

LGA Corporate Peer Review – Newham 2023

Newham Draft Action Plan

Roadmap for our Continuous Development

Our action plan is structured around three key themes, designed to enhance operational efficiency, encourage collaboration, and uphold our commitment to serving our residents to the highest standard.

Getting the Basics Right

Strengthen our approach to prioritisation and modernise governance to enhance accountability and service delivery.

Supporting Our People

Create a unified, inclusive, 'One Newham, One Team' culture, strengthen our workforce & member development and enable deeper engagement with residents.

Meeting our Financial Challenges

Establish a sustainable financial outlook, and shared ownership of the temporary accommodation challenge.

Getting the Basics Right

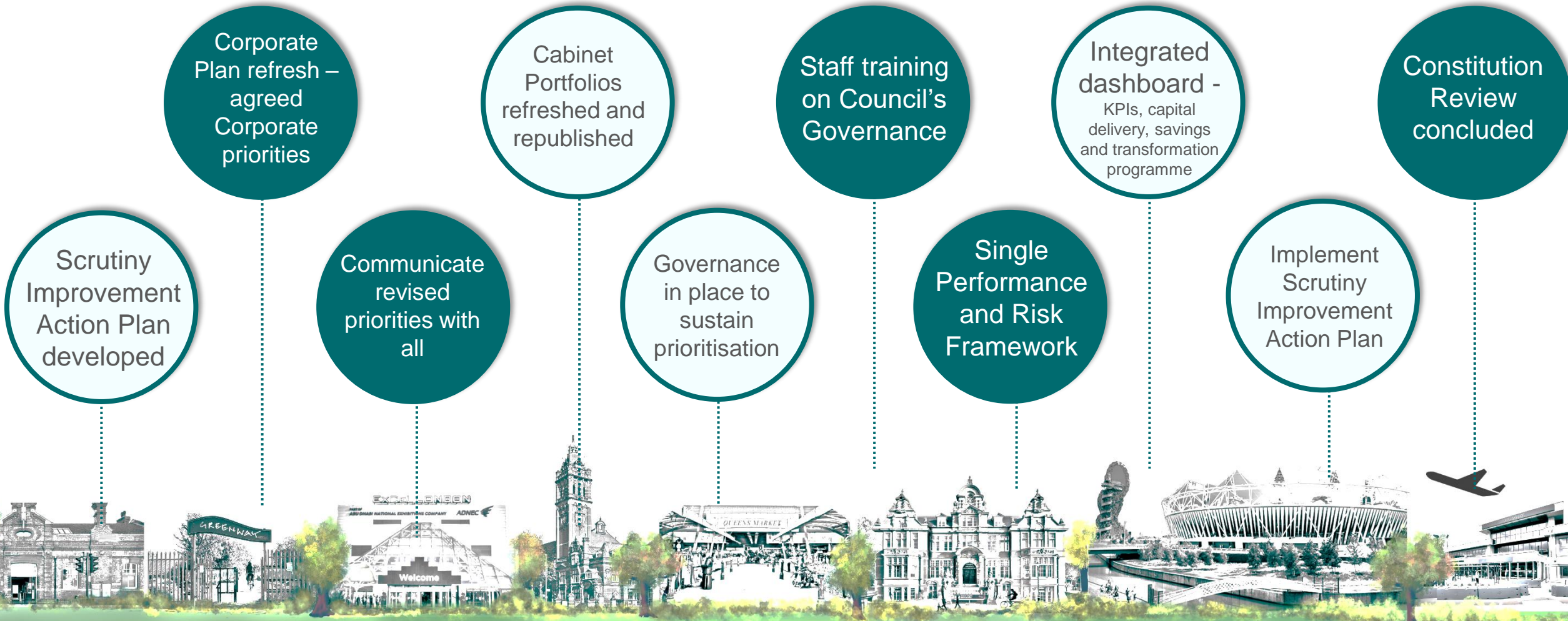
Recommendation 1 – Prioritisation

Recommendation 3 – Delegation of Responsibility

Recommendation 8 – Performance and Programme Management

Recommendation 9 – Overview and Scrutiny

Getting the Basics Right



Within 3 months

Within 6 months

Within 1 year

Recommendation no.1 - Prioritisation

An exercise of clarifying the short-, medium- and long-term nature of the council priorities is required. This will involve making difficult choices about what the council can, and cannot, do – and then committing to the decisions. It must include a focus on getting the basics right. It will be important that this is communicated across the organisation and to partners.

| Future State | | | |
|--|---|----------|--------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A streamlined Corporate Plan with a reduced number of priorities. • The streamlined priorities are meticulously resourced and prioritised. • Both staff and partners are well informed about the priorities and there is a feedback loop mechanism in place to ensure ongoing alignment with organisational goals. | | | |
| Ref | Actions | Priority | Activity needs to be completed by |
| 1.1 | Review the priorities within the Building a Fairer Newham Corporate Plan with a clearer focus on the key corporate priorities for the immediate, short, medium and long-term. | P1 | within 9 months |
| 1.2 | Develop and implement a clear and concise external and internal plan for communicating the refreshed priorities to all staff, members, and partners, tailored to be relevant and understandable within their specific roles. | P2 | Within 3 months |
| 1.3 | Ensure the Corporate Governance Framework review delivers clearer and stronger arrangements to oversee and sustain future prioritisation processes, ensuring consistent tracking and evaluation of progress against the set priorities. | P2 | Within 2 months (action in progress) |
| 1.4 | Review the operational structure of the Chief Executive Officer and Mayor’s Office to ensure that staffing arrangements and delivery methods align with the Corporate Governance Framework. | P2 | Within 6 months |

Recommendation no. 3 – Delegation of Responsibility

Clarify and adhere to delegations in order to engender shared responsibility and to increase the pace of delivery. Cabinet members and senior managers in CMT and the SLT should be empowered to step more into the corporate leadership space. The final phase of the constitutional review should be concluded urgently to support the governance framework, in accordance with best practice principles, and provide important clarity of the decision-making roles and responsibilities.

| Future State | | | |
|---|--|----------|---|
| Ref | Actions | Priority | Activity needs to be completed by |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear delegations of authority are established, ensuring that responsibilities are clearly assigned and understood, leading to more efficient decision-making and execution. • The governance framework is updated and aligned with best practice principles, incorporating the findings of the constitutional review. • Our decision-making processes are transparent, fair, and in line with established standards. | | | |
| 3.1 | <p>Conclude and implement the Constitutional Review to establish improved governance protocols that reflects current best practice and ensures the organisation's operations are transparent, accountable, and aligned with statutory requirements.</p> <p>Refresh the scheme of delegation as part of the Constitutional Review to provide clarity on decision making roles and responsibilities.</p> | P1 | <p>Stage 1 – conclude within 3 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Procedure Rules • Process for investigation of complaints <p>Stage 2 – conclude remainder of the review in stages within 9 months</p> |
| 3.2 | Design and deliver targeted training for managers, staff and members across the Council focusing on understanding Council's governance. This will include clear and practical guidance on protocols and understanding individual roles and responsibilities. | P2 | within 6 months |
| 3.3 | Republish refreshed Cabinet Portfolio scopes, setting out Cabinet Members, their portfolio of responsibilities and key officers supporting them. This should include clarification of the respective roles and delegated strategic and business as usual responsibilities and accountabilities of the Mayor, Cabinet, Scrutiny, and Chief Officers. | P2 | within 6 months |

Recommendation no. 8 – Performance and Programme Management

Review the differing approaches to performance management across the council, including the Cabinet Accountability Model, with a view to establish a single performance and risk framework which covers key performance indicators, capital delivery, savings programme delivery and transformation programme delivery.

| Future State | | | |
|--------------|--|----------|---|
| Ref | Actions | Priority | Activity needs to be completed by |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Governance structures and processes provide a transparent, council-wide overview of performance, simplifies reporting procedures, and strengthens decision-making processes, thereby ensuring strategic objectives are achieved with optimal efficiency and effectiveness. | | |
| 8.1 | Update the Cabinet Accountability Model to incorporate insights from peer challenge findings, ensuring alignment with best practice and organisational needs. Ensure that the refresh of the Corporate Governance Framework (linked with action 1.1) establishes a single performance and risk framework which covers key performance indicators, capital delivery, savings programme delivery and transformation programme delivery. Ensure this is baselined and embedded in the 2024 business planning cycle. | P2 | within 6 months (Action in progress) |
| 8.2 | Ensure the new single performance and risk framework is robustly monitored internally and reported externally, through the development of an integrated dashboard so all the information covering KPIs, capital delivery, savings programme and the transformation programme, are all accessible in the same place. | P2 | within 6 months |
| 8.3 | Review and improve Council's approach to handling complaints and member enquiries to enhance resident satisfaction and organisational responsiveness. | P2 | Within 6 months |

Recommendation no. 9 – Overview and Scrutiny

A comprehensive action plan must be developed and implemented urgently in response to the Scrutiny Improvement Review to ensure robust governance and ensure the effectiveness of the scrutiny function.

| Future State | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Scrutiny Improvement plan has been fully implemented which has strengthened mechanisms for scrutiny, resulting in more thorough and effective oversight of council activities and decisions.Stakeholders, including residents, council members, and external partners, have a higher level of confidence in the efficacy of the scrutiny function. | | | |

| Ref | Actions | Priority | Activity needs to be completed by |
|-----|---|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 9.1 | Develop and agree a robust and comprehensive action plan based on the findings and recommendations from the Scrutiny Improvement Review. | P1 | within 3 months |
| 9.2 | Implement the agreed action plan and undertake regular progress reviews to assess the implementation of the scrutiny improvement action plan. Ensure external input is engaged at the end of the first year of the action plan in order to evaluate the improvements achieved and identify areas for further enhancement. | P3 | within 12 months |

Supporting Our People

Recommendation 2 – Relationship Reset

Recommendation 6 – Culture Change and Workforce Strategy

Recommendation 7 – Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion

Recommendation 10 – Member Development

Supporting Our People

CMT and Cabinet – 'One Team' shared values agreed

New Workforce Strategy

Informal engagement opportunities of members and officers

Peer mentoring scheme rolled out for members

Inclusive Newham Commission established

Staff Forums and Senior Leadership – quarterly meetings

All members training needs workshop

Member development and induction programme

Internal EDI strategy aligned with workforce strategy

'One Team' culture evaluation and survey

Within 3 months

Within 6 months

Within 1 year

1 – 2 years



Recommendation no. 2 – Relationship Reset

Relationships at a senior level between politicians and senior officers, between the Mayor and Cabinet and other members, and within CMT urgently require resetting. This should be done in such a way as to create a 'one team' culture focused on delivering the best outcomes for Newham. This should include explicit clarification of the respective roles of the Mayor, Cabinet, Scrutiny, and Chief Officers, and this should be agreed and written down. Relationships between members and officers should be strengthened by creating time and space for members and officers to interact outside of formal meetings to understand each other's roles and responsibilities and build trust.

Future State

- Politicians and senior officers work seamlessly together, fostering a culture of teamwork and cooperation to achieve common goals.
- Roles for key stakeholders such as the Mayor, Cabinet, Scrutiny, and Chief Officers are clearly defined and documented, ensuring everyone understands their responsibilities and works together effectively.
- Backbenchers' roles are enhanced and an empowered Overview and Scrutiny function, enriching the decision-making process and overall council effectiveness, and upholding transparent governance and accountability.

| Ref | Actions | Priority | Activity needs to be completed by |
|-----|--|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 2.1 | Develop a 'One Team' leadership culture, supported by external facilitation and through collaborative workshops involving council officers and members to define and agree upon shared leadership values, behaviours, delegated responsibilities and accountabilities and agreed ways of working to deliver best outcomes for Newham residents. (Linked to action 3.2) | P1 | within 3 months |
| 2.2 | Review the impact of the new 'One Team' culture through an agreed evaluation and survey of leadership, key officers and partners to measure the improvements at the end of the first year. | P3 | 1 - 2 years |
| 2.3 | Ensure the new culture is fully embedded through a programme of opportunities for members and officers to engage outside of formal meetings to enhance mutual understanding of their roles and building trust through direct interactions. | P4 | within 12 months |
| 2.4 | Refresh our approach to working with strategic partners, establishing a 'Team Newham' network of strategic partnerships which is supported by strong and robust governance arrangements. | P2 | 6 months |

Recommendation no. 6 – Culture Change and Workforce Strategy

The council should develop a clear approach to culture change and organisational development. This should include the introduction of a new workforce strategy to address issues such as recruitment, retention, induction, EDI and performance management.

Future State

- Our employees feel more connected to their work and the Council, actively participating in decision-making processes and initiatives.
- Council experiences reduced turnover rates and effectively identifies and nurtures talent for future leadership roles through succession planning.
- New staff members receive comprehensive support and resources to integrate smoothly into their role.
- Council fosters a culture of continuous improvement and accountability, where employees are motivated to excel and achieve their goals, contributing to overall organisational success.

| Ref | Actions | Priority | Activity needs to be completed by |
|-----|---|----------|---|
| 6.1 | <p>Develop a workforce strategy. Incorporate the findings from the staff survey and the recently held staff conferences into the development of the strategy. Ensure the strategy targets key areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee engagement and well-being • Leadership and management practices • Recruitment and retention mechanisms • Career development and progression • Workforce and succession planning • Reward and recognition systems • Technology and innovation • Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts • Performance management • Ways of working and workstyles • Good quality staff inductions | P1 | <p>Quick wins within 3 months</p> <p>Strategy developed within 6 months</p> |
| 6.2 | <p>Ensure through the disaggregation of OneSource that an assessment of the organisational capability to deliver workforce, culture and OD development programmes is undertaken, and that all relevant support services have the capabilities to adapt to the new strategy once agreed.</p> | P2 | <p>Within 6 months</p> |

Recommendation no. 7 – Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

The council should strengthen its approach to EDI across the range of protected characteristics, including by building on the existing staff forums. This needs the full and active participation of the senior leadership team. As a minimum a dedicated strand on EDI should be included within the new workforce strategy plotting out actions to amplify the importance of EDI in Newham. This should build on the good work which has been delivered, and the council may wish to consider developing a dedicated EDI strategy. This would represent an opportunity to engage in genuine borough-wide co-production and co-development, empowering and engaging people, residents and communities in the equalities and inclusion work of the council.

Future State

- The council demonstrates a strong commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across all protected characteristics, ensuring fairness and equity in all aspects of its operations.
- There is an ongoing mechanism for empowerment and engagement of residents and communities in the council's equalities and inclusion work.

| Ref | Actions | Priority | Activity needs to be completed by |
|-----|---|----------|---|
| 7.1 | <p>Develop a broader internal EDI strategy aligned closely with the new workforce strategy, ensuring that our internal practices reflect our commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusivity across all aspects of our operations.</p> <p>Specific actions to support this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing mandatory protected characteristics shortlists • Providing a comprehensive coaching and interview training for staff across all equalities strands • Review apprenticeship entry requirements ensuring barriers to entry for candidates across all equalities strands • Review our approach to interviews and assessment with a greater focus more on aptitude testing | P3 | within 12 months |
| 7.2 | <p>Ensure greater leadership sponsorship for the staff forums by arranging quarterly meetings bringing the leads of each of the staff forums together with senior Council officers to ensure issues, insights and progress help to inform decision making at senior level.</p> | P2 | Within 3 months (action in progress) |
| 7.3 | <p>Ensure that the upcoming Inclusive Newham Commission addresses inclusion and challenges around inclusion across all protected equalities characteristics represented within Newham's diverse communities, with specific sub-commissions dedicated to targeted issues.</p> | P4 | 12 - 24 months |

Recommendation no. 10 – Member Development

Enhance the existing member development and induction programme. The council should consider establishing a member working group which identifies development need. Specific training and support should be commissioned, developed and offered to Cabinet members, committee chairs and committee members. It is important that dedicated member development and training provision is necessarily resourced.

Future State

- The new member development and induction programme better meet the needs of council members.
- Member training and development requirements are regularly reviewed and shaped in collaboration with members themselves, ensuring that the programme remains responsive to their evolving needs and priorities.
- Council members have access to tailored training and support tailored to their specific roles, whether they serve on the Cabinet, scrutiny committees, committee chairs or hold other formal roles.

| Ref | Actions | Priority | Activity needs to be completed by |
|------|--|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| 10.1 | Rapidly review the current member training and development programme against industry best practice programmes and through facilitated all members workshops, identify and capture training and skills development needs. The review should establish what capability and resource the organisation will need to establish in order deliver the future member training and development programme. | P2 | within 6 months |
| 10.2 | <p>Following the review, develop and implement the new member training and development programme, with a clear focus and differentiated offer organised around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core training for all members, encompassing financial management, government structures, community championing and advocacy and essential softer skills such as effective meeting chairmanship and conflict resolution. • Role-specific training and development programmes for those in specialised positions like Cabinet, Scrutiny, and Committee roles. • A refreshed induction for new members as a platform for delivering the above ongoing programmes • Ensuring that the new training programme adopts best-practice training and development approaches, incorporating interactive, practical and ongoing review as core elements to all training and development activities delivered. This should include practical, immersive experiences like site visits and staff engagement, with a focus on fewer, more impactful sessions that may include community walkabouts. | P3 | within 12 months |
| 10.3 | Create and roll out a peer mentoring scheme for Members, designed to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, insights, and skills between experienced and new members. | P3 | within 12 months |

Meeting Our Financial Challenges

Recommendation 4 – Medium-Term Financial Strategy

Recommendation 5 – Assets, Capital and Investment

Recommendation 11 – Temporary Accommodation

Meeting Our Financial Challenges

3-year
MTFS
developed

Financial
Monitoring
Briefings to
Executive

TA Oversight
Board
established

TA
Challenge
Awareness
Sessions

HRA
Business
Plan update

Medium to
long term
Transformation
Strategy

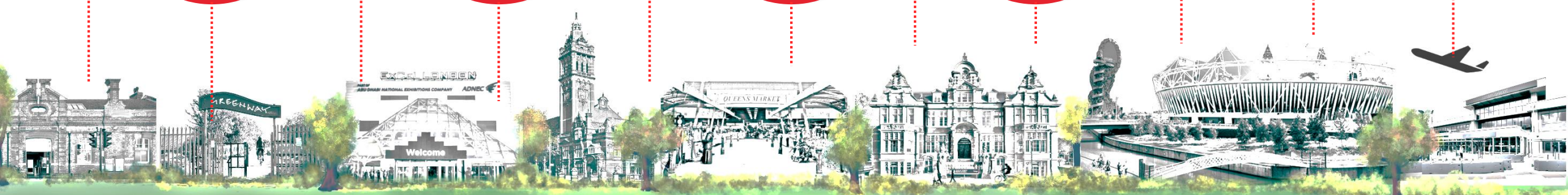
VFM audit of
discretionary
spend

Capital
Programme
Oversight
Framework

TA
Programme
Review
undertaken

Asset
Management
Strategy
developed

Long-term
Capital
Strategy
developed



Within 3 months

Within 6 months

Recommendation no. 4 – Medium-Term Financial Strategy

Develop a longer-term MTFS covering a minimum of three years forward look for revenue alongside longer term plans for capital. This should be accompanied by an updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan. In the whole, this should aim to demonstrate the future financial sustainability, and which is aligned to the strategic vision of the council and the BaFN.

| Future State | | | |
|--|---|----------|-----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our MTFS provides a forward look of at least 3 years for revenue alongside comprehensive plans for capital expenditure and an up-to-date HRA business plan. Staff, managers, and members demonstrate a thorough awareness and understanding of the MTFS, enabling informed decision-making and effective resource allocation across the organisation. | | | |
| Ref | Actions | Priority | Activity needs to be completed by |
| 4.1 | Develop a Medium-Term Financial Strategy that is aligned to the Corporate Plan and the transformational vision of the council, covering a minimum of three years forward look. | P2 | within 3 months |
| 4.2 | Undertake a comprehensive update of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan for the Council. | P2 | within 6 months |
| 4.3 | Undertake a Value for Money (VFM) audit of the discretionary spend to ensure the spend is achieving the necessary value for investment whilst delivering council's priorities. This could be delivered or supported by a zero-based budgeting exercise in key areas of Council spend. | P1 | within 3 months |
| 4.4 | Introduce monthly financial monitoring briefings to the Executive in 2024/25. | P1 | within 3 months |
| 4.5 | Develop a medium to long term transformation strategy and plan for the organisation, maximising the opportunities to deliver services as efficiently as possible while ensuring the organisation continues to support and deliver Building a Fairer Newham. | P2 | within 6 months |

Recommendation no. 5 – Assets, Capital and Investment

The council should develop and embed mechanisms to improve oversight and management of the council’s capital programme– including a dedicated long term capital strategy. This needs to clarify the risks of the existing and planned for increase in borrowing. Alongside this the council needs to develop a comprehensive asset management strategy. A review should be undertaken to ensure the council’s assets are contributing to organisational priorities which should consider future requirements, acquisitions, and disposals.

Future State

- Council has a clear roadmap for capital investment and borrowing decisions through its published dedicated long-term capital strategy is published.
- A clear governance mechanism is established for the oversight and management of the capital programme.
- Council has comprehensive asset management strategy which is aligned with the organisational priorities.

| Ref | Actions | Priority | Activity needs to be completed by |
|-----|---|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 5.1 | Develop a comprehensive asset management strategy to ensure Council’s assets are contributing to organisational priorities incorporating future requirements, acquisitions, and disposals. | P2 | within 6 months |
| 5.2 | Develop a long-term capital strategy to provide a clear roadmap for capital investment and borrowing decisions. | P2 | within 6 months |
| 5.3 | Establish a structured framework for overseeing the council's capital programme, ensuring clear collective lines of responsibility and accountability across CMT and Cabinet for delivery and value for money | P1 | within 3 months |

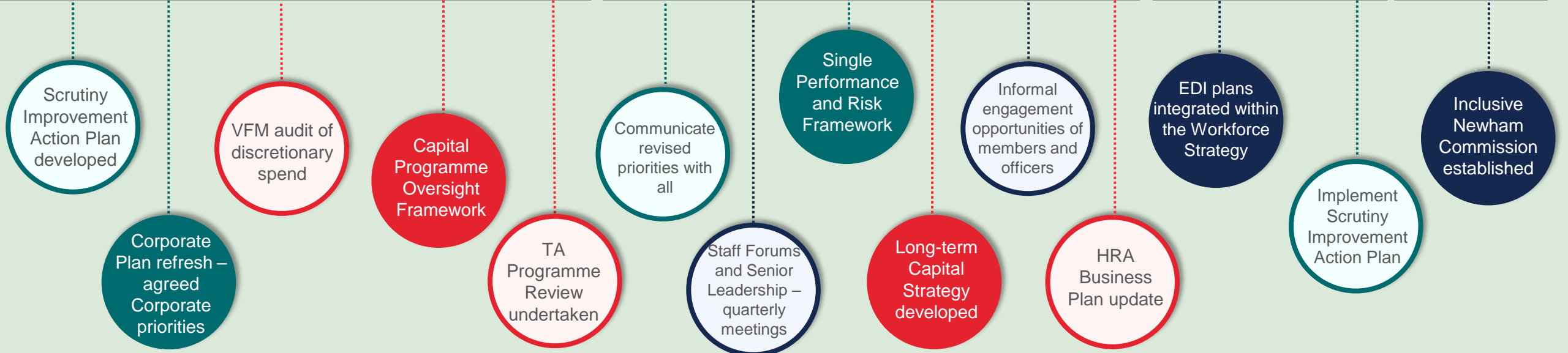
Recommendation no. 11 – Temporary Accommodation

There needs to be a whole organisational ownership of the temporary accommodation challenge. This is a crisis and requires a collective response, both to the immediate challenge and in grasping the strategic changes that are needed to address the underlying problem. The council should review all the levers it has to impact positively on this crisis, including those which involve some hard professional and political choices.

| Future State | | | |
|---|--|----------|-----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a shared sense of responsibility across all directorates and services to address the temporary accommodation challenge. • There is collective effort from all levels of the organisation to contribute to finding solutions, sharing resources, expertise and best practices. | | | |
| Ref | Actions | Priority | Activity needs to be completed by |
| 11.1 | <p>Create a dedicated TA board chaired by the Chief Executive to oversee and coordinate cross-organisational support and response to the temporary accommodation and homelessness challenge.</p> <p>Engage major supporting partners such as housing associations, charities, estate agents, with the TA board and involve them contributing to the collective response.</p> | P1 | within 3 months |
| 11.2 | Organise awareness sessions with staff, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and Senior Leadership Forum (SLF), and members to educate and inform them about the temporary accommodation challenge and its underlying issues. | P1 | within 3 months |
| 11.3 | Carry out an in-depth gateway review of the existing homelessness response programme to fine-tune the programme's approach and execution, with the specific aim to clarify and restate the resources needed for successful delivery. | P1 | within 3 months |



With 3 months Within 6 months With 1 year 1 - 2 years



Implementing the recommendations of the peer review across all three themes will drive positive outcomes for our residents, staff, and members.



RESIDENTS



STAFF



MEMBERS

Sustainable and effective public services

Inclusive resident engagement

Suitable solutions to TA challenge

Operational clarity and efficiency

Inclusive workplace culture

Improved knowledge of Council governance

Enhanced role clarity

Improved members training and induction

Collaborative member engagement