delivery and balancing budgets. • Non-compliance with accounting requirements regarding MRP. • A finance function that is not fit for purpose owing to capacity or capability issues. • Underinvestment in back-office services, which affects capacity and succession planning. • Inefficient or uncompetitive procurement arrangements that do not deliver value for money. • IT that is not capable of doing the job for which it is designed.

6. Service delivery

Description	Characteristics of a well-functioning authority	Indicators of potential failure
<p>Poor individual services can often be an indication of broader governance and financial weaknesses within an authority.</p> <p>Equally, corporate governance failure almost certainly will at some point negatively impact how services are delivered locally, in terms of missed opportunities or silo working and a failure to make strategic connections.</p> <p>Local authority data, the assessments of other government departments and service regulators, such as Oflog, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, Planning Inspectorate and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, identify whether services are being delivered efficiently and effectively, and whether authorities are responsive to customer complaints. Authorities should provide services at a comparable level to other authorities of a similar size and location when benchmarked.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Service delivery is evidence-based, customer and citizen focused, and meet the needs of different groups within the community. • The authority has an effective and accessible complaints process and provides appropriate redress. • 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. • Procurement processes are economic, efficient and ensure the outcomes of efficient contract procurement and management. • The authority achieves the best balance of cost and quality, considering the resources available, in delivering services, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. • The local authority takes an innovative approach when considering how services will be designed and delivered in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant weaknesses identified in the annual audit report for economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and/or statutory recommendations or a public interest report issued. • Critical reports from regulator, inspectorate and/or ombudsman show failings which may have resulted in intervention by other government departments. • Intervention from other government departments is not delivering results. • A high level of complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and/or an annual letter to the authority requesting action to improve with no associated action plan. • Transformation is in name only. Opportunities for efficiency savings and improvements have not assessed in a meaningful way. Exotic or novel solutions are pursued that lack rigor or adequate risk appraisal. • The approach to contracting and contract management is weak, resulting in poor quality public services that do not represent value for money. • Excessive use of contract Standing Order waivers. • Poor tracking of benefits realisation on service improvement. • Services data suggests poor performance and outcomes compared to similar local authorities, e.g. adult social care quality of life score, planning applications completed to time.

7. Partnerships and community engagement

Description	Characteristics	Indicators of potential failure
<p>Driving local economic growth, promoting social cohesion and pride in place is increasingly dependent on the effectiveness of partnerships and collaborative working arrangements with a range of local stakeholders and service users.</p> <p>Authorities should have a clear understanding of and focus on the benefits that can be gained by effective collaborative working with local partners and community engagement in order to achieve its strategic objectives and key outcomes for local people.</p> <p>Appropriate governance structures should also be in place to oversee these arrangements, and the process of consultation and engagement should be inclusive, open and fair. An inclusive approach that accepts challenge is an indicator of a confident organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authority provides effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships with external stakeholders. • 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. • 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-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. • 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. • The authority drives social and environmental value in their place through mechanisms like procurement and employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of appropriate governance in partnership arrangements. • The authority shows weak ambition (or is overly ambitious) and fails to seize opportunities for building prosperity and opportunity for local people and businesses, promote social cohesion and pride in place. • The authority does not seek and consider feedback from citizens and service users on performance when developing improvement plans. • Poor outcomes identified from resident or partner surveys. • Poor or non-existent communication with partners on issues impacting on their business. • Consultation is perfunctory with a focus on complying with statutory minimums.

6. Assurance and early engagement

29. The department and the local government sector, with others, are responsible for the local government accountability system, with the department's Accounting Officer being responsible for ensuring this system remains robust. A key element of this is ensuring that the public is protected from instances of local authority failure.
30. The department's local government stewardship function continually reviews the health of local authorities' governance, financial management processes, including commercial operations and the sustainability of authorities' medium-term financial outlooks, and delivery of corporate and key services. The information reviewed combines the use of:
- national data metrics,
 - published documents from local authorities (annual governance statement, committee papers, statement of accounts, and locally commissioned reviews),
 - auditors' annual reports and other reporting,
 - reports from inspectorates such as Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission,
 - reports from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsmen,
 - LGA corporate peer challenge reports and any follow-up reports, and
 - residents' and MPs' letters where they raise concerns under the Best Value Duty.
31. To be assured of local authorities' compliance with the Best Value Duty, the department engages with other government departments who maintain responsibility for their services areas, such as the Department for Education (DfE), the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Home Office. It also engages with a range of other non-departmental organisations working with the local government sector. In certain circumstances, the department will also engage with local authority auditors.
32. The department is committed to working in partnership with other government departments to share intelligence on common challenges and ensure a co-ordinated and collaborative approach across Government. Government departments set and monitor performance against their own standards and failure to meet these standards should be first managed by the relevant department directly. However, in these circumstances if concerns continue for two or more years despite local attempts to improve and there is evidence available, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will consider whether the lack of improvement constitutes failure to meet the Best Value duty.
33. Close engagement with government departments is particularly important when an authority of concern is already subject to statutory intervention. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will consult with other Secretaries of States prior to using best value powers to start an intervention where another department already has inspection or intervention frameworks to

assess and further understand any wider context. This does not compromise the Secretary of State's independent legal authority to exercise best value powers under the Local Government Act 1999.

34. Collating the information outlined in the paragraphs above enables the department to gain a deeper understanding of those authorities that may be facing challenges and showing some of the indicators of potential best value failure set out in section 5 of this guide. This could mean that those authorities may not be properly complying with the Best Value Duty. In some circumstances, evidence of past failure and conduct concerns may also be taken into account by the Secretary of State in deciding whether to exercise his or her statutory powers.
35. Where the department becomes aware of quantitative or qualitative indicators of potential failure being met, officials from the department may look to engage constructively with the local authority to provide an opportunity to understand their organisational challenges in relation to governance, finances and service delivery, including local partner and market delivery, and to gain assurance of how they are being managed. The purpose of this form of early engagement is to prevent any challenges experienced by the local authority from escalating by seeing how the authority is engaging with, or plans to engage with, sector support and identifying what form of additional support (if any) is needed. Local authorities demonstrating early indications of failure may also be invited to discuss their arrangements for securing continuous improvement with the minister responsible for local government. Where sufficient assurance is not provided, the department may write formally to obtain assurance that the authority is taking steps to manage its challenges. This may include the formal issuance of a Best Value Notice, the models for which are set out below.

(Non-statutory) Best Value Notice

A senior civil servant writes formally to an authority to state the department's concerns on the available evidence and to set out the department's expectations of the authority in providing assurance of progress. The Notice will request that the authority engages directly with the department to provide assurance of improvement. This engagement could include requesting that the authority provides a timebound improvement plan containing details of the arrangements the authority has made and proposals to secure the improvement needed. Where an improvement plan is already in place, officials may specify the need for further information, ongoing engagement, or greater assurance of that plan. The Notice may also request that the authority reports back to the department at specified junctures.

Officials may challenge an authority's improvement plan if it is considered insufficiently robust, feasible or timely. Officials will also determine progress against the authority's improvement plan, based on the evidence provided by the authority and may draw on sector peer support to do so. Further action may be needed if the requested information is not provided to the department by a specified date or if progress is not satisfactory.

The Notice will normally remain in place for 12 months, after which time, should the department deem it necessary to continue to seek assurance of the authority's improvement progress, it will be reissued. The Notice may be withdrawn or escalated at any point based on the available evidence.

To ensure the authority's improvement work is transparent and open to external scrutiny, the department will publish Best Value Notices on gov.uk and will expect the authority to publish all related documents on its website.

Best Value Notices provide an opportunity for early engagement with an authority that is exhibiting indicators of potential best value failure and where there is confidence that the authority may have the capability and capacity to make its own arrangements to secure continuous improvement. Best Value Notices may also be used to obtain assurance from an authority that has previously been subject to intervention that they will continue to meet their Best Value Duty, or as a form of longer term non-statutory intervention where there is no evidence of best value failure.

Example: Best Value Notices were issued to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Middlesbrough Council in January 2023, setting out the department's concerns and the importance of pace and rigor in delivery of their locally led improvement frameworks.

Best Value Notice issued under section 230 of the Local Government Act 1972

A Best Value Notice (as described above) is issued on a statutory basis, under the general power in section 230 of the Local Government Act 1972, stating the department's concerns on the available evidence and requiring that the authority engages directly with the department to provide assurance of improvement.

Section 230 of the 1972 Act requires local authorities (including combined authorities) to send the Secretary of State any information with respect to their functions that the Secretary of State may require or may be required by either House of Parliament.

As with non-statutory Best Value Notices, the Notice will remain in place for 12 months, after which time, should the department deem it necessary to continue to seek assurance of the authority's improvement progress, it will be reissued. The Notice may be withdrawn or escalated at any point based on the available evidence.

Failure to properly engage with the department in response to a statutory Best Value Notice could indicate a failure of the authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement and may lead to further action.

Statutory requests for improvement information provide an opportunity for the department to engage on a statutory basis with an authority that is exhibiting early indicators of potential best value failure and where there is limited confidence in

the authority's willingness to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement and/or to engage constructively and promptly comply with requests for information from the department.

Example: This power has yet to be used.

Exceptional financial support

36. Since 2020 the government has given considerable support to the local government sector to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, as a result of particular local circumstances, a small number of local authorities approached the department for exceptional financial support to help them address financial pressures that they considered unmanageable.
37. The government has agreed to provide additional financial support to these authorities on an exceptional basis and on the condition that each authority is subject to an external assurance review focused on, at a minimum, their financial position and their ability to meet any or all of the identified budget gap without additional borrowing. Authorities are expected to respond effectively to the challenges and recommendations highlighted in their external assurance reviews and provide regular updates to the department on progress.
38. It is a principle of the exceptional financial support process that authorities meet the costs of support over time, as far as possible. The department will work with a relevant authority, and commissioners if appointed, to consider all available options for managing costs locally, including additional cost reductions. Where exceptional financial support is granted, it is usually provided in the form of a capitalisation direction from the Secretary of State. This provides an authority with the temporary flexibility to fund revenue expenditure with capital resources, normally achieved through taking out additional borrowing, or the generation of capital receipts through asset sales. Using capital resource for revenue purposes is outside the normal rules of local authority accounting and, as such, ministers will only consider agreeing to this in exceptional circumstances.
39. The department continues to keep the financial position of local authorities under close review and any authority concerned about its financial position should engage with the department on a confidential basis. The department is clear, however, that any financial support agreed will be provided openly and transparently and any decisions to provide such support will be published on gov.uk.

Capital risk assurance

40. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will introduce measures to provide a flexible range of interventions for the department to investigate and remediate extreme risk in relation to a local authority's investment and borrowing. Intervention in a local authority will be considered when a trigger point is

breached with respect to certain risk metrics, which fall into the following categories:

- Proportionality of debt (e.g., total debt compared to Core Spending Power),
- Proportion of commercial investments,
- Types of debt (e.g., novel credit arrangements and loans), and
- Under-provision of Minimum Revenue Provision (a statutory duty to make sufficient provision to repay debt).

41. The department engages with local authorities who are outliers within these categories of risk so that they can reduce their risk. These discussions are held on a confidential basis, to allow for open and productive discussions on their financial risks and strategies for managing them.

42. The appropriate management of capital risk is a necessary part of adhering to the Best Value Duty, in particular the responsible use of resources (Chapter 4 'Defining Best Value', theme 5 'Use of resources').

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7. Evidencing failure

43. The Secretary of State must be satisfied that an authority is failing to carry out its functions in compliance with the Best Value Duty before intervening on a statutory basis under section 15 of the 1999 Act. If an authority is exhibiting some characteristics that may indicate best value failure, but there is insufficient evidence available for the Secretary of State to make an informed judgement, the Secretary of State may commission an inspection to determine whether best value failure has occurred.
44. Failure, or the risk of future failure, can also be evidenced in other types of expert independent assessments. These include reports commissioned by local authorities, those from other recognised independent bodies, for example external auditors or inspectorates, or government commissioned reviews, such as an external assurance review of a local authority's financial management and resilience, and/or governance, since financial failure is often a presenting symptom of broader failure. These external assurance reviews have in the past been commissioned by the department following a local authority's request to the department for support via the exceptional financial support framework (see section 6 of this guide). They provide a valuable source of evidence to determine the underlying drivers of the authority's request for financial support and what remedial actions are required by the local authority to achieve financial sustainability. The assessments may also identify whether there is cause for concern in other areas of the local authority which may necessitate further investigation, for example in relation to leadership, governance and service delivery.
45. **Annex A** sets out the process for statutory inspection in more detail.

Best Value Inspections

Best Value Inspections are statutory reviews which provide the Secretary of State with updated information on how an authority is performing the Best Value Duty.

The powers relating to a statutory Best Value Inspection are contained in sections 10-13 of the Local Government Act 1999. They cover the appointment of an inspector and (if required) an assistant inspector, the powers and duties of an inspector particularly around access to documents, the requirement of the authority being inspected to pay reasonable fees, the submission of the inspector's report to the Secretary of State and its subsequent publication.

An inspector is appointed by the Secretary of State to lead an inspection, based on specific experience and expertise. The scope of the inspection is published, which will focus on specific functions of an authority in relation to its governance, financial management, service delivery or a combination.

Inspections may be appropriate when an authority is exhibiting some characteristics that may indicate best value failure, including taking no steps to acknowledge or address ongoing challenges, but where there is insufficient evidence available for the Secretary of State to make a judgement. However, this is not an exhaustive description of scenarios where an inspection may be appropriate.

Example: Following a series of police investigations into corruption and misconduct in public office, a Best Value Inspection of Liverpool City Council was conducted from December 2020 to March 2021. The matters covered by the inspection were the authority's planning, highways, regeneration and property management functions and the strength of associated audit and governance arrangements.

Independent reports

There are a range of independent expert assessments which may satisfy the Secretary of State's standards with regards to scope, independence and quality. These assessments may also provide evidence of best value failure or risk of failure, and the extent of that failure. They include government commissioned reports such as external assurance reviews, reports commissioned by local authorities, or those from other recognised independent bodies, for example auditors and inspectorates. The progress reports of local improvement boards or commissioners working with authorities already under intervention are also very useful sources of independent evidence. The Secretary of State may decide to intervene in an authority based on the evidence contained in these independent reports.

An independent report may be used when an authority is exhibiting some characteristics that may indicate best value failure. The findings of an independent expert analysis can help determine the steps required by an authority to address the concerns or issues identified in that report, either on their own or with the support of external intervention. However, this is not an exhaustive description of scenarios where an independent report may be appropriate.

Example: Slough Borough Council requested exceptional financial support in 2020/21 and a condition of that support was an external assurance review of the Council's financial position and wider governance arrangements. The review, which was similar to a Best Value Inspection in terms of scale, scope and quality, identified a range of concerns, including evidence of best value failure, and included recommendations for improvement. Based on this evidence of best value failure, the Secretary of State took the decision to appoint commissioners to Slough.

8. Models of intervention

Non-statutory measures

46. Non-statutory measures aimed at ensuring compliance with the Best Value Duty do not involve the Secretary of State using the powers in the 1999 Act. They are usually appropriate for addressing failure or risk of future failure that does not appear to be systemic in an authority and where that authority has the willingness, capability and capacity to improve. Authorities that can demonstrate how they are addressing failure, and where the department is confident that continuous improvement can be sustained without statutory intervention, are most likely to be subject to non-statutory measures. The Secretary of State retains the option to move to statutory intervention if an authority's improvement progress is not satisfactory.

Improvement boards

The establishment of an improvement board, panel or taskforce made up of individuals with relevant experience and skills, who will provide support, advice and challenge to an authority. As the board does not have any statutory powers, its members are involved in an advisory capacity.

Membership of the board and its terms of reference are usually determined by the authority but can also be proposed by the department (in agreement with the authority), depending on the level of assurance required by the Secretary of State. The department will need to be confident the authority will make sensible appointments and set sufficiently robust terms of reference. Where it does not have that confidence, the department may make its own appointments and direct the authority to follow the advice of the improvement board, triggering it to move to a statutory footing (under section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1999).

Improvement boards may be used when an authority demonstrates failures or risk of future failure which is not systemic and there is confidence that the authority has the willingness, capability and capacity to sustain continuous improvement, but external expertise and challenge would result in more efficient recovery. However, this is not an exhaustive description of scenarios where an improvement board may be appropriate.

Example: A condition of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council's request to the department for exceptional financial support in 2020/21 was completion of an external assurance review. This Review identified a range of concerns, including poor financial governance and management and the need to strengthen oversight and scrutiny. The Council agreed to implement the Review's recommendations and established a locally led improvement panel to provide oversight of its improvements and report regularly to the Council and Secretary of State.

Sector-led intervention

An authority of concern, identified through a non-statutory Best Value Notice, may be partnered with another authority with a track record of delivering good governance and effective service delivery in the area(s) of concern. This arrangement does not change local lines of accountability, with the host authority maintaining responsibility for the delivery of its functions. A supportive authority will be asked by the Secretary of State to assist, and the success of the local partnership and the authority's improvement is set and monitored by the Secretary of State. The option of alternative forms of intervention remains if progress is insufficient.

Sector-led intervention may be appropriate when an authority demonstrates failures or risk of future failure but is prepared to accept support from a willing and able local partner authority with the capacity to assist its improvement journey. It may be helpful if the two authorities share geography and strategic partners. However, this is not an exhaustive description of scenarios where a sector-led intervention may be appropriate.

Example: Evidence of service, governance and leadership failures at West Sussex County Council contributed to the suspension of the Chief Executive (who later left the council) and resignation of the Leader in early autumn 2019. The authority agreed with the Secretary of State to develop a local partnership approach to improvement and accepted a comprehensive support package from neighbouring East Sussex County Council and the Local Government Association. This involved establishing a strong executive leadership team which would report directly to the Secretary of State on progress and a programme of member-to-member support, which played a key role in the authority's improvement. East Sussex's Chief Executive formally became joint Chief Executive of both authorities in January 2020 and the Secretary of State monitored improvement progress until early 2021.

Statutory intervention

47. Statutory directions under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 can be made in relation to authorities where, from the available evidence, the Secretary of State is satisfied that the authority is failing to comply with the Best Value Duty. There are two main models of statutory intervention, and the Secretary of State will determine in each case what is the most appropriate option, based on the evidence of failure.
48. A statutory intervention – either with directions to the authority only or commissioner-led with directions to the authority – will usually be preceded by an announcement that the Secretary of State is 'minded to' intervene. This allows for a period of representations on the reasoning and evidence behind the proposed

intervention and on the proposed package itself. This process can however be bypassed in exceptional situations where there is sufficient urgency.

49. **Annex A** sets out the process for statutory intervention in more detail.

Directions to a best value authority

Under section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1999, the Secretary of State may direct an authority to take any action which he or she considers necessary or expedient to secure its compliance with the Best Value Duty. This action may be anything the Secretary of State deems necessary. This might include, for example, the preparation of an improvement plan and the content of that plan, the requirement to report on the delivery of that plan, and the establishment of an improvement panel to provide external support and challenge. Directions can be issued on their own and without the simultaneous appointment of commissioners. They are time-limited and will automatically lapse unless further directions are issued.

The Secretary of State may also direct an authority to carry out a review of how it exercises specific functions (section 15(2) of the 1999 Act) or direct a local inquiry to be held into the exercise by the authority of specified functions (section 15(3) of the 1999 Act). These powers have not been exercised to date.

The decision to direct an authority to take certain actions is based on evidence from an inspection or another comparable source confirming that best value failure has occurred and there is limited confidence in the authority's ability to improve independently. In exceptional circumstances where the Secretary of State is satisfied that the need for action is sufficiently urgent, directions can be issued without a minded-to period.

Directions to a local authority may be appropriate where there is evidence of significant but not widespread best value failure in the authority, and that authority has some capacity but limited commitment to improve on its own. However, this is not an exhaustive description of scenarios where the use of Directions may be appropriate.

Example: To ensure the transformational work being undertaken by Nottingham City Council continued at sufficient pace, the Secretary of State issued Directions in September 2022 to amend its improvement plan, to report periodically to the Secretary of State on its delivery and to support the Improvement and Assurance Board, which had the effect of putting that Board on a statutory footing.

Directions for a commissioner-led intervention

Under section 15(6) of the Local Government Act 1999, the Secretary of State may direct that some or all of the functions of an authority be exercised by the Secretary of State or his or her nominee (commissioners) for a specified period until that authority is in a sustainable position to comply with the Best Value Duty. This may include the appointment of a managing director commissioner to provide additional capacity at the senior level, and can be Head of Paid Service where necessary, to aid implementation of an improvement plan and to drive the cultural change required.

Commissioners receive powers to exercise functions to accelerate improvement, including default powers relating to governance and senior appointments. These powers have not been exercised frequently by commissioners as it is the role of commissioners, as far as possible, to guide members and officers to make the right decisions and be accountable locally for those decisions.

Commissioners are appointed by and directly accountable to the Secretary of State. Their fees are set by the Secretary of State and met by the council under intervention, and they must adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).

The authority has a statutory requirement to comply with any instructions of the Secretary of State or their nominated commissioner in relation to the exercise of specified functions and provide such assistance as the Secretary of State or the commissioner may require for the purpose of exercising that function.

Commissioners will be expected to establish an exit strategy for returning functions to the authority (see section 9 of this guidance), to create their own governance and operational arrangements, and to set an example to the authority around transparency in decision-making by publishing key decisions and the minutes of any Boards they create. Commissioners provide regular reports to the Secretary of State on the progress made by the authority and any concerns at defined intervals and these reports, along with ministers' responses to them, are published on gov.uk. They receive a fee from the authority for their work and are supported by a Chief of Staff, who provides support from the department.

Concurrently, the authority is usually also directed to take any action which the Secretary of State considers necessary and expedient to secure its compliance with the Best Value Duty (see Directions to the best value authority intervention model above).

Commissioners will be expected to give their views to ministers on the scope of their powers, which may result in an extension in the scope of the directions mid-intervention. The Secretary of State may also direct the authority to take any action that the commissioners reasonably require to avoid incidents of poor

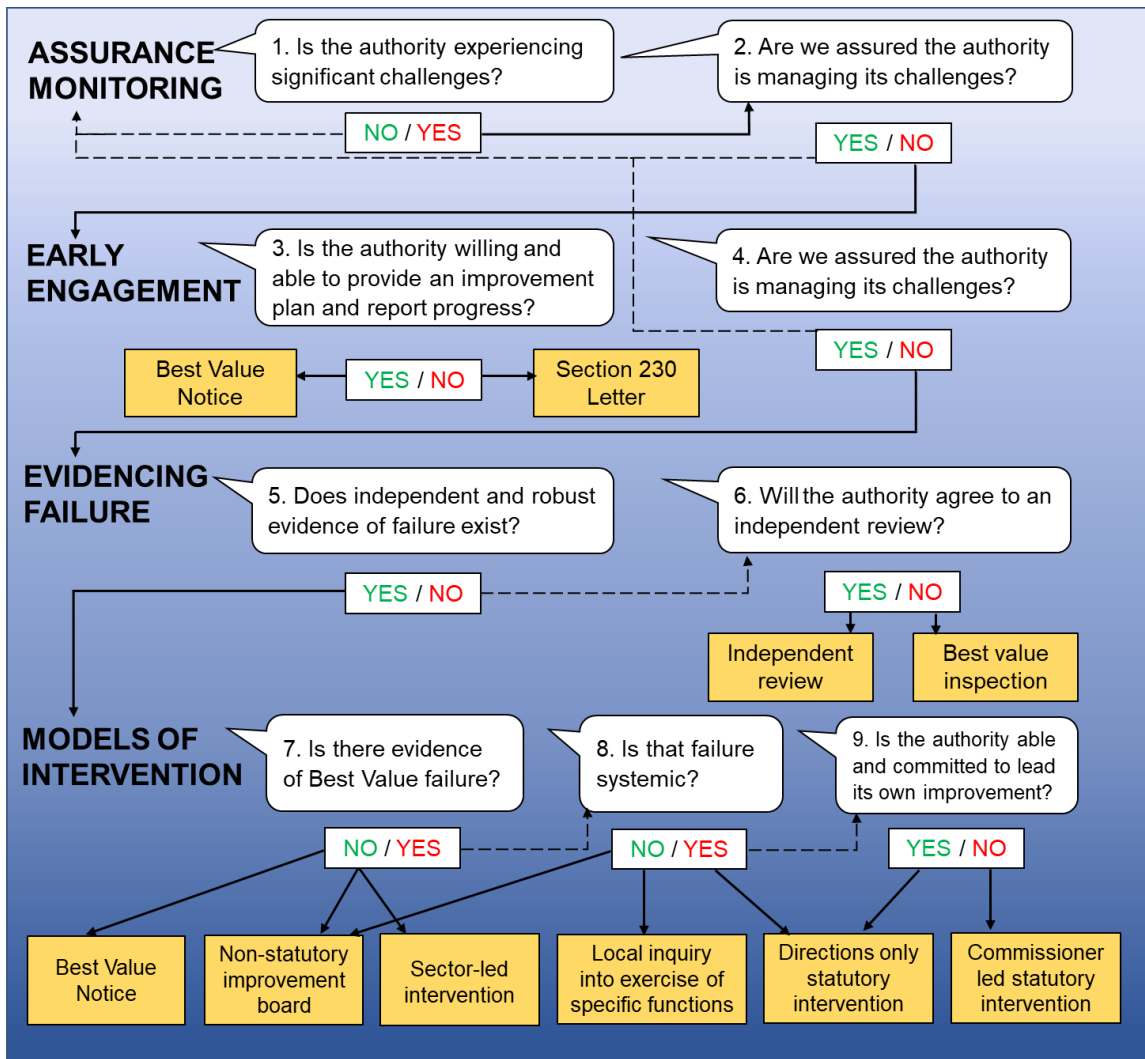
governance or financial mismanagement that may give rise to the risk of further best value failure.

It is also possible for the Secretary of State to appoint an authority as an inspector or commissioner instead of a named individual.

Directions for a commissioner-led intervention may be appropriate where there is evidence of best value failure in an authority, and that authority has limited capacity and commitment to improve on its own. However, this is not an exhaustive description of scenarios where the appointment of commissioners may be appropriate.

Example: Following a Best Value Inspection of Northamptonshire County Council, which found evidence of poor financial management and a culture that discouraged challenge, the Secretary of State appointed commissioners in May 2018 to exercise all functions associated with the governance and scrutiny of the authority's strategic decision making, of strategic financial management, and of functions relating to the appointment and dismissal of statutory officers. The commissioners remained in place until March 2021 when the authority and neighbouring authorities were abolished and replaced with the two newly created unitary authorities of North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire.

Diagram 2: Models of intervention by scenario

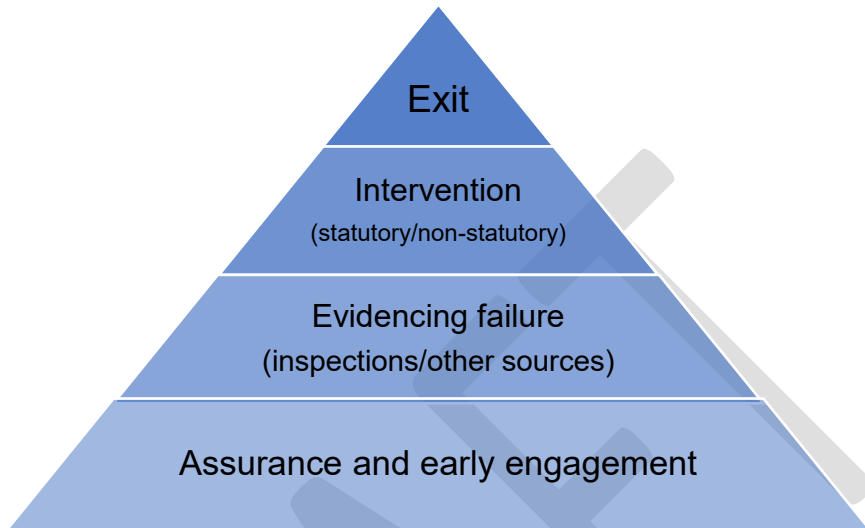




9. Exiting intervention

50. No local authority is perfect and in determining whether and when an intervention should end, it is important to ensure that reasonable standards are applied that clearly relate to the nature of failure identified in that particular local authority. Local authorities are not expected to be perfect before an intervention ends. The aim of all interventions is to resolve incidents of failure to the point where the authority can demonstrate that it now has the capacity and capability to sustain its own journey of continuous improvement without the need for further external involvement. Commissioners or, where appropriate, chairs of statutory improvement and assurance boards are responsible for assessing the levels of risk and confidence that the Secretary of State can rely on when determining whether or not to end an intervention.
51. It is essential that commissioners/board chairs and the authority work together from the outset to develop a clear road map which identifies what the intervention intends to achieve and the route the authority should take to exit intervention, noting that this may change over time. This will enable the authority to focus its efforts on improvement, to share a sense of achievement and confidence, and to maintain momentum with progress. The details of that exit strategy will be unique to each authority experiencing intervention; it will depend on the nature of local failings and be sufficiently flexible to reflect the journey that the local authority is making. It will identify measurable criteria – “proxies for success” – in relation to individual functions and service areas which are specific and capable of being evidenced. The characteristics of a well-run authority, included in section 5 of this guide, give an indication of how those criteria may look.
52. When sufficient improvement has been made and the authority can demonstrate it is able to sustain its own journey of continuous improvement, the Secretary of State will consider evidence from the commissioners/board chairs and any other relevant sources such as peer challenges before handing functions back to the authority. Conversely, a turnaround programme that takes too long is likely to result in increased intervention. Functions may be returned when the intervention is due to end or earlier, on a partial basis, depending on the level of progress made by the authority in specific areas. For example, a function may be returned to the authority but with continued commissioner oversight, or a certain function(s) may be returned whilst others are retained by the commissioners until further progress is made. An independent review may be required to give reassurance to the Secretary of State, as well as to the authority and local residents, on the progress made and to set the future improvement agenda for the authority to focus on. If appropriate, the Secretary of State may withdraw commissioners but require the authority to report on progress against an improvement plan for a fixed period before completely ending the intervention.

Annex A: The end-to-end process of interventions

Diagram 3: Strategic view of the intervention process



Assurance and early engagement	<p>The department’s local government stewardship function, working closely with other government departments and the Local Government Association, continually reviews the health of local authorities’ governance, financial management and delivery of corporate and key services.</p> <p>The department engages with local authorities to understand their organisational challenges, gain assurance of how they are managing these challenges and help identify what form of support (if any) is needed.</p> <p>Where assurance is not provided, the department may write to an authority stating its concerns and request that they provide a timebound improvement plan, report back to the department on progress and publish all related documents.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Best Value Notice </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Statutory Best Value Notice </div> </div>
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Evidencing failure

If an authority is exhibiting some characteristics that may indicate best value failure, including taking no steps to acknowledge or address ongoing challenges by engaging with sector-led improvement, but there is insufficient evidence available for the Secretary of State to make an informed judgement, the Secretary of State may commission an inspection to determine whether best value failure has occurred.

Failure or the risk of future failure can be evidenced in other types of expert independent assessments, for example local authority-commissioned reports, auditor or inspectorate reports, or government commissioned reviews.




Best value inspection assessment



Another independent

DRAFT

<p>Best value inspection</p>	<p>Where there are concerns, the Secretary of State can use powers under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999 to appoint an inspector to carry out an inspection of the authority's compliance with the Best Value Duty in relation to specified functions.</p> <p>Once an inspector has been identified by the Secretary of State, a formal letter of appointment will be sent to them, setting out the evidence leading to the inspection, the deadline for the Inspector's report and guidance on the areas the Inspector should focus on.</p> <p>The Inspector's letter of appointment will be sent to the Chief Executive of the authority under inspection with a covering letter setting out the reasons for the inspection, details of the appointment, the deadline for the Inspector's report and a description of the requirements placed on the authority (access to documents, IT and records, payment of fees and expenses, provision of office space and general cooperation).</p> <p>The Secretary of State will consider the findings and evidence set out in the inspector's report and decide appropriate next steps. This could be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue close monitoring of the local authority by the department and offer appropriate targeted support, if the inspection finds no evidence of Best Value failure. • Non-statutory intervention, if the inspection confirms limited best value failure and the authority has the willingness, capability and capacity to lead its own improvement. • Statutory intervention, where failure is systemic and the Secretary of State has limited confidence in the authority's ability to improve independently.
<p>Non-statutory intervention</p>	<p>A form of non-statutory intervention may be appropriate if an authority demonstrates failures or risk of future failures that are not systemic and there is confidence that the authority has the willingness, capability and capacity to sustain continuous improvement, but external expertise and challenge would result in more efficient recovery.</p> <p>Membership of an improvement board, panel or taskforce and its terms of reference are usually determined by the authority but can also be proposed by the department (in agreement with the authority), depending on the level of assurance required by the Secretary of State. The department will need to be confident the authority will make sensible appointments and set sufficiently robust terms of reference. Where it does not have that confidence, the department may make its own appointments,</p>

	<p>triggering the improvement board to move to a statutory footing (under section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1999).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Improvement boards Sector led intervention </p>
<p>Statutory intervention</p>	<p>If an authority does not have the willingness, capability and capacity to improve without external support and, based on the evidence, the Secretary of State is satisfied that the authority is failing to comply with the Best Value Duty, the Secretary of State's decision to intervene pursuant to section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 will be communicated formally to the authority through a "minded to" letter issued by officials (unless the directions are sufficiently urgent). The decision will also be announced by a Statement (written or oral) to both Houses in Parliament. The "minded to" letter will set out the reasons underlying the proposed intervention package and, if the Secretary of State proposes to appoint commissioners, the likely extent of their powers.</p> <p>The authority and other interested parties, for example, elected members and residents, will have the opportunity to make representations on the Secretary of State's proposals (generally 10 working days). If, after considering any representations received and all the relevant available evidence, the Secretary of State still considers that a statutory intervention is necessary, the Secretary of State will make Directions as set out in the minded to letter (subject to any amendments arising from representations received).</p>

Statutory intervention

The authority will be informed of the Secretary of State’s decision by means of a letter from a senior departmental official to the Chief Executive which will also contain the final Directions and associated Explanatory Memorandum. The decision will also be announced by a Statement (written or oral) to both Houses in Parliament. Where appropriate, the Secretary of State will also appoint commissioners.

During the intervention, regular reports on progress to the Secretary of State will be expected. There may also be some consideration of changes to the original Directions, either to extend the powers or duration, or to hand back functions to the authority.

The statutory intervention will end when the authority can demonstrate that it now has the capacity and capability to sustain its own journey of continuous improvement without the need for further external involvement. The Secretary of State will consider evidence from the commissioners, where appropriate, and any other relevant sources before ending the intervention.

An independent review may also be required to give assurance to the Secretary of State, as well as to the authority and local residents, on the progress made and to set the future improvement agenda for the authority to focus on.



**Directions only intervention,
incl. local review or inquiry**



Commissioner-led

Consultation questions – final

Introduction

Q1. What is your name?

Q2. What is your organisation?

Q3. Are you answering the consultation as?

- An individual with personal interest
- An individual as a member of an organisation
- An Upper Tier Local Authority
- A Lower Tier Local Authority
- Other – please specify
- Comments

Q4. From the list below, where are you or your organisation based?

- London
- South East
- North West
- East of England
- West Midlands
- South West
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- East Midlands
- North East
- National

Scope of the guidance

This statutory guidance has been developed for local authorities, including combined authorities and combined county authorities, in England. However, all best value authorities should bear its principles in mind.

Q5. Do you agree that the principles in section 4 should apply to all best value authorities?

- a. Yes
- b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestions below]
- c. Comments

Q6. This statutory guidance has been developed principally for local councils, including combined authorities. However, all best value authorities should be mindful of the principles set out in this document. Would further published guidance be welcome for other best value authorities to set out the application of best value duty given their specific responsibilities, structures and context? These include national park, fire, rescue, waste disposal, integrated and sub-

national transport authorities, the London Fire Commissioner and Transport for London.

- a. Yes [Please specify which type of authority and why]
- b. No
- c. Comments

Principles

The government's approach to ensuring all authorities carry out their functions in compliance with the Best Value Duty is based on seven principles. These principles are local accountability, continuous improvement, openness to challenge and support, expectations, prevention, moral hazard and default commissioner powers and de-escalation.

Q7. Do you agree with the seven principles proposed in section 4?

- a. Yes
- b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestions below]
- c. Comments

Defining best value

The statutory guidance sets out seven overlapping themes of good practice for running an authority that meets and delivers best value. These best value themes are continuous improvement, leadership, governance, culture, use of resources, service delivery, and partnerships and community engagement.

Q8. Do you agree with the seven best value themes? [Diagram 1, Section 5]?

- a. Yes
- b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestions below]
- c. Comments

Q9. Do you agree with the suggested key characteristics of a well-run authority and key indicators of failure in relation to continuous improvement? [Table 1, Section 5]

- a. Yes
- b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestions below]
- c. Comments

Q10. Do you agree with the suggested key characteristics of a well-run authority and potential indicators of failure in relation to leadership? [Table 2, Section 5]

- a. Yes
- b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestions below]
- c. Comments

Q11. Do you agree with the proposed characteristics of a well-run authority and potential indicators of failure in relation to governance? [Table 3, Section 5]

- a. Yes
- b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestions below]
- c. Comments

Q12. Do you agree with the proposed characteristics of a well-run authority and potential indicators of failure in relation to culture? [Table 4, Section 5]

- a. Yes
- b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestions below]
- c. Comments

Q13. Do you agree with the proposed characteristics of a well-run authority and potential indicators of failure in relation to efficient use of resources? [Table 5, Section 5]

- a. Yes
- b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestion below]
- c. Comments

Q14. Do you agree with the proposed characteristics of a well-run authority and potential indicators of failure in relation to service delivery? [Table 6, Section 5]

- a. Yes
- b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestion below]
- c. Comments

Q15. Do you agree with the proposed characteristics of a well-run authority and potential indicators of failure in relation to partnerships and community engagement? [Table 7, Section 5]

- a. Yes
- b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestion below]
- c. Comments

Q16. The seven themes have a description, characteristics of a well-run authority and indicators of potential failure [Tables 1-7, Section 5]. Which, if any, of the proposed characteristics and indicators of failure do you think are priorities and the strongest indicators of best value?

- a. Comments

Q17. Many of these indicators are measured by metric but there is scope to identify more to more accurately assess Best Value. What do you think are the top most appropriate quantitative metrics for monitoring Best Value, against the indicators in section 5?

- a. Comments

Q18. The guidance sets out a number of characteristics and indicators across the seven themes in section 5. If certain characteristics or indicators were to

be identified as key, and more important than others in achieving Best Value, what would the risks be to this approach? The department is mindful of proportionality and the need to ensure the full context and circumstances of each case is taken into account, and is clear that no single characteristic or indicator automatically results in actions relating to the use of Best Value powers. How could any risks be further mitigated?

a. Comments

Assurance and early engagement

Q19. Are you happy with the level of clarity and detail in the description of statutory and non-statutory Best Value Notices? [Section 6]

a. Yes

b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestion below]

c. Comments

Q20. Besides those mentioned in section 5, are there other ways in which the government could engage earlier with individual local authorities to prevent any challenges experienced from escalating?

a. Yes [Please provide suggestions below]

b. No

c. Comments

Q21. Based on lessons learned from interventions to date, the guidance proposes that where authorities are unable to correct failure in specific services, such as social care or education, for two years, this is potentially symptomatic of wider governance and leadership failure and the department should consider the authority's compliance with the Best Value duty. Do you agree that two years is a reasonable timeframe to consider whether an authority's service performance may impact its ability to deliver Best Value? [Section 6, para 32]

a. Yes

b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestion below]

c. Comments

Evidencing failure

Q22. Is the description of a Best Value Inspection sufficiently clear? [Section 7 and Annex A]

a. Yes

b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestion below]

c. Comments

Q23. Is the description of independent reports sufficiently clear?

a. Yes

b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestion below]

c. Comments

Models of intervention

Q24. Are the models of intervention described in this guidance clear in terms of description, purpose and scenario when they would be applied? [Section 8]

- a. Yes
- b. No [Please provide reasoning or suggestion below]
- c. Comments

Exiting intervention

Q25. Do you agree with the position that interventions should end as soon as an authority can demonstrate that it can independent sustain its journey of continuous improvement without support?' [Section 9, para 50]

- a. Comments

General

Q26. Are there any areas missing from the statutory guidance that you think would be helpful to include?

- a. Yes [Please provide rational and suggestions below]
- b. No
- c. Comments

Almost done...

You are about to submit your response. By clicking 'Submit Response' you give us permission to analyse and include your response in our results. After you click Submit, you will no longer be able to go back and change any of your answers.

If you provide an email address you will be sent a receipt and a link to a PDF copy of your response.

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Agenda Item 8.

Report to: Overview Panel

Date: Tuesday, 1 August 2023

Reporting Officer: Emma Varnam – Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods

Subject: **MORE HOME TRUTHS - LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT**

Report Summary: The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) published a report in March 2023 which highlighted significant learning and areas of improvement from complaints that had been received since the introduction of Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017. The act gives local housing authorities new duties and powers to help people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Most significantly, it created what are commonly referred to as the prevention and relief duties, a responsibility to help more people and sooner in their housing journey. Whilst the LGSCO recognised the financial pressure that local authorities are facing, he identified common administrative mistakes, process failures and poor communication, all of which added to the distress of individuals at a very stressful time.

The report at **Appendix 1**, provides a clear explanation of the duty. It uses case studies to highlight common issues, and examples of best practice. The report provides example questions for Scrutiny Panels to ask of their local authority Homelessness Service. The responses to those questions from Tameside's Homelessness Service are provided at **Appendix 2**.

Recommendations: That the Overview Panel note the responses by the Homelessness Team to the questions by Scrutiny.

Corporate Plan: The responses will inform the development and ongoing monitoring and delivery of the Homeless Strategy as priority within the Corporate Plan.

Policy Implications: The recommendations of the LGSCO have implications in terms of the quality of homelessness services and the delivery against the duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Financial Implications: This is not a decision making report and there are no direct financial implications arising as a result. The following financial information is provided for context.

(Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer) The table below shows the financial position of the Tameside Housing Advice Service that is the main focus of this report.

Tameside Housing Advice Service	22/23 Outturn £m	23/24 Budget £m	23/24 Forecast £m
Contracted Service Provision*	0.100	0.000	0.000
Employees	0.504	0.609	0.938
Temporary Accommodation (net cost)	3.276	1.136	3.188
Other Expenditure	0.116	0.149	0.122

Total Expenditure	3.996	1.894	4.248
Grant Income	(0.498)	0.000	(0.463)
Other Income	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Total Income	(0.543)	(0.045)	(0.508)
Net Position	3.453	1.849	3.740

The current position for 23/24 is a forecasted overspend of £1.981m. This is as a result of continuing increases in demand for temporary accommodation.

Appendix 2 of this report notes various improvements to the current service that are either underway or being considered:

- **Increased Focus on Prevention Work**

As well as improving outcomes for residents, homelessness prevention work results in lower costs to the Council as a result of reduced demand for temporary accommodation. One example is that of payment of arrears or financial assistance to access private rented accommodation. In the first quarter of 23/24 42 families or individuals have received the benefit of a financial measure to prevent homelessness at an average cost of £1,375. If these families hadn't benefitted from this assistance and had instead entered temporary accommodation, the same amount would have covered 22 nights with any stay longer than that representing a greater cost to the Council.

- **Service Review**

The service review is expected to be carried out within this financial year and will seek to address capacity gaps and also increase the focus on prevention work. As part of this, consideration will be given to the budget available and also the potential for additional posts, particularly around Homelessness Prevention, to reduce the Temporary Accommodation costs incurred by the Council as outlined above.

Any other changes considered as a result of this report should also evaluate the potential to improvement in service delivery and outcomes alongside the budget available and potential for cost avoidance to the Council, as well as ensuring any necessary approval is sought.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the
Borough Solicitor)**

Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (the Code) sets out the council's powers and duties to people who are eligible and homeless or threatened with homelessness.

These have since been extended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which provided additional duties and powers. It gave local housing authorities further duties and powers to help more people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and to provide help earlier.

The report provides helpful learning and guidance for the council to consider, to ensure that services are being delivered compliantly and effectively.

Risk Management:

Failure to adopt the recommendations of the LGSCO will have significant wellbeing risks for individuals and families as well as

organisational risks in terms of additional demands in other high cost specialist services.

Access to Information:

Not confidential

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Emma Varnam, Assistant Director



Telephone: 01613423337



e-mail: emma.varnam@tameside.gov.uk

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More Home Truths

*- learning lessons
from complaints
about the
Homelessness
Reduction Act*



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Ombudsman's foreword



April 2023 marks the fifth anniversary of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 coming into force. It gave local housing authorities new duties and powers to help people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Most significantly, it created what are commonly referred to as the prevention and relief duties. These duties help to prevent homelessness or help people who are already homeless find somewhere to live. They are important because local housing authorities owe them regardless of whether someone is in priority need or has a local connection to the area.

In short, the Homelessness Reduction Act gave councils the responsibility to help more people and to help them earlier.

In England last year, councils assessed almost 280,000 households as being homeless or threatened with homelessness¹. While a relatively small proportion of these households end up approaching us, we are nevertheless in a unique position to see how local housing authorities are delivering services to households at an extremely difficult time in their lives.

1. [Official statistics: Statutory homelessness in England: financial year 2021-22](#)

In July 2020, we published a [report on our first 50 investigations](#) related to the Act to share the early learning. We highlighted the areas where councils were failing to implement their new duties. Five years since the introduction, we would expect to see the principles and processes of the Homelessness Reduction Act fully embedded.

Unfortunately, that does not always appear to be the case. Although we see many examples where councils have adopted the correct approach, too often our investigations still find that councils have failed to issue a Personalised Housing Plan or consider the support needs of the applicant. Complainants still tell us they were turned away and told to come back when the court issues a warrant for their eviction.

We recognise that councils' ability to deliver services is under more pressure than ever, and that officers are expected to do more with less. However, homeless applicants approach councils at one of the most stressful and uncertain times in their lives.

We see examples of delay completing assessments and accepting duties. These are more than just administrative oversights. These

failings represent missed opportunities to achieve one of the main aims of the Act: preventing homelessness. And these faults cause avoidable distress and confusion when the applicant should expect support and guidance.

Our investigations are not limited to whether the council met statutory duties in homeless law. We expect councils to follow our [Principles of Good Administrative practice](#). Getting the process right avoids making an already difficult time more stressful for the applicant.

Good administration in homelessness means:

- > **Keeping in touch with the applicant:** complainants often tell us about difficulties contacting their case officer, or even days or weeks when they didn't know who that officer was
- > **Notifying of decisions and review rights:** this is a statutory duty, but it's good administration too
- > **Avoiding or explaining jargon:** homelessness decision letters can be complex documents using technical language, with references to case law and sections of the Housing Act. Councils should ensure the applicant can understand the decision and what it means for them. This is particularly important where the applicant's disability means they need adjustments in how the council communicates with them
- > **Writing it down:** good record keeping is the backbone of good decision making. We should be able to see the council's thinking about significant issues reflected in contemporaneous records. This is particularly important when there isn't a decision letter and attendant review right, so things like taking notes of telephone conversations, offers of interim accommodation, or consideration of its suitability are vital.

The individual case studies in this report demonstrate fault at different stages of the homeless process. But each of them also includes failures of administration causing avoidable distress, frustration, or uncertainty. Complainants often tell us that failings in communication or record keeping are why they complained in the first place.

The consecutive nature of homeless duties means that getting things wrong early in the process can 'snowball' into increasing fault and injustice. Failure to make inquiries when there is reason to believe someone is homeless, for example, might result in further failure to:

- > complete an assessment and issue a Personalised Housing Plan
- > provide interim accommodation
- > accept a relief duty
- > accept the main housing duty.

Getting things right at the start of the process, on the other hand, can put things on the right track for the rest of the homelessness journey.

From the case studies in this report and our wider casework we have identified learning for local housing authorities to improve their delivery of services to homeless people. We encourage councils to reflect on this learning and have provided some questions local scrutiny committees may find useful in maintaining effective oversight of these important duties.



Michael King
Local Government and
Social Care Ombudsman
March 2023

Complaints to the Ombudsman

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, we completed detailed investigations on 126 complaints about homelessness. We found fault in 95 of those investigations. That means our uphold rate for homelessness cases was 75%. This is significantly higher than the uphold rate across all our investigations in the same period of 66%.

Many decisions councils make about homeless applications have statutory rights of review and then appeal to court. We expect people to use these rights. After carrying out an initial investigation (assessment) we will decide not to investigate in further detail complaints where these rights existed, unless we consider there was a good reason the complainant could not use them.

Legal context

Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (the Code) set out councils' powers and duties to people who are eligible and homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The law, guidance, and case law about homelessness is complex. In this report, we try to explain the most important duties and what they mean in an accessible way, but intentionally do not cover every scenario.

Definitions

An applicant is **homeless** if they have:

- > no accommodation for them and others who already do, or might reasonably be expected to, live with them to occupy
- > no accommodation which they have a legal right to occupy
- > accommodation but cannot secure entry to it
- > nowhere to lawfully place moveable accommodation such as a houseboat or caravan
- > accommodation but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy it.

An applicant is **threatened with homelessness** if they:

- > are likely to become homeless within 56 days
- > have received a valid notice to leave the only accommodation available to them which expires within 56 days.

Certain duties arise when a council has **reason to believe** something may be the case. This is a very low threshold.

Other duties arise when a council is **satisfied** something is the case. This is a higher standard of proof than 'reason to believe' but is no higher than 'balance of probabilities'. This means a council will be 'satisfied' when it decides something is more likely than not to be the case.

Before the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force, councils only had statutory duties to people who had **priority need**. There are certain groups of people who will always be in priority need. This includes households with children and people homeless because of domestic violence. For other applicants, the test is whether a person is **vulnerable** because of age, mental illness, disability, or another special reason.

Duties

We have set out the most significant duties in the order in which they generally arise as an applicant moves through the process.

1. Taking homeless applications and making inquiries

If a council has reason to believe someone may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, it must take a homeless **application** and make **inquiries**. The threshold for taking an application is low. The person does not have to complete a specific form or approach a particular council department.

(Housing Act 1996, section 184 and Homelessness Code of Guidance paragraphs 6.2 and 18.5)

Having taken an application and made inquiries, if a council is satisfied an applicant is not homeless, it must give the applicant a decision in writing. The letter must fully explain the reasons for the decision. All letters must include information about the right to request a review and the timescale for doing so.

(Housing Act 1996, section 184)

2. Carrying out assessments

Having taken an application and made inquiries, if a council is satisfied an applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness it must complete an assessment.

Councils must notify the applicant of the assessment. This assessment must include:

- a. the circumstances that have caused them to become homeless or threatened with homelessness
- b. their housing needs
- c. their support needs.

(Housing Act 1996, section 189A and Homelessness Code of Guidance paragraphs 11.7)

3. Personalised Housing Plans

Councils should work with applicants to identify practical and reasonable steps for the council and the applicant to take, to help the applicant keep or secure suitable accommodation. These steps should be tailored to the household, follow from the findings of the assessment, and must be provided to the applicant in writing as their personalised housing plan.

(Housing Act 1996, section 189A and Homelessness Code of Guidance paragraphs 11.6 and 11.18)

4. Preventing homelessness

If councils are satisfied applicants are threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance, they must help them to secure that accommodation does not stop being available for their occupation. This is called the **prevention duty**.

(Housing Act 1996, section 195)

5. Providing accommodation

A council must secure **interim accommodation** for applicants and their household if it has reason to believe they may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need.

(Housing Act 1996, section 188)

6. Relieving homelessness

If councils are satisfied applicants are homeless and eligible for assistance, they must take reasonable steps to help them secure accommodation. This is called the **relief duty**.

The relief duty lasts a maximum of 56 days.

(Housing Act 1996, section 189B)

If, at the end of the relief duty, a council is satisfied an applicant is unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance, and has a priority need the council has a duty to secure that accommodation is available for their occupation. This is called the **main duty**.

(Housing Act 1996, section 193)

Councils may not be able to end the main duty by providing secure or permanent accommodation straight away. While it owes the main duty, councils must provide **temporary accommodation**.

7. Ensuring accommodation is suitable

The law says councils must ensure all accommodation provided to homeless applicants is **suitable** for the needs of the applicant and members of their household. This duty applies to interim accommodation and accommodation provided under the main homelessness duty.

(Housing Act 1996, section 206 and Homelessness Code of Guidance 17.2)

8. Reviews

Councils have a duty to **notify** applicants about decisions, including what duty is owed and decisions to end those duties. All letters must include information about the right to request a review and the timescale for doing so.

(Housing Act 1996, section 184, Homelessness Code of Guidance 18.34 and 18.35)

Common issues

Not identifying homelessness and making inquiries

We often find councils at fault for failing to identify at the earliest opportunity that a complainant had made a homeless application. This leaves people waiting longer than they should for help, or without any help at all.

Opportunities to prevent or relieve homelessness may be missed as a result.

Caleb's story shows how fault at the start of the process can 'snowball', which compounds the injustice to the person.



Caleb's story

Case reference: [21 002 533](#)

What happened

Caleb fled his home at the start of the year, on the advice of police, because of harassment and violence. He ended up sofa surfing for a while.

In September, Caleb approached the council and said he was now sleeping in his van. The council said it 'triaged' him and gave him information about local services that may be able to help.

Caleb came back to the council some 16 months later in the January. He was still sleeping in his van. This time, the council did an assessment but did not accept a duty to him.

The council eventually offered interim accommodation in June. It accepted a relief duty in July and the main housing duty in September. This was two years after he first approached the council.

What we found

We found significant fault with the council that caused Caleb serious injustice.

The council had reason to believe Caleb was homeless when he first asked for help. It should have made inquiries at that point into whether it owed him a duty.

Our investigation found that, had the council made inquiries, it would have identified that Caleb was homeless having fled violence. It would have learned about his physical and mental health problems, including trauma from a violent assault. The council would then have had reason to believe Caleb was in priority need, meaning it should have provided interim accommodation.

The council should also have accepted the relief duty because Caleb was homeless. However, it did not do this for almost two years. During that time, Caleb slept in his van and his physical health deteriorated.

Putting things right

The council agreed to apologise and pay Caleb £8,100 to recognise the significant injustice of sleeping in his van for 21 months longer than he should have.



People do not have to approach the homeless services department, or complete a specific form, for a council's duty to take a homeless application and make inquiries to arise.

Officers dealing with applications should be aware of the statutory duties which arise if there is reason to believe someone might be homeless.

Often a council's duty to make inquiries is triggered when someone makes an application for social housing, as shown in Helen's story.



Helen's story

Case reference: [20 008 807](#)

Helen applied to join the council's housing register in October. She was living in a women's refuge. She had left her previous accommodation because of domestic abuse. The council did not make inquiries into what duty it owed Helen until the next July, when the refuge asked her to leave.

We found the council's failure to identify that its homeless duties were engaged in October was fault. This delayed the council accepting a duty to Helen for nine months.

Once it accepted a duty, Helen qualified for a higher priority on the housing register. The council's fault delayed her accessing this increased priority.

Our investigation said that it was likely Helen would have secured a property much sooner had the council not got things wrong and this was a significant injustice. The council agreed to pay Helen a symbolic payment to recognise the distress it caused and remind its staff about the council's duties to accept homeless applications, regardless of the format.

We encourage councils to provide training or guidance to all frontline services to ensure homeless applicants are identified and the right service notified. Other council departments likely to receive homeless applications include social care, housing benefits, and customer services.

It is important contractors delivering services on a council's behalf also understand the requirements.

Marcus' story shows how a gap in awareness can lead to significant injustice.



Marcus's story

Case reference: [21 012 511](#)

Marcus applied for a discretionary housing payment (DHP) to help him pay his rent in his private tenancy. A private contractor processes DHP applications on behalf of the council.

When he applied, Marcus said his landlord had given him notice to leave the property. Had the contractor referred Marcus to homeless services, the council might have been able to tell Marcus and his landlord that the notice was not valid.

But instead, Marcus moved out of the property. He applied for another DHP to help with a deposit for a new property. The contractor did not identify that in seeking help to obtain accommodation, Marcus' application indicated he might be homeless.

Our investigation found the council had a duty to assess Marcus' circumstances to make inquiries into what, if any, duty it owed him. Failure to do so was fault.

Learning points - Not identifying homelessness and making inquiries

Having 'reason to believe' someone might be homeless or threatened with homelessness is a very low threshold.

Councils must:

- > Make inquiries into whether they owe a further duty in all such cases. Councils should not require applicants to provide 'proof' of homelessness or require specific documents before making inquiries

- > Ensure frontline staff and contractors delivering services on the council's behalf are aware that a homeless application can be made to any department and refer people who indicate they may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to the relevant department for advice and assistance. Councils should provide guidance or training as necessary.

Common issues

Failings in the prevention and relief duties

The cases above highlight examples of councils failing to recognise or act on their duty to make inquiries. The purpose of those inquiries is for councils to decide what, if any, duty it owes the applicant. Despite the Homelessness Reduction Act having been in force for almost five years, we continue to see cases where councils fail in or misunderstand their duties to take steps to prevent or relieve homelessness.

Prevention

A council owes the prevention duty to all eligible applicants who it is satisfied are threatened with homelessness. Our investigations regularly find councils at fault for taking too long to accept this duty and for failing to tell the applicant in writing. Applicants have a statutory right to review a council's decision to accept a homelessness duty. Getting things wrong at this stage denies the applicant access to this important right.

We also see cases where councils have not understood the extent of the prevention duty. It is not only to help someone remain in their existing accommodation. If this is not possible, the prevention duty is also to help them find somewhere else to live.

Not accepting the prevention duty results in missed opportunities to prevent homelessness. By promptly accepting the prevention duty and taking action, a council may be able to prevent the applicant losing their accommodation and experiencing all the upset and disruption that inevitably follows.

Preventing an applicant from becoming homeless also frees up the council's resources for dealing with applicants where homelessness cannot be prevented. This is particularly important when resources are as stretched, as they are now.



Neil's story

Case reference: [21 016 752](#)

Neil had a history of mental ill-health. He approached the council because the family member he lived with was selling their home. He asked for help to find somewhere else to live.

The council did not take any action.

Next month, and just two days before Neil had to leave, the council completed an assessment and told him what to do on the day he became homeless. It offered no support to prevent his homelessness.

Because of the stress and uncertainty of his situation Neil took himself to hospital, concerned for his mental health and safety. He was admitted for two weeks.

The council told us there was nothing it could have done to prevent Neil's homelessness. It said because he was asked to leave by a family member, there was no prevention work it could do.

We found fault because the council failed to try to prevent Neil's homelessness by helping him look for alternative accommodation. Its approach to Neil's case indicated the council did not understand the extent of the prevention duty.

The council agreed to apologise to Neil, pay him a symbolic payment for his distress and uncertainty, and review its procedures to ensure it fully complies with its prevention duties.

Learning points - Prevention

Councils should:

- > ensure applicants are told about their statutory review rights
- > avoid delays as it limits opportunities to prevent homelessness

Preventing homelessness is not only helping someone stay in their current accommodation, but also taking steps to help people find alternative accommodation.

Relief

A council owes the relief duty to all eligible applicants it is satisfied are homeless. The duty is to take steps to help the applicant secure accommodation for at least six months.

As with the prevention duty, we often find councils at fault for delay accepting this duty and failing to tell the applicant in writing.

We also see cases where the council has not properly considered whether the prevention duty has ended or tells the applicant to come back when they are about to become homeless.

This may be appropriate advice in particular cases. However, the Code of Guidance encourages councils to offer assistance rather than delay providing support which might prevent homelessness.

(Homelessness Code of Guidance paragraph 12.2)

Unfortunately, we still see examples of councils not considering whether accommodation is reasonable to continue to occupy, and so whether the applicant is homeless, when their notice to leave a private tenancy has expired.

This can be summarised as the “wait for bailiffs” approach. Councils should not tell an applicant who is under notice to leave a private tenancy, that it will only help them once the landlord has applied to court for possession of the property.

A major aim of the Homelessness Reduction Act was to give councils statutory duties to help people in private tenancies who are under notice to quit. This is why the definition of “threatened with homelessness” makes specific reference to this group.

The “wait for bailiffs” approach results in missed opportunities to prevent homelessness. It means both applicants and councils end up scrambling to find accommodation at the last minute, which can result in avoidable costs to the council. Applicants may face unnecessary court costs.

This approach is contrary to the law and guidance and causes significant and avoidable distress and uncertainty for people at an already difficult time in their lives.

We will be critical of a council if it continues to apply a blanket policy on when it will provide support, or at what point in the eviction process it will offer interim accommodation.



Lloyd's story

Case reference: [21 001 348](#)

Lloyd lived with his wife and four children in privately rented accommodation. In July, Lloyd's landlord issued him with a notice to quit the property by January.

Lloyd asked the council for help in August. The council told him to stay in the property until the landlord applied to court for possession. Meanwhile, Lloyd was told to start looking for other private rented properties.

The council accepted the prevention duty and issued a Personalised Housing Plan.

In January, the landlord started court action. The council told Lloyd he might wait many months before anything happened. It said he didn't need to do anything at that point.

In February, the court made a possession order. Lloyd and his family had to move out by early March. The court also ordered Lloyd to pay £355 towards the landlord's court costs. The council told Lloyd that he was now eligible for financial

help from the council to secure another privately rented tenancy.

Our investigation found the council acted with fault when it told Lloyd he should wait for a court order. There was no evidence the council considered whether it was reasonable for Lloyd and his family to remain in the property after the notice expired. The council had not contacted the landlord to negotiate a longer stay. The landlord clearly intended to pursue possession.

As a result, Lloyd incurred avoidable court costs. It also caused him significant worry and distress and meant he only had a very short time to find somewhere else to live with help from the council's scheme.

Putting it right

The council agreed to apologise and pay Lloyd back for the court costs with an additional payment to recognise the avoidable distress it caused.

Learning points - Relief

- > Councils should not have a blanket policy requiring applicants to remain beyond the expiry date of a notice to leave a private tenancy
- > Councils should consider, in each case, whether it is reasonable to continue to occupy the property, in line with Chapter 6 of the Code of Guidance
- > Any decision that it is reasonable for the applicant to remain beyond the expiry date of a notice should be recorded and include the reasons
- > Any decision to depart from the Code of Guidance about when it will not be reasonable to remain in occupation should be recorded with detailed reasons

Common issues



Personalised Housing Plans

When the council is satisfied that an applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness, it must complete an assessment and issue a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP). The PHP must be based on the assessment.

At a highly uncertain and frightening time, the PHP is a key document for the homeless applicant. It states what the council is doing, and what they can do, to prevent or relieve their homelessness. The PHP should be kept under review and amended to reflect changes in circumstances.

Despite being a legal duty for almost five years, our investigations continue to find fault with councils for:

- > failing to issue a PHP
- > failing to review the PHP, at least with every change in duty
- > not taking the steps it said it would take in the PHP
- > issuing poor quality, generic, or incomplete PHPs.

Deepa's story shows how failure to issue a PHP and keep it under review:

- > creates avoidable uncertainty and fear at a time when people are already frightened and distressed

- > results in avoidable frustration
- > misses opportunities to give applicants essential information.



Deepa's story

Case reference: [19 014 011](#)

Deepa told the council that her abusive ex-partner was about to be released from prison. He had continued to harass her from prison throughout his sentence, sometimes writing letters via neighbours.

The council told Deepa to come back when the release date was more imminent.

We found the council failed to complete an assessment at the earliest opportunity and therefore failed to accept the prevention duty.

Deepa was dealing with the distress and fear caused by her ex-partner's ongoing harassment. This fear only got worse as the release date approached. If the council had accepted a prevention duty, it would have also issued a PHP. This would have set out the steps for Deepa and the council to take to prevent her homelessness. This might have reassured Deepa that she would not be at risk when the perpetrator came out of prison. Instead, she had to live with the uncertainty of not knowing if she would move in time, or if the council would help her.

When the council eventually accepted a relief duty and provided interim accommodation four months later, it once again failed to issue a PHP.

When it responded to her complaint, the council said it was sometimes acting "behind the scenes" in ways Deepa might not have known about. If it had completed a PHP, Deepa would have known what she and the council should

do. Instead, she felt as though nothing was happening.

Deepa was a social housing tenant. She said the council told her not to give up her tenancy when it provided interim accommodation. Deepa told us she got no further advice about what to do about her tenancy and as a result, she accrued significant debts.

The council should have issued a PHP and kept it under review. It might have been appropriate for Deepa to maintain her tenancy for a short period while the council assessed whether it could take steps to make it safe for her return. If so, this should have been recorded in the PHP.

However, as soon as the council knew it was not intending for Deepa to return to the tenancy, it should have updated the PHP. At the very latest, it should have given her advice about her tenancy when it accepted the main duty to her. This would have enabled Deepa to make a timely and informed decision about whether to maintain her tenancy while in interim accommodation. Instead, she accrued avoidable debts.

Putting it right

The council agreed to apologise to Deepa, make a payment to recognise her avoidable distress and meet the cost of any rent and council tax arrears accrued after it accepted the main duty.

Agreeing the PHP means the council commits to take certain steps. It must then actually take those steps. If the PHP says the council will process an application to the housing register, it should do so. If the council agrees to contact the applicant on a certain date or to keep in regular contact, it should happen.

If the council offers access to a rent deposit or other scheme to support applicants to access the private rented sector, applicants must be able to do this when they need to.



Joanne's story

Case reference: [21 013 638](#)

Joanne was threatened with homelessness and the council accepted the prevention duty. In Joanne's PHP, the council said that, subject to checks, she could access a scheme to loan her money to secure a private rented property.

Joanne found a property. But despite repeated attempts, Joanne was unable to contact her

housing officer to apply to the scheme.

Fortunately, Joanne was able to borrow £3,000 from family and friends to meet the upfront costs of moving. Other applicants may not have been able to access this level of help and would have lost out on an opportunity to relieve their homelessness as a result.

Learning points - Personalised Housing Plans

Councils should:

- > issue PHPs which are relevant and contain steps for both the council and the applicant to take

- > ensure PHPs are reviewed with every change of duty, as a minimum.

If the council commits to steps in the PHP, it should take, and evidence, those steps.

Common issues

Interim accommodation

A council must secure interim accommodation for homeless applicants and their household if it has reason to believe they may be homeless, eligible, and have a priority need.

We often find councils at fault for failing to offer, or delaying offering, interim accommodation. We see too many cases where councils do not provide interim accommodation until they are 'satisfied' the applicant is homeless.

The duty arises when the council has 'reason to believe' an applicant may be homeless and in priority need.

The applicants to whom councils owe interim accommodation are often in urgent need of help and may be at risk of harm if the council fails in its duty.

Jared's story shows how delay providing interim accommodation can result in significant injustice.



Jared's story

Case reference: [21 006 060](#)

Jared told the council his landlord had asked him to leave the property in early January. Jared has several physical and mental health conditions which affect his day-to-day life.

The council accepted the relief duty in early February and issued a PHP.

Jared's landlord evicted him four days later. Jared tried to contact his worker at the council but could not reach anyone.

A few weeks later, with help from a representative, Jared asked the council for accommodation and a review of his PHP. The council did not respond.

Jared contacted the council again in early March. The council then provided interim accommodation. It said his case officer was on leave when Jared sought help in February.

Our investigation found the council should have provided interim accommodation on the day Jared was evicted.

As a result of its failure, Jared spent more than a month sleeping on the streets.

Putting it right

The council agreed to apologise and make a payment to Jared to reflect the distress and risk of harm caused by having to sleep on the streets.

The council also agreed to identify measures to make sure it can respond to applicants when their assigned case officer is on leave.

Interim accommodation must be suitable. This means it must meet the needs of the applicant and their household.

Councils should identify what will be required for a property to be suitable as part of its assessment of the applicant's needs and circumstances.

The council must keep suitability under review. This means it should consider, and keep a record, of any change in circumstances which might affect whether interim accommodation remains suitable.

Failure to provide suitable interim accommodation can have a significant impact on the health and dignity of applicants, as Ella's story shows.



Ella's story

Case reference: [22 000 406](#)

Ella lives with her partner and young child. She has multiple health conditions and uses a wheelchair to get around outside the home and crutches inside, if she can.

Ella approached the council for help in August. Her landlord wanted to sell the property they rented and had issued her a notice to leave.

In November, the council did a suitability assessment for interim accommodation. It found the family needed:

- > a two-bedroom property in the local area so Ella could access ongoing medical care
- > somewhere to store Ella's wheelchair safely
- > widened doorways and an accessible shower.

A few days later, the council accepted the relief duty. In the updated PHP, the council said Ella needed a two-bedroom property and that the family could move out of the area. The PHP had no actions for Ella or the council to take to relieve homelessness.

The council offered Ella interim accommodation in a one-bedroom property. It did not have an adapted bathroom or a wet-room. Only the front door was wheelchair accessible. Ella had to keep her wheelchair in the communal entrance area, which breached her contract with

the wheelchair provider. The charger for the wheelchair was later stolen.

After two weeks in the property, Ella told the council the lack of adaptations meant she was restricted to her bed for most of the day. She could not bathe, even with help from her husband, or use the kitchen.

The council responded by asking Ella for some financial information and telling her to look for private rented accommodation. Ella sent the information but the council lost it and she had to send it again.

The council should have made a decision about whether it owed the main duty in January but it did not do this. Ella's accommodation therefore remained interim.

Ella complained to the council. In March, the council accepted that the accommodation was unsuitable and that it owed her the main housing duty. From this point, Ella had a statutory right to review the suitability of the accommodation. However, by this point, the council had accepted it was unsuitable.

Our investigation said the council knew from the outset that Ella was disabled and used a wheelchair. If it had properly considered its assessment of her needs, it would not have offered the property in the first place.

It then failed to review the suitability of the property. When Ella told the council a few weeks after moving in that it wasn't suitable, the council should have considered this. We said that, had it done so, the council would have decided the property was unsuitable much sooner.

Instead, it took no steps to look for alternative accommodation for Ella and her family for almost six months.

Ella lived in circumstances where she could not regularly leave her bed, wash herself or use the kitchen, and risked losing her wheelchair. Living this way affected her ability to care for her child as well as herself.

Under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act, Ella has a right to respect for her private and family life. In failing to consider the suitability of the accommodation prior to offering it or when she raised concerns, the council failed to have due regard for this right. The council also had a duty under the Equality Act to take account of Ella's

needs as a disabled person. It failed to properly consider the suitability of the accommodation with regards to Ella's disability.

Putting it right

The council agreed to apologise to Ella and pay her £350 a month for every month she spent in the unsuitable accommodation. At the time of our decision, Ella had lived in the property for 11 months. The monthly payment would continue until the council offered Ella suitable accommodation or ended its duty to her.

The council also agreed to ensure it considered the needs of disabled applicants and remind its staff about the duty to keep suitability under review.

We recommended it share the decision with its staff to identify learning from the case and refer it to the relevant Cabinet Member or scrutiny committee.

Learning points - Interim accommodation

- > The duty to provide interim accommodation arises when the council has 'reason to believe' the applicant might be homeless and in priority need. Councils should therefore provide accommodation to these applicants while it decides what duty it owes
- > Interim accommodation must be suitable. Providing suitable accommodation relies on initial assessments and PHPs containing accurate detail about the applicant's needs
- > Suitability must be kept under review, especially when there is a change in circumstances or the applicant tells the council about issues affecting suitability

Common issues



Communication

Many of the case studies in this report demonstrate how failures in communication or excessive delay can result in additional distress, frustration and uncertainty at an already difficult time.

Jared tried to contact his housing officer for weeks with no reply, while he was sleeping on the street.

Joanne couldn't reach her housing officer to apply for the loan scheme to secure a private tenancy. As a result she had to borrow a large sum of money.

Deepa felt as though nothing was happening on her case, because the council had not told her what it was doing. This caused avoidable distress when she was dealing with ongoing harassment from her abusive ex-partner.

Neil waited more than a month for an initial appointment, by which time his homelessness was imminent.

Ella told the council her accommodation was so unsuitable she could barely leave her bed, and it responded by asking her for paperwork which it then lost and she had to send again. She had to

resort to the complaints process more than once just to get updates on her case.

While these cases are examples of councils failing in their statutory duties, such failures rarely happen in isolation. Instead, they are accompanied by, or result from, failures in communication or other poor administrative practice.

Other common issues in this area include failing to:

- > tell the applicant and/or not effectively pass on information when the case worker changes
- > respond to requests for contact
- > share information with other departments within the council, including housing allocations and social care
- > communicate with other public bodies, such as the police and other councils.



Daniel's story

Case reference: [21 015 451](#)

Daniel lives with his wife and four children. Three of their children have disabilities and complex needs.

The council accepted a prevention duty to Daniel because his landlord was selling their home.

The landlord agreed with the council that the family could remain in the property until it sold, at which time the council would provide accommodation. When the property sold, the council accepted the main duty but did not find the family anywhere else to live.

The council agreed internally to increase the family's priority on its housing register from Band A to Band A* a number of times, but did not implement this for more than two years.

What we found

Along with failing to provide temporary accommodation, we found the council at fault in how it communicated with the family. It failed to tell Daniel when the allocated housing officer changed and the new officer did not contact the family for several months.

Both Daniel and his wife are full time carers for their children who have complex needs. The council's delays in communicating with them caused avoidable distress at an already difficult time.

We also found the council often emailed Daniel on Friday afternoons. This meant he could not follow up with anyone until Monday. Daniel told us how this would frustrate and distract him over the weekend. He would then contact the council on Monday, only for it to delay responding to him again.

The council was also at fault for failures in its internal communication. Despite agreeing to increase the family's priority on the housing register, the council took 30 months to do so. It failed to communicate with its allocations service to ensure the change took place on several occasions. This caused significant avoidable distress and uncertainty for Daniel and his family.

Putting it right

The council agreed to find suitable accommodation for the family and pay a financial remedy to reflect its delay doing this.

To remedy the injustice caused by its poor communications, the council agreed to pay Daniel a further £1,000.

Common issues



Reviews

Unlike some other service areas, housing law sets out a requirement to communicate certain decisions in writing. This is sometimes called the 'notification duty'. Prior to the Homelessness Reduction Act, the notification duty applied to a decision that an applicant was:

- > not homeless
- > not eligible
- > not in priority need
- > intentionally homeless
- > owed the main housing duty.

The Homelessness Reduction Act introduced many more decisions which councils must set out in writing. This includes:

- > the assessment of the applicant's circumstances
- > the PHP
- > a decision to accept the prevention duty
- > a decision to end the prevention duty
- > a decision to accept the relief duty
- > a decision to end the relief duty.

The council must also tell applicants in writing about any offers of accommodation to discharge or end a duty.

This means the council might issue one homeless applicant more than eight different letters and documents at various times.

Although potentially numerous, these letters are important. Homeless people will, naturally, have less knowledge of the law and processes than council officers.

Notification letters are a way for councils to explain this process and help applicants understand what to expect.

These letters must also tell applicants about their statutory right to review the decision and, if it is an adverse decision, give reasons for it.

Councils can combine some decisions into one letter, such as when ending the prevention duty and accepting the relief duty. However, such letters must still explain clearly to the applicant how they can ask for a review of each decision notified.



Lucy's story

Case reference: [22 000 816](#)

Lucy told the council she and her son were homeless in March. The council accepted the relief duty and provided a PHP. The PHP included details of Lucy and her son's medical needs.

The council provided interim accommodation in April. Lucy told the council she thought the accommodation would not be suitable for very long.

The council accepted the main duty in June. This meant the interim accommodation was now temporary accommodation.

The letter said Lucy could ask for a review of its decision to accept the main duty.

We found fault with how the council notified Lucy of her statutory review rights. The letter accepting the main duty was not clear that Lucy now had a right to review the suitability of her temporary accommodation.

As a result, Lucy did not know she had this right.

Putting it right

The council agreed to make a payment to Lucy and change its template letters to make sure applicants know about their review rights.



Promoting Good Practice

Remedying personal injustice is an essential part of what we do. However, we also make recommendations to help councils improve services and address systemic failures.

Drawing on our casework, we have identified some practical steps councils can take.

- > Keep accurate, up to date records of activity on homeless cases, including decisions about suitability and decisions about whether to provide interim accommodation
- > Develop template letters which explain the various homelessness duties in plain English, avoiding or explaining jargon
- > Make sure all template letters set out the statutory right to review
- > Use assessments and PHPs which include the statutory questions, and provide guidance to staff on completing them
- > Keep PHPs under review and update them at least with every change in duty
- > Implement a suitable mechanism for officers in the allocations team to notify homelessness services about applications for social housing which may also be a homeless application
- > Develop joint working protocols and information sharing agreements with other departments such as children's services, adult social care, and benefits
- > Set time targets for responding to requests for contact from homeless applicants
- > Give applicants and staff clear guidance on the process for accessing financial schemes such as rent deposit or other homeless prevention funds
- > Have a system of cover for officers on leave or off sick

Encouraging local accountability - Questions for scrutiny



We want to share learning from our complaints with locally elected councillors who have the democratic right to scrutinise the way councils carry out their functions and hold them to account.

We suggest some questions elected members could ask officers, to ensure their services receive proper and effective scrutiny and are accountable to local people.

- > What arrangements are in place to ensure all front-line staff know what to do if they have contact with someone who appears to/may have housing issues?
- > How does the council keep track of applicants whose notice to leave private rented accommodation has expired but who remain in the property?
 - Are there well-recorded decisions justifying this in each case?
 - What triggers a review of the decision that it is reasonable to remain?
- > How does the council make sure Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs) are tailored to the individual and kept under review?
- > What steps can officers take to prevent or relieve homelessness?
 - How does the council provide staff with guidance on these steps?
- > Is there a difference between the number of households with a priority need owed the relief duty and provided interim accommodation?
 - Is it clear in each case why interim accommodation was not provided?
- > What robust processes are in place to ensure the council can meet its homeless duties during periods of staff absence or leave?

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More Home Truths – learning lessons from complaints about the Homelessness Reduction Act

LGSCO Key Questions (March 2023)	Service area / response
<p>What arrangements are in place to ensure all front-line staff know what to do if they have contact with someone who appears to/may have housing issues?</p>	<p>The LGSCO report refers to staff employed in the Housing Register specifically. In Tameside Housing Advice (THA), our staff are trained to identify when Homelessness Reduction (HR) applications need to be referred to the Homeless Prevention team. The process is intended to ensure any person who is at risk of potential homelessness will be identified as early as possible. We will be undertaking a service review to bolster the staffing resource in this area, turning reactive duty into a prevention approach.</p> <p>There are recommendations that other front line services should know when to signpost to THA. Other departments such as Children’s and Adult Social Care do already have relationships with the THA service. We propose a briefing note to remind all services of these requirements.</p>
<p>How does the council keep track of applicants whose notice to leave private rented accommodation has expired but who remain in the property?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there well-recorded decisions justifying this in each case? - What triggers a review of the decision that it is reasonable to remain? 	<p>All case information is recorded on our case management programme; Locata. The current programme does not have a specific field for this data. However when engaging with the Housing advice team – the data is recorded.</p> <p>The cases are discussed in staffing supervisions and actions/justifications are recorded.</p> <p>Each case is considered on an individual basis. The Officer will be actively discussing with applicants what will happen at the point the Notice expires. In some cases, the tenant chooses to exercise their legal right to stay and such decisions are noted and recorded. Staff will always take into account personal circumstances and service user wishes when issuing advice on reasonableness to remain.</p>


<p>How does the council make sure Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs) are tailored to the individual and kept under review?</p>	<p>Personalised Housing Plans (PHP) are completed at point of acceptance of the duty. They are then updated and amended at key stages during the homeless process. Compliance with this requirement is high but caseload levels mean that while initial PHP's at application stage are completed, there are some cases where updates at key points have not always been done.</p> <p>As part of our service review we will look at the rate of plan reviews. Obviously significant changes of circumstances can trigger a review of the individual plans. The quality of PHP's in relation to them being tailored to individual will also be reviewed and fed into our supervision, team guidance and training plan.</p>
<p>What steps can officers take to prevent or relieve homelessness?</p> <p>- How does the council provide staff with guidance on these steps?</p>	<p>The service has continued to implement change to improve service delivery and customer outcomes. There is no doubt that the cost of living crisis will impact on homelessness levels in Tameside and service delivery. Preventing Homeless is a key objective of the Council.</p> <p>There are a multitude of steps that staff can use including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allocating homeless at home status - Financial measures, including payment of arrears and rent top ups to prevent loss of private rented - Financial measures to access private rented, deposits, RIA and tops - Sanctuary scheme for Domestic Abuse victims - Referrals to supported housing - In house debt team - Safe Accommodation Team referral - Access to social housing <p>Staff can access homeless prevention fund to both prevent and relieve homelessness.</p> <p>All staff have now participated in a 2 day homelessness training event. In addition a staff training matrix has been established to deliver and monitor staff training and competencies going forward.</p>

	<p>The implementation of a dedicated staff member to focus on homeless prevention is proving successful. The two new workers will adopt this approach and all prevention staff will be moved to this model over the coming months.</p> <p>A suite of key performance indicators is compiled and monitored weekly which is distributed to senior managers and to track and monitor performance is near completion.</p> <p>A designated staff member is now in place to act as key point of contact between the statutory service and the RSI service. This staff member is a co-ordinator from the RSI team who is now based at THA and this is proving very effective in promoting better communication and avoiding duplication.</p> <p>A homeless option toolkit is in a pilot testing phase with staff. This will be rolled out in full this summer.</p>
<p>Is there a difference between the number of households with a priority need owed the relief duty and provided interim accommodation?</p> <p>- Is it clear in each case why interim accommodation was not provided?</p>	<p>Yes, there is a difference as not all people owed a relief duty are in priority need. Decision letters to confirm non priority with full reasons for this decision are issued at point of presentation which include information on applicant's statutory right to review.</p> <p>When an applicant has been identified and there is no priority need, they are offered a referral to The Town House Shelter on date of homelessness.</p>
<p>What robust processes are in place to ensure the council can meet its homeless duties during periods of staff absence or leave?</p>	<p>Staff rotas are managed to avoid gaps in service and there is a duty rota which is covered when staff are on leave or sick.</p> <p>In the next few months we will be undertaking a service review to address gaps in staff capacity and to bolster our prevention approach.</p>

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Agenda Item 9.

Report to:	OVERVIEW PANEL
Date:	1 August 2023
Reporting Officers:	Councillor Gerald P Cooney – Executive Leader Sandra Stewart – Chief Executive
Subject:	CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCORECARD
Report Summary:	The scorecard attached at Appendix 1 provides evidence to demonstrate progress towards achievement of the Corporate Plan and improving the services provided to residents, businesses and key stakeholders within the locality. A glossary providing more information about the indicators included in the Corporate Outcomes Scorecard is attached at Appendix 2 . A plan to refresh the scorecard is also referenced in the report.
Recommendations:	That the contents of the report noted.
Links to Corporate Plan:	The report is relevant to all elements of the Corporate Plan as the scorecards provide data to help track progress towards achieving its aims and objectives.
Policy Implications:	The corporate scorecards provide the evidence for demonstrating the progress being made towards achievement of the Corporate Plan and improving the services provided to residents, businesses and key stakeholders within the locality.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report, the scorecard should assist Members in making decisions regarding the prioritisation of the Council's limited resources. The CIPFA Financial Management Code sets an expectation that to remain financially sustainable an authority must have timely information on both its financial and operational performance. Performance information should aid Members understanding as to whether spending decisions are achieving objectives, and enable informed decisions regarding the prioritisation of scarce resources in the face of significant financial challenges.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	Although there are no direct legal implications, the scorecard is one of the council's fiscal management tools to ensure prudent financial management especially in the current challenging economic climate.
Risk Management:	Effective use of data, including performance management through scorecards, helps to identify areas where improvement activity is required thus avoiding the risk of service failure. Alongside this services have management information that is used to assess risk and drive improvement.
Access to Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Alec Milner, Policy Officer

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1. CORPORATE PLAN OUTCOMES SCORECARD

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan outcomes scorecard, **Appendix 1**, contains indicators focused on long term outcomes across the eight corporate plan priorities. The measures within this scorecard were chosen to illustrate how the Council's work directly and indirectly impacts the lives and experiences of Tameside residents.

Adults

- 1.2 The percentage of care home beds at homes rated as Good or Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission, CQC, has increased since the previous scorecard release in February, from 73.4% to 74.4% of care beds within Tameside.
- 1.3 The rate of emergency hospital admissions for falls in people aged 65 years or older was 1,989 per 100,000 in 2021/2022, down significantly from 2,189 per 100,000 the previous year and below the national average rate of 2,100 per 100,000 residents aged 65 year or older.

Children's

- 1.4 The percentage of Tameside's children achieving the expected level of phonics decoding in 2022 was 72%, a fall from the previous time this was reported in 2019, when 78% of children reached the expected standard. A national issue due to the impact of extensive lockdown.
- 1.5 The number of young children in quality education is improving- placements of 2 year olds in funded early education reached 86% of the target number set by the Department for Education in the Spring term 2022/23, up from 81% in the same term 12 months prior. Considering 3 and 4 year olds, 94% were placed at early years settings rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted in Spring 22/23, up from 88% in Spring 21/22.
- 1.6 Educational attainment data, which were updated for the first time since the Coronavirus pandemic in the previous release of this report, has been amended: the average Attainment 8 score of Tameside GCSE pupils in 2022 was 45.2, up from 44.2 in 2019 but below the national average of 47.2. In addition, the percentage of pupils achieving a grade 4 or above in their English and Mathematics GCSEs was 65.2% in 2022, up from 63.0% in 2019 and above the national average of 64.4%.
- 1.7 Also adjusted were the data on key stage 2 reading standards, with the percentage of Tameside pupils achieving the expected reading standard in 2022 was 76%, up from 72% in 2019 and fractionally higher than the national average of 75%. Due to the intensive Tameside Loves Reading programme.
- 1.8 The number of first time entrants into the youth justice system per 100,000 was 64.3 in Q4 2022/23, down from 91.9 in the previous quarter but up significantly from the 23.0 recorded in Q4 2021/22. In line with the other nine Greater Manchester authorities covered by Greater Manchester Police (GMP).
- 1.9 The rate at which fixed term exclusions were given to secondary school pupils was 34.32% in the 2021/22 academic year. While up significantly from 16.65% the previous year, 2020/21's numbers are artificially suppressed due not only to the increased rate of absences due to Covid-19 but also due to two Tameside secondary schools became academies during the school year, resulting in the Autumn term data for these schools being unavailable.
- 1.10 The number of Child and Family Assessments completed by Children's services was 925 in Q4 2022/23, a slight drop on the 979 assessments completed in the previous quarter, and down 25% on the quarter 4 of the previous year, when 1,241 assessments were completed. A positive development bringing us in line with our comparable neighbour benchmark.

1.11 The percentage of children cared for by the Authority who were adopted was 1.56% in Q4 2022/23, down from 2.84% in the same quarter of 2021/22.

Place

1.12 The percentage of adult residents in employment in 2022 was 75.6%, up by one percentage point from 2021 but slightly below the national average rate of 75.8%.

1.13 Job density, the ratio of total jobs to working age residents, was 0.57 in 2021, up slightly from 0.56 in 2020. Tameside's job density being less than 1 is indicative of the borough's position as a satellite area of Manchester, with people living in Tameside and working in Manchester and other boroughs.

1.14 The number of Tameside residents claiming Universal Credit was 26,864 in April 2023, up from 25,012 12 months prior- an increase of 7.4% over the year. Of Tameside residents in receipt of Universal Credit, 37.5% were in employment in March 2023, down from 40.8% in March 2022 and just below the national average of 38.4%.

1.15 Tameside Gross Value Added per Head (a measure of the size of Tameside's economy similar to the national measure of GDP per Capita) was £14,991.41 in 2021 (current prices), down 3.97% from 2020, when the GVA per Head was £15,617.50 in current prices.

1.16 The borough's business rates Total Rateable Value was £148,392,292 in May, down slightly from £148,477,595 in May 2022.

1.17 Apprenticeship data for 2022/23 shows a steep drop in both starts and completions on the previous year. Per 10,000 working age residents in Tameside, there were 65.7 apprenticeship starts and 22.8 completions, compared to 127.6 starts and 47.5 completions in the previous year. These rates, however, remain higher than the national average of 54.9 starts and 17.4 completions per 10,000 working age residents.

1.18 The maximum mean download speed available to broadband users in Tameside was 123.6 Mb per second in Q4 2022/23, up from 83.1 in the same period the year prior, and the proportion of premises with network infrastructure capable of providing gigabit speeds, such as "full fibre", was 81.9%, up from 76.6% in Q4 2021/22- this level of connectivity is higher than across England as a whole, where the maximum mean download speed was 112.4 Mb per second and 75.8% of premises were gigabit-capable.

1.19 The rate of rough sleeping in Tameside continued to fall from 0.48 per 10,000 households in 2021 to 0.40 per 10,000 households in 2022, although the rate of households owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty has increased; 2.86 in every 1,000 households was owed a prevention or relief duty in the period of October to December 2022, up slightly from 2.82 per 1,000 households in the same period in 2021.

Population Health

1.20 The proportion of children in year 6 classified as overweight or obese in 2022 was 39.2%, up from 36.2% in 2020 (data was not recorded in 2021) and above the national average of 37.8%. Conversely, the proportion of adults classified as overweight or obese has fallen, down from 70.3% in 2020/21 to 69.2% in 2021/22.

1.21 The rate of hospital admissions due to alcohol related harm (using the broad definition, which includes admissions where alcohol was a secondary factor, e.g. injuries sustained while intoxicated), in 2021/22 was 2,085 per 100,000 – notably higher than the national average of 1,734 admissions per 100,000 people. The rate of hospital admissions due to alcohol related harm in 2021 (using the narrow definition, which is more stable over time and less likely to coding changes in data), was recorded as 504 per 100,000 which is not significantly different

than the national average of 494 admissions per 100,000 people. Comparisons on previous years could not be made due to changes on how the indicator is calculated.

- 1.22 The suicide rate in Tameside was 7.2 per 100,000 people (2019-21), which is the lowest rate seen in Tameside in over 20 years. This reflects a continued decline in the rate over the last decade and is now significantly lower than the national average.

2 REFRESH OF THE SCORECARDS

- 2.1 It is appropriate to keep the basket of measures in the scorecards under regular review to ensure they are still relevant and meaningful. Similarly, a more comprehensive review of the wider approach should be undertaken from time to time. With this in mind, a review has commenced that will lead to the development of a refreshed scorecard. The current scorecard includes a large number of long-term outcomes measures. Improvement against these will be delivered by the actions of a number of partners – local, regional and national – not just Tameside Council. It is proposed to develop a new scorecard linked to the council's corporate plan that focusses primarily on measures that record and explain the performance of council services. That is, areas and indicators the public and regulators use to judge how well the council is run and delivering for the local community.
- 2.2 An initial outline scope of potential measures has been undertaken. Sources include (not exhaustive) Ofsted; Care Quality Commission; Local Government Association (LGA); and government department frameworks. The refresh will also reflect on the emerging Office for Local Government (Oflog) performance framework and the new statutory guidance on the Best Value duty from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) that is currently out to consultation.
- 2.3 It is proposed a conversation takes place with each Directorate on which measures to take forward. The existing long-term outcomes measures will be kept under ongoing review by the council and partners as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As set out at the front of the report.

Directorate	Portfolio	Theme	Outcome	Metric Reference	Metric	Previous Position	Current Position	National Average	Period	Progress	Targets		
											Apr 2025	Apr 2030	
Adults	Adult Social Care, Homelessness, and Inclusivity	Independence & Dignity in Older Age	Increase the number of people helped to live at home	ID1	Funded Permanent 65+ in residential/nursing homes per 10k	144.1 (Q4 2021/22)	151.1	N/A	Q4 2022/23	↑	585.6	Only those in most in need access residential/nursing care at the right point for them	
	Population Health and Wellbeing		Reduce hospital admissions due to falls	ID2	Emergency admissions for falls 65+ per 100k	2189	1989	2100	2021/2022	↓	1875.57	Emergency falls in the 65+ age group are low	
	Adult Social Care, Homelessness, and Inclusivity		Increase levels of self-care / social prescribing	ID3	% service users who find it easy to find information	70.6% (2019/20)	57.7%	64.6%	2021/2022	↓	78.6%	Tameside and Glossop is a place where people are supported to self care	
	Adult Social Care, Homelessness, and Inclusivity		Good' and 'Outstanding' social care settings	ID4	CQC Audit Results: % care home beds good or outstanding	73.4%	74.4%	N/A	Ad Hoc	↑	80%	All residential/nursing settings are rated good or outstanding	
	Adult Social Care, Homelessness, and Inclusivity		Prevention support outside the care system	ID5	Number of people supported outside the social care system with prevention based services	7085 (Q4 2021/22)	5211	N/A	Q4 2022/23	↓	7500	All people are supported to remain in the community	
Children's	Children and Families	Very Best Start	Improve school readiness	V2 (LUI) (GMM)	% achieving a 'good' level of development	65.7%	66.9%	71.80%	2019	↑	75%	All children start school ready to learn	
	Children and Families			V3 (LUI)	% achieving expected level in Phonics decoding	78% (2019)	72%	75%	2022	↓			
	Children and Families		Children attending 'good' and 'outstanding' early years settings	V4	% 3 & 4 year olds at 'good' or 'outstanding' EY settings	88.0% (Spring 21/22)	94.0%	N/A	Spring Term 2022/23	↑	98%	All children to attend good or outstanding early years settings	
	Children and Families		Take up nursery at 2 Years	V5 (GMFT)	2 year olds in funded early education- % of DfE Target	81% (Spring 21/22)	86%	N/A	Spring Term 2022/23	↑	95%	All eligible 2 year olds benefit from funded early years education	
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities	Aspirations and Hope	Reading / Writing / Maths at Key Stage 2	A1	% students achieving KS2 expected standard	63% (2019)	57%	59%	2022	↓	70%	All children to be provided with the opportunity to achieve their full educational potential	
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities		Key Stage 4 attainment	A2	Average attainment 8 score	44.2 (2019)	45.2	47.2	2022	↑	50		
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities		% achieving Grade 4 or above in English & Maths GCSEs	A3	63.0% (2019)	65.2%	64.4%	2022	↑	70%			
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities		Young people going into higher education	A4 (LUI)	% Key Stage 4 going into/remaining in education	84.2%	86.1%	89.0%	2021	↑	90%		All young people going into/remaining in further education after KS4
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities		Children attending 'good' and 'outstanding' schools	A5 (LUI)	% Primary schools 'good' & 'outstanding'	92.1%	92.1%	89.7%	Ad Hoc	↔	95%		All children attending a good or outstanding primary school
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities		Children attending 'good' and 'outstanding' schools	A6 (LUI)	% Secondary schools 'good' & 'outstanding'	66.7%	62.5%	81.2%	Ad Hoc	↓	80%		All children attending a good or outstanding secondary school
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities		Proportion of children with good reading skills	A7 (LUI)	% Key Stage 2 achieving expected reading standard	72% (2019)	76%	75%	2022	↑	80%		All children to be provided with the opportunity to achieve their full educational potential
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities	Promote a whole system approach and Improving wellbeing and resilience	A8 (LUI) (GMM) (LGI)	Secondary Fixed Term Exclusions	16.65%	34.32%	N/A	2021/2022 Academic Year	↑				
	Children and Families	Resilient Families and Supportive Networks	Early Help Intervention	R1	Child and Family Assessments completed each quarter	1241 (Q4 2021/22)	925	N/A	Q4 2022/2023	↓		All vulnerable families receive the help they need	
	Children and Families		Reduce the number of first time entrants into Youth Justice	R2	First Time Entrants into Youth Justice aged 10-17, rate per 100k	23.0 (Q4 2021/2022)	64.3	N/A	Q4 2022/2023	↑	212.9	No young people entering the youth justice system	
	Children and Families		Increased levels of fostering and adoption	R3	% Cared for children adopted each quarter	2.84% (Q4 2021/2022)	1.56%	N/A	Q4 2022/2023	↓	18.60%	All looked after children provided with the opportunity to be adopted, where its of benefit to the young person, within the year	
Children and Families	Improve the quality of social care practice		R4	Children's Services Audits Rated 'Good' & 'Outstanding', Year to Date	34% (Apr 22)	16%	N/A	Apr-23	↓	50%	All Children Social Care audits rated good or outstanding		
Children and Families	Nurturing Communities	Reduce victims of domestic abuse	N11	Domestic Abuse Incidents reported to Children's Services	270 (Apr 2022)	164	N/A	Apr-23	↓				
Place	Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment	Work, Skills, and Enterprise	Increase median resident earnings	W1 (LUI) (GMM)	Median Annual Income, Full-Time Workers	£27,706	£29,129	£33,208	2022	↑	£27,492	The median annual income to be in line with the England average	
	Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		Percentage in Employment (Rolling 12 Month Period)	W2 (LUI) (GMM)	74.6% (2021)	75.6%	75.8%	2022	↑	78%	All people who can work are in work		
	Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		Increase the working age population in employment	W3	Job Density (Ratio of Total Jobs to Residents Aged 16-64)	0.56	0.57	0.86	2021	↑			
	Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		Universal Credit Recipients	W4	25,012 (Apr 2022)	26,864	N/A	Apr-23	↑				
	Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		Increase the number of people earning above the Living Wage	W5 (LUI) (GMM)	Universal Credit Recipients in Employment	40.8% (Mar 2022)	37.5%	38.4%	Mar-23	↓			
	Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		New enterprises (percentage of total businesses)	W6 (LGI)	12.27%	13.32%	12.51%	2021	↑	18.97%	Tameside is recognised as a vibrant economy where entrepreneurs are supported to start new businesses		
	Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		Increase number of enterprise / business start-ups	W7	Business Rate Taxbase: Total Rateable Value	£148,477,595 (May 2022)	£148,392,292	N/A	May-23	↓			
	Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		Regional Gross Value Added Per Head (Balanced): NW Current Prices	W8 (LUI)	£15,617.50	£14,991.41	N/A	2021	↓				
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities		Working age population with at least level 3 skills	W9 (LUI) (LGI)	Percentage of population with at least level 3 skills	48.6%	48.9%	61.3%	2021	↑	54.90%	Higher proportion of Tameside's population have Level 3 skills than the national average	
	Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		Proportion of employed residents in skilled employment (SOC 1-3, 5)	W10 (LUI)	47.0%	52.8%	60.4%	2021/2022	↑				

Directorate	Portfolio	Theme	Outcome	Metric Reference	Metric	Previous Position	Current Position	National Average	Period	Progress	Targets			
											Apr 2025	Apr 2030		
Page 06	Education, Achievement, and Equalities		Increase the number of good quality apprenticeships delivered	W11 (LUI)	Number of apprenticeships started per 10,000 residents aged 16-64	127.6 (1,800)	65.7 (950)	54.9 (195,600)	2022/2023	↓	2310	Apprenticeships are available to all that seek them		
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities			W12 (LUI)	Number of apprenticeship achievements per 10,000 residents aged 16-64	47.5 (670)	22.8 (330)	17.4 (62,030)	2022/2023	↓				
	Climate Emergency and Environmental Services	Infrastructure and Environment	Improve air quality	I1 (GMM)	Particulate Matter Pollution in the Air (PM2.5, ug/m^3)	7.60	7.67	7.35	2021	↑	6	Air quality to be good and at least be in line with the UK average		
	Climate Emergency and Environmental Services			I2 (GMM)	Territorial Carbon Dioxide Emissions (kilotonnes)	810.10	744.50	795.20	2020	↓				
	Climate Emergency and Environmental Services			I3	Trees Planted Annually	16095	977	N/A	2022/2023	↓				
	Planning, Transport, and Connectivity			I4 (LUI)	Net Additional Dwellings per 10,000 Residents	16.2	18.2	41.2	2021/2022	↑				
	Planning, Transport, and Connectivity			I5 (LGI)	New Affordable Homes per 10,000 Residents	2.51	4.63	10.47	2021/2022	↑				
	Planning, Transport, and Connectivity			I6	Maximum Mean Download Speed	83.1 (Q4 2021/22)	123.6	112.4	Q4 2022/2023	↑			41.5	All households to have access to high quality internet services
	Planning, Transport, and Connectivity			I7 (GMFT)	Premises with Superfast-Capable (30Mbps) Network Infrastructure	99.5% (Q4 21/22)	99.5%	97.8%	Q4 2022/2023	↔				
	Planning, Transport, and Connectivity			I8 (LUI)	Premises with Gigabit-Capable Network Infrastructure	76.6% (Q4 21/22)	81.9%	75.8%	Q4 2022/2023	↑				
	Climate Emergency and Environmental Services			I9 (LGI)	Percentage of household waste recycled	47.2%	52.6%	42.5%	2021/2022	↑			57.78%	All household waste recycled where possible
	Planning, Transport, and Connectivity			I10 (LUI)	% population walking / cycling 3+ times a week	39.0%	34.3%	45.6%	2021 (Nov to Nov)	↓				
	Towns and Communities	Nurturing Communities	Reduce victims of domestic abuse	N1	Rate of PPIs per 1000	23.8	23.7	N/A	2022/2023	↓	25.1	Tameside has low rates of domestic abuse		
	Towns and Communities			N2	Street counts & estimates of rough sleepers	0.48 per 10k Households	0.40 per 10k Households	1.31 per 10K Households	2022	↓			2	Nobody sleeping rough on the streets of Tameside
	Towns and Communities			N3	Households owed a prevention or relief duty per 1,000 Chargeable Dwellings	2.82 (Oct - Dec 2021)	2.86	2.82	Oct - Dec 2022	↑				
	Towns and Communities			N6 (GMM)	Crime Rate per 1,000 residents	10.4 (Mar 2022)	10.1	N/A	Mar-23	↓			Tameside is a low crime borough	
Population Health	Population Health and Wellbeing	Very Best Start	Reduce rate of smoking at time of delivery	V1	% Smoking at time of delivery	Data awaiting validation		8.6%	Q3 2022/2023	↑	10.50%	All expectant mothers to be supported to be smoke free at the time of delivery		
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing			V6 (LUI) (GMM) (LGI)	% of children in year 6 who are overweight or obese	35.9% (2020)	39.4%	37.8%	2022	↑			34%	All children to be a healthy weight at the end of Year 6
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing	Aspirations and Hope	Promote a whole system approach and Improving wellbeing and resilience	A9 (LUI)	Mean worthwhile ratings (adults 16+)	7.79	7.85	7.78	2021/2022	↑	8.5	All residents 16+ feel that the things they do in life are worthwhile		
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing	Nurturing Communities	Improve satisfaction with local community	N4 (LUI)	Mean life satisfaction ratings (adults 16+)	7.43	7.62	7.55	2021/2022	↑	8.5	Maintain mean life satisfaction at 8.5		
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing			N5 (GMFT) (GMM)	Mean GM life satisfaction score, Y10 Students	6.02	6.13	N/A	2022	↑				
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing			N7	Deaths due to suicide- rate per 100,000	8.3	7.2	10.4	2019-2021	↓				
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing	Longer & Healthier Lives	Increase access, choice, and control in emotional and mental self-care and wellbeing	N8	IAPT Referrals	2525 (Q3 2021/2022)	2,025	N/A	Q3 2022/2023	↓	12383.4	Everyone has access to good quality mental health services		
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing			L1 (LUI)	Healthy Life Expectancy at birth	M- 61.9 years, F- 58.7 years	M- 61.6 years, F- 58.2 years	M- 63.1 years, F- 63.9 years	2018-2020	↓	Male - 61.2 years, Female - 62.3 years	Healthy life expectancy to be in line with the England average		
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing			L2 (LUI)	Under-75 mortality rate form cardiovascular diseases considered preventable	41.6	46.0	30.2	2021	↑				
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing			L3 (LUI) (GMM)	Mean happiness ratings (adults 16+)	7.13	7.48	7.45	2021/2022	↑	7.52	Maintain mean happiness ratings above 8		
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing			L4 (LUI) (GMM) (LGI)	Smoking prevalence	18.3%	19.2%	13.0%	2021	↑	11%	Tameside and Glossop are smoke free areas		
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing			L5 (LGI)	% of population 'inactive' (<30m exercise a week)	30.5% (Nov 2019 - 2020)	32.4%	27.2%	Nov 2020 - Nov 2021	↑	25.20%	All residents are physical active where possible		
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing			L6 (LUI) (GMM) (LGI)	% adults (18+) classified as overweight or obese	70.3%	69.2%	63.8%	2021/2022	↓				
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing			L8 (LGI)	Admission rate for alcohol related harm per 100k (Broad Definition)	1820	2085	1734	2021/2022	↑	2250	Alcohol harm rates are low and support is available		
Population Health and Wellbeing	Population Health and Wellbeing	L9	Deaths from drug misuse per 100k	5.6	8.8	5	2018-2020	↑	4	Drug misuse rates and low and support is available				

Directorate	Portfolio	Theme	Outcome	Metric Reference	Metric	Details
Adults	Adult Social Care, Homelessness, and Inclusivity	Independence & Dignity in Older Age	Increase the number of people helped to live at home	ID1	Funded Permanent 65+ in residential/nursing homes per 10k	The number of people aged 65+ in permanent residential or nursing care funded by the authority per 100,000
	Population Health and Wellbeing		Reduce hospital admissions due to falls	ID2	Emergency admissions for falls 65+ per 100k	The rate of emergency admissions to hospital due to falls for people aged 65+ per 100,000
	Adult Social Care, Homelessness, and Inclusivity		Increase levels of self-care / social prescribing	ID3	% service users who find it easy to find information	The percentage of all service users who report finding it easy to find information about services, taken from the Adult Social Care Survey, taken annually of a random selection of long-term care users
	Adult Social Care, Homelessness, and Inclusivity		Good' and 'Outstanding' social care settings	ID4	CQC Audit Results: % care home beds good or outstanding	Percentage of Tameside ASC beds in homes which received a 'good' or 'outstanding' rating at their last CQC inspection. This is updated with each scorecard report, whether any inspections have taken place or not.
	Adult Social Care, Homelessness, and Inclusivity		Prevention support outside the care system	ID5	Number of people supported outside the social care system with prevention based services	People supported by the community response team, health and wellbeing teams, and any new contacts which are signposted to voluntary agencies such as Age UK or who receive a small piece of equipment e.g. pick up stick, kettle tipper, etc.
Children's	Children and Families	Very Best Start	Improve school readiness	V2 (LUI) (GMM)	% achieving a 'good' level of development	Percentage of children reaching a 'good' level of development before starting school
	Children and Families			V3 (LUI)	% achieving expected level in Phonics decoding	Percentage of children reaching the expected standard in phonics decoding before starting school
	Children and Families			V4	% 3 & 4 year olds at 'good' or 'outstanding' EY settings	Percentages of three and four year old children attending early years settings rated 'good' or 'outstanding'
	Children and Families			V5 (GMFT)	2 year olds in funded early education- % of DfE Target	Percentage fulfillment of our Department for Education target for 2 year olds in funded early education
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities	Aspirations and Hope	Reading / Writing / Maths at Key Stage 2	A1	% students achieving KS2 expected standard	Percentage of Key Stage 2 pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing, and mathematics
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities			A2	Average attainment 8 score	Average Attainment 8 score for Tameside's GCSE pupils- Attainment 8 is a measure of overall achievement across all a pupil's GCSE subjects
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities			A3	% achieving Grade 4 or above in English & Maths GCSEs	Pupils achieving grades 4 or higher, i.e. passing, their English and Maths GCSEs
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities			A4 (LUI)	% Key Stage 4 going into/remaining in education	Percentage of Key Stage 4 pupils remaining in education or going onto further education e.g. college, sixth forms
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities			A5 (LUI)	% Primary schools 'good' & 'outstanding'	Percentage of Tameside primary schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding' in their most recent Ofsted inspection. This is updated with each scorecard report, whether any inspections have taken place or not.
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities			A6 (LUI)	% Secondary schools 'good' & 'outstanding'	Percentage of Tameside secondary schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding' in their most recent Ofsted inspection. This is updated with each scorecard report, whether any inspections have taken place or not.
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities			A7 (LUI)	% Key Stage 2 achieving expected reading standard	Percentage of Key Stage 2 pupils achieving the expected standard for reading ability
	Education, Achievement, and Equalities			A8 (LUI) (GMM) (LGI)	Promote a whole system approach and Improving wellbeing and resilience	Secondary Fixed Term Exclusions
	Children and Families	Resilient Families and Supportive Networks	Early Help Intervention	R1	Child and Family Assessments completed each quarter	Initial assessments carried out by Children's services, which may or may not lead to a service provision
	Children and Families			R2	First Time Entrants into Youth Justice aged 10-17, rate per 100k	The rate of young people entering the youth justice system as first time entrants, i.e. children who receive a youth caution or a court conviction for the first time, reported quarterly
	Children and Families			R3	% Cared for children adopted each quarter	The percentage of children who are looked after by the authority who are adopted in each quarter
	Children and Families			R4	Children's Services Audits Rated 'Good' & 'Outstanding', Year to Date	Audits of children's services settings that concluded with a rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'
	Children and Families	Nurturing Communities	Reduce victims of domestic abuse	N11	Domestic Abuse Incidents reported to Children's Services	The number of incidents of domestic abuse which are reported to children's services
	Place	Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment	Work, Skills, and Enterprise	Increase median resident earnings	W1 (LUI) (GMM)	Median Annual Income, Full-Time Workers
Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		W2 (LUI) (GMM)			Percentage in Employment (Rolling 12 Month Period)	The percentage of Tameside residents in employment

Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment	Increase the working age population in employment	W3	Job Density (Ratio of Total Jobs to Residents Aged 16-64)	The total number of jobs in the borough divided by the total number of working age residents. This statistical measure shows the balance in the borough between a place to live and a place to work		
Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		W4	Universal Credit Recipients	The number of Tameside residents in receipt of universal credit, with or without conditions to work/look for work		
Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		W5 (LUI) (GMM)	Universal Credit Recipients in Employment	The proportion of universal credit-receiving Tameside residents who are in employment while in receipt of UC, serving as an indicator of residents in low wage jobs		
Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment			W6 (LGI)	New enterprises (percentage of total businesses)	The percentage of active enterprises in Tameside which were 'born' in the last financial year	
Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		W7	Business Rate Taxbase: Total Rateable Value	The total monetary value of business assets in Tameside which are subject to business rates (NDR)		
Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment		W8 (LUI)	Regional Gross Value Added Per Head (Balanced): NW Current Prices	The gross value added per head from Tameside residents in current prices. Similar to GDP on the national scale, this can be seen as the size of Tameside's economy		
Education, Achievement, and Equalities		Working age population with at least Level 3 skills	W9 (LUI) (LGI)	Percentage of population with at least level 3 skills	Proportion of Tameside residents with qualifications at NVQ level 3 (A Level or equivalent) or above	
Inclusive Growth, Business, and Employment			W10 (LUI)	Proportion of employed residents in skilled employment (SOC 1-3, 5)	Skilled employment is defined as jobs falling within standard occupational classifications 1 (managers, directors, and senior officials), 2 (professional occupations), 3 (associate professional occupations), or 5 (skilled trades occupations)	
Education, Achievement, and Equalities			W11 (LUI)	Number of apprenticeships started per 10,000 residents aged 16-64	The number of apprenticeships started by Tameside residents of working age per 10,000	
Education, Achievement, and Equalities			W12 (LUI)	Number of apprenticeship achievements per 10,000 residents aged 16-64	The number of apprenticeships passed by Tameside residents of working age per 10,000	
Climate Emergency and Environmental Services		Infrastructure and Environment	I1 (GMM)	Particulate Matter Pollution in the Air (PM2.5, ug/m ³)	Particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns, which come from a range of sources including road vehicles, are a component of air pollution which impacts health. Concentrations are measured in micrograms of material per cubic metre of air	
Climate Emergency and Environmental Services			I2 (GMM)	Territorial Carbon Dioxide Emissions (kilotonnes)	Carbon dioxide emissions are a component of air pollution which contribute to climate change. This is measured as the total mass of CO2 emitted from within Tameside borders in thousands of metric tonnes	
Climate Emergency and Environmental Services	I3		Trees Planted Annually	The number of trees planted by the authority each year, both in green spaces and along roads. Planting season begins in October each year.		
Planning, Transport, and Connectivity	I4 (LUI)		Net Additional Dwellings per 10,000 Residents	The net number of additional dwellings completed within Tameside boundaries		
Planning, Transport, and Connectivity	I5 (LGI)		New Affordable Homes per 10,000 Residents	The total number of new affordable homes completed within Tameside boundaries		
Planning, Transport, and Connectivity	I6		Maximum Mean Download Speed	The average maximum broadband download speed received by Tameside households. This tracks the internet speeds experienced by residents and is impacted by the speeds people pay for from their internet service provider		
Planning, Transport, and Connectivity	I7 (GMFT)		Premises with Superfast-Capable (30Mbps) Network Infrastructure	The percentage of Tameside premises with network infrastructure capable of providing Superfast broadband. Not all of these premises may see these speeds if they don't have a superfast package with their internet service provider		
Planning, Transport, and Connectivity	I8 (LUI)		Premises with Gigabit-Capable Network Infrastructure	The percentage of Tameside premises with network infrastructure capable of providing Gigabit broadband. Not all of these premises may see these speeds if they don't have a gigabit package with their internet service provider		
Climate Emergency and Environmental Services	I9 (LGI)		Percentage of household waste recycled	The percentage of waste collected from Tameside households (or dropped off at a household waste recycling centre) which is sent for reuse, recycling, or composting		
Planning, Transport, and Connectivity	I10 (LUI)		% population walking / cycling 3+ times a week	The proportion of Tameside residents who walk or cycle for any reason three or more times a week		
Towns and Communities	Nurturing Communities	N1	Rate of PPIs per 1000	Number of public protection incidents filed per 1,000 Tameside residents		
Towns and Communities		N2	Street counts & estimates of rough sleepers	An estimate of the number of people sleeping rough in Tameside		
Towns and Communities		N3	Households owed a prevention or relief duty per 1,000 Chargeable Dwellings	The number of Tameside households owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty per 1,000 households		
Towns and Communities		N6 (GMM)	Crime Rate per 1,000 residents	The monthly number of crimes committed in Tameside known to Greater Manchester Police per 1,000 residents		
Population Health	Population Health and Wellbeing	Very Best Start	Reduce rate of smoking at time of delivery	V1	% Smoking at time of delivery	Percentage of pregnant women smoking at the time of delivery of their child

Population Health and Wellbeing		Childhood Obesity	V6 (LUI) (GMM) (LGI)	% of children in year 6 who are overweight or obese	Percentage of school children in year 6 with excess weight
Population Health and Wellbeing	Aspirations and Hope	Promote a whole system approach and Improving wellbeing and resilience	A9 (LUI)	Mean worthwhile ratings (adults 16+)	A statistical measure of how worthwhile Tameside residents feel their lives are, taken from the ONS National Wellbeing Survey
Population Health and Wellbeing	Nurturing Communities	Improve satisfaction with local community	N4 (LUI)	Mean life satisfaction ratings (adults 16+)	A statistical measure of how satisfied Tameside residents are with their lives, taken from the ONS National Wellbeing Survey
Population Health and Wellbeing			N5 (GMFT) (GMM)	Mean GM life satisfaction score, Y10 Students	A statistical measure of how satisfied year 10 pupils in Tameside are with their lives, taken from the GMCA BeeWell Survey
Population Health and Wellbeing			N7	Deaths due to suicide- rate per 100,000	The rate of deaths due to suicide in Tameside residents per 100,000
Population Health and Wellbeing					
Population Health and Wellbeing	Longer & Healthier Lives	Increase physical and mental healthy life expectancy	L1 (LUI)	Healthy Life Expectancy at birth	The average amount of time that Tameside residents can expect to live in good health
Population Health and Wellbeing			L2 (LUI)	Under-75 mortality rate form cardiovascular diseases considered preventable	The rate at which Tameside residents under the age of 75 died from cardiovascular diseases which were considered preventable
Population Health and Wellbeing			L3 (LUI) (GMM)	Mean happiness ratings (adults 16+)	A statistical measure of how happy Tameside residents are, taken from the ONS National Wellbeing Survey
Population Health and Wellbeing			L4 (LUI) (GMM) (LGI)	Prevalence of smoking, 18+. Survey Data	The percentage of adult Tameside residents who smoke
Population Health and Wellbeing			L5 (LGI)	% of population 'inactive' (<30m exercise a week)	The percentage of Tameside residents who do less than 30 minutes of exercise each week and are therefore classified as 'inactive'
Population Health and Wellbeing			L6 (LUI) (GMM) (LGI)	% adults (18+) classified as overweight or obese	Percentage of adults with excess weight
Population Health and Wellbeing			L8 (LGI)	Admission rate for alcohol related harm per 100k (Broad Definition)	The rate of admissions into hospital for alcohol related harm per 100,000 people. The broad definition includes a wider range of harms and scenarios where alcohol was a contributing factor
Population Health and Wellbeing		Reduce drug and alcohol related harm	L9 (LGI)	Deaths from drug misuse per 100k	The rate at which Tameside residents died from drug misuse per 100,000

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