

<b>2007-2008 Statement of Accounts Action Plan incorporating Statement on Internal Control action plan as at – 18 February 2008</b>			
<b>Improvement Area</b>	<b>Action Agreed</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. Risk management	Training Programme to be developed and implemented upon adoption of the updated Risk Management Strategy for Officers and Members	AD S&D ADFM	Risk Management arrangements were agreed by Cabinet in March 2007. A more comprehensive Risk Management Strategy has been approved by CMT and is going to Cabinet in April. The strategy action plan includes the development and delivery of a risk management training programme.
2. Asset Management	The preparation and adoption by the Council of a formal Asset Management Plan and the integration of this plan with the capital investment plan.	AD A&CM ADFM	The Council's Asset Management Plan has been formally adopted by Cabinet at its 6 February 2008 meeting. This will help inform the Council's Capital Strategy which is expected to be presented to Cabinet in May 2008.
3. Controls Assurance	Ensure that enhancement work on the bank reconciliation process and interface between the cash receipting system and the general ledger is completed by the end of July 2007. This will be comprehensively checked by Internal Audit in	ADFM	This work has been completed and was followed up by a planned internal audit as well as the Mid year Systems Review carried out by PKF in December 2007. A monthly bank reconciliation is now operating in full and reconciling items are at a reasonable level.

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	consultation with External Audit.		
4. Business Assurance	To implement business assurance framework for main business systems (including Debtors, Treasury Management, Creditors, Housing Benefits, NNDR, Council Tax, Housing Rents and Payroll) reporting and review processes.	ADFM PIA	This has been implemented and a nominated manager of each main system completes a business assurance return each month. Internal Audit will carry out audits of these returns as part of their planned audits for 2007-08 to ensure relevant evidence is available. This work was also reviewed by PKF as part of their Mid year systems review.
5. Business Continuity	To develop, test and maintain Business Continuity Plans for the Council's services as per agreed timetable.	AD S&D	The first phase of the business continuity programme has been completed and work started on the second phase. The timetable is being revised and it is likely that the end date will now be October 2008.
6. Data Quality	Data quality policy statement to be reviewed and approved by CMT as part of an annual review programme. Internal Audit	AD S&D CMT	The Council's new Data Quality Strategy has been considered by the Corporate Management Team and Scrutiny Committee and will be recommended for adoption to Cabinet in March 2008. This

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	<p>checks to be held on selected PI collection areas. Develop Members' scrutiny role to assure data quality. Data quality audit to be completed creating a central database of data collected and returned to various Central Government departments and agencies.</p>		<p>strategy sets out the Council's commitment to achieving and maintaining a high level of data quality across the council, setting regular review dates by CMT and Members. The quarterly and annual BVPI collection template has been completed as part of the Strategy's action plan which enables an extra level of accuracy checking and an audit trail of reporting responsibilities for the existing and new National Performance indicators.</p> <p>Reviews have already been undertaken by Internal Audit for key systems including the development of process maps and the collection of evidence of data returns on a quarterly basis.</p>
<p>7. Financial Procedures</p>	<p>To review and agree the Council's financial procedures with incorporated finance manual</p>	<p>ADFM CMT</p>	<p>Work continues on the finance manual and the Council's financial procedures are in the process of being reviewed. They will be redrafted and reported to CMT and Cabinet following the 2007-08 year end process.</p>

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8. Scheme of Delegation	To agree the Council's Scheme of Delegation	ADFM CMT	The Council's scheme of delegation in relation to spending levels was agreed by CMT in November 2007.
9. Communication	The Corporate Communications Strategy 2004-2007 and the Corporate Communications participation, Reputation and Branding guidance are scheduled to be reviewed during summer 2007.	ADET&P	This has still to be started – due to staff shortages and reorganisation this will be completed in 2008-09.
10. Information Technology	The implementation of key strategic projects as outlined in the Transformation Programme	ADCS	Transformation Board is overseeing progress on initial key projects, inc: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home/Mobile Working</li> <li>• Customer Relationship Management (CRM)</li> <li>• Property related systems</li> </ul>
11. Medium Term Financial Strategy – Four year plan	The preparation and adoption by the Council of a four year plan incorporating the Council's vision, Priorities and objectives	CMT	Initial steps have been taken in the Service and Financial Planning round in preparation for the 2008-09 budget setting process to establish the Council's position for the period 2008-09 to 2011-

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			12. Cabinet will receive a report in April which will seek approval of a Council Plan linked to the vision and the Sustainable Community Strategy.
12. Decent Homes Requirement	Achieve ALMO 2 star rating	ADH&HS/CMT	The ALMO has now been recognised as having a 2 star rating, and as a result has now been able to draw down long term loans to a value of £7.52 million before 31 March 2008. In 2008/2009 £11.974 million will be drawn down in further support of capital investment in Decent Homes.
13. Review of Effectiveness	Complete an independent forensic validation of the work undertaken in the action plan agreed at the Accounts Committee on 25 September 2007	CEx & ADFM	This report was completed and presented to Cabinet on 5 September 2007. Progress on recommendations of that report will be presented in a report to Cabinet on 12 March 2008.
14. Payment methods	Review all payment methods used to ensure effectiveness whether provided by contractors or	CEx & ADFM	We continue to systematically review all payments methods to ensure continuing effectiveness and value for money. The cash collection contract was successfully

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	in house		re-let during 2007 and a robust contract management process is in place. An option appraisal was carried out and it was considered the most efficient and cost effective route for the Council to take. In addition all cheque processing has been brought back in house as the most efficient and effective method to be in place.
15. Contractual Arrangements	Review procedures and processes for procurement of contracted services and the monitoring of performance	CEx & CMT	
16. Collection Fund	Review outcome for 2006/7 and reasons for deficit and review current position for 2007/8 and implications for future years	CEx & ADFM	A thorough investigation was carried out in the summer of 2007 which was followed up by an external audit commissioned by the Council which confirmed actions now being taken had addressed previous concerns. The report is on the agenda for this meeting of Cabinet.
17. Council Tax	Conduct an internal review	DHHCS	An interim Head of Revenues and

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Collection	of working practices aimed at improving collection performance.		Benefits was appointed in December 2007. A progress report is set out in the report attached. This outlines progress to date and action planned in the next few months.
18. Council Tax Collection	At the conclusion of the above (no. 17) conduct full business process and CRM review to identify long term improvements and efficiencies.	DHHCS	See point 17 above and point 20 below
19. Council Tax Debt Recovery	Investigate the reallocation of resources to improve debt recovery.	DHHCS	Specific debt recovery targets have now been set and progress is monitored and reported regularly to Cabinet.
20. Benefits Performance	Address 'backlogs' and review existing performance levels (including existing improvement planning)	DHHCS	A progress report is set out in the attached report. Resources have been allocated to assist. A further report on action and progress will be made in April.
21. Benefits Performance	Review targets and develop associated action planning	DHHCS	See point 20 above

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22. Benefits Service Development		DHHCS	The CRM pilot which was to be introduced into benefits has been put back slightly because of other working practices that will shortly be introduced and could possibly compliment the CRM system.