

Plan, noting the use of the Capital Fund as part of the Asset Management Strategy for 2023/24 to 2032/33 and notes borrowing levels increased by £20.1 million. The Capital Strategy for 2024/25 to 2032/33 was approved by Council in March 2024.

- that the council has adequate arrangements in place to prevent and detect fraud or other irregularities.

D.3.2 Financial Sustainability

Within their report the Auditor notes that:

- the council has a sound approach to medium term and longer term financial planning with arrangements in place to manage ongoing financial challenges.
- the council has clearly identified funding gaps through its medium term and longer term financial planning and that savings plans have been agreed and are continually monitored, noting that the savings measures are well developed and soundly based.
- the council recognises that the use of one-off resources to balance the budget is not sustainable in the long term and is considering options to address the gap on a recurring basis, including options for consultation with the public.
- the council has been proactive in its asset management in respect of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in both operational buildings and council dwellings.
- reducing employer contributions will reduce the costs associated with pensions, thereby reducing some of the cost pressures faced by the council in 2024/25. From April 2024, the employer rate has been reduced from 21.8% to 17.6%. This change to employer contributions has been built into the council's financial budget plans for 2024/25 and overall budget gap identified for that year.

D.3.3 Vision, Leadership and Governance

The Auditor concludes that the council continues to have effective and appropriate governance arrangements in place that support effective scrutiny, challenge and informed decision making. They have observed that committee meetings are conducted in a professional manner and there is a reasonable level of scrutiny and challenge by members.

The auditor recognises that the Council Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring the council's compliance with the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and is responsible for the approval of all climate change strategies, policies, action plans and monitoring reports, acknowledging that the council reported progress against the targets set and a review in 2024 will consider the targets set as part of wider refresh of the Climate Change Strategy.

D.3.4 Use of Resources to Improve Outcomes

The Auditor reports that the council has an effective performance management framework in place and that measures are aligned to key priorities and outcomes and there is regular performance monitoring reporting to elected members.

The auditor notes the council has an established performance management framework that managers and councillors clearly understand, and that this provides a sound base for improvement. These arrangements include self-assessment, benchmarking, use of feedback to improve services, public performance reporting and regular scrutiny of performance reports.

The Accounts Commission issued a new Statutory Performance Information (SPIs) Direction in December 2021 which applies for three years from 2022/23, the auditor reviewed the council's arrangements for fulfilling the requirements of the Accounts Commission Report and concluded that the council has satisfactory arrangements in place.