

Colchester Borough Council
Annual Governance Statement – Action Plan for 2021/22
Interim Review December 2021

Significant Internal Control Issues – Relating to 2020/21 Financial Year

No.	Issue	Action	Due Date	Responsible Officer	Position Update
1	The Council, like many other organisations, was subjected to deliberate attempts to disrupt its IT processes and potentially access information during the year. The attempts were successfully defeated, however they did highlight some weaknesses in the controls around IT usage. It is also acknowledged that cyber-attacks will continue to evolve, and the system controls will need to be constantly refined to be able to provide adequate defence against them.	A review of system controls is already completed after any attempted cyber-attack, and any necessary changes are immediately implemented to resolve any weaknesses. However, resources need to be dedicated to ensuring that controls are continuously reviewed and developed to guard against new methods of attack.	31/10/21	Head of Corporate & Improvement Services	A Cyber Maturity audit is underway, with a follow up meeting with the auditor booked for Dec 2021. The results should help us assess our processes and procedures, to show if we are adapting appropriately. We are also, through ICT, talking to suppliers about SIEM systems, which is a system the Council requires to help monitor its infrastructure. These systems are an essential additional investment in improving cyber defences.
2	The response to the pandemic highlighted the importance of effective partnership arrangements. This has included joint planning to alleviate acute health and social care service pressures, partnerships providing business support to help with local economic recovery, and the delivery of community support across multiple agencies, including NHS partners and the community and voluntary sector (CVS). The Annual Governance Statement and Strategic Risk Register acknowledge the essential role of partnerships, but these have not been reviewed considering the Covid pandemic and the Council's strategic priorities and risks.	A review of the Council's partnership arrangements, including partnerships considered strategically important to the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities, is undertaken.	31/12/21	Chief Operating Officer	The review of the Council's partnership arrangements has confirmed key relationships and delivery objectives. The impact of the Health and Care Act has made the ICS statutory, strengthening the NEE Alliance with integrated neighbourhood teams being rolled-out and clearer accountability arrangements with local government. The forthcoming Integration White Paper and the Levelling Up White Paper (now expected in January) will see further significant shifts in our partnership context. The Senior Management Team will continue to update and refine our partnership arrangements during Quarter 4 2021/22.