

Southampton City Council
Improvement and Assurance Board
Terms of Reference

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Panel is:
 - To provide external advice, challenge, and expertise to Southampton City Council in driving forward the development and delivery of their improvement plan and transformation programme
 - To provide assurance to key stakeholders including but not limited to Cabinet, External Auditors, Governance Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, regarding progress in delivering necessary savings and improvements.
 - To provide regular progress reports to the Council on the delivery of the improvement plan.
 - Seek assurance that key decisions are made cognisant of the financial implications and impact on in-year budgets and the long term MTFS.

2. This will involve:
 - Providing regular advice, challenge, and support to the Council on the full range of their improvement activities and in particular, on delivery of the recommendations in the CIPFA reports and transformation programme.
 - Regularly monitoring progress against key target improvement indicators, to ensure transformation outcomes and financial sustainability of the Council is achieved in two years.
 - Working together across specialisms, acknowledging as well as challenging key dependencies with a collegiate approach to identifying, managing and resolving risk.
 - Exploring key issues in detail through deep dives and specially commissioned pieces of work and through workshops.
 - Ensuring key decisions are made cognisant of the financial implications and impact on in-year budgets and the long term MTFS.

3. The panel will convene for the first time in October 2023 and is expected to conclude within two years, following regular reviews to ensure appropriate expertise and impact. The first review will take place after the Council's February 2024 budget report. Board meetings will be held in private, and any minutes produced will not be published.

4. The Improvement and Assurance Board will comprise:
 - Independent Chair
 - Leader of the Council
 - Chief Executive of the Council
 - Independent External Member (Finance)
 - Independent External Member (Childrens)
 - Independent External Member (Adults)
 - Deputy Leader (Cabinet Holder Adults, Housing & Health)
 - Cabinet Member Finance & Change

5. Additional independent external members may be appointed to the panel in the future if required.
6. Key Officers will attend the Board meetings as and when required.

Wider Local and Political Engagement

7. The Improvement Board will work closely and in concert with the other Governance arrangements across the Council.

Costs and Support

8. Any costs associated with the Improvement and Assurance Board will be met by Southampton City Council.
9. Independent Board members will be paid a fee for their work. The fee will be paid on a personal basis.
10. Board members will need to work flexibly as the demand of the role requires. However, Southampton City Council may wish to agree in advance the number of days advice to be provided by each panel member over each 12-month period.
11. Initial Improvement Board meetings to be held in person, on a monthly basis.
12. The Board will be supported by an effective programme office to ensure that the overall programme plan is proactively tracked, kept up to date and that issues and risks are managed on a day to day basis through officers.