

Update on the Actions from the Annual Assurance Statement and the Local Code of Governance.

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Wards affected: All

PROPOSED DECISION

The Committee is advised to NOTE the action taken to address the areas for improvement arising for the Annual Assurance Statement and the adopted Local Code of Governance.

Corporate Implications

1. The Council is required to review the effectiveness of its system of internal control and publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The AGS forms part of the published Statement of Accounts.
2. In producing the Annual Governance Statement, the Council has adopted guidance issued by CIPFA/SLACE "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016", which as its cornerstone has seen the introduction of a Local Code of Governance.
3. A half yearly update is provided to the Audit Committee as regards the implementation of the agreed areas for improvement.

Executive Summary

4. As part of the reporting process for the 2017/18 Annual Governance Statement, a series of areas for improvement were identified. The purpose of this report is to provide an update as regards the progress that has been made in implementing the agreed areas for improvement arising from the review of both the Annual Assurance Statement and the Local Code of Governance.
5. Strategic Management Board have oversight and approval of both the processes used in compiling the Annual Governance Statement and Local Code, as well as oversight of the progress that has been made in the timely implementation of agreed areas for improvement.
6. The Modernising Local Government agenda and the awaited decision has had an impact on the decision to commit resources to several of the areas for improvement.
7. Detailed in table 1 are the 5 areas for improvement identified from the 2017/18 Annual Assurance Statement.
8. Detailed in table 2 are the 7 areas for improvement identified from the 2017/18 Local Code of Governance review.

Table 1 below provides an update from the respective Head of Service as to the progress made implementing the Area for Improvement from the review of the Annual Assurance Statement.

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION OWNER	COMMENTARY & SUPPORTING INFORMATION	Status: Open (O) Closed – implemented (CI) Closed - not to be actioned (CNA)
<p>1 People</p> <p>Partial compliance in that job descriptions (JD's) need to be reviewed in line with individual performance development plans.</p>	<p>All Heads of Service via their respective Managers as part of the HR Performance Management Framework.</p>	<p>Expectation:</p> <p>Assurance obtained from Service Managers that as part of the Councils performance management process that JD's have been confirmed as being as relevant, reflective of roles performed and can be used to prepare an applicable personal development plan</p> <p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p> <p>JDs and Person Specifications are now up to date in all service areas.</p> <p>Head of HR, Shared Support Services</p> <p>JD's may be reviewed as part of the Performance Management cycle and/or in the event of changes in services or to service structures, as appropriate. PDP's are considered as part of the Performance Management Framework conversations.</p> <p>Head of Housing & Environment</p> <p>Full set of job descriptions have been obtained and are currently under review. A gap has been identified to be addressed by December 2018. All other JDs are current, fit for purpose in present structures and suitable for preparing personal development plans.</p>	<p>Open</p>

		<p>Head of Finance and Commercial</p> <p>In light of the Finance consultation exercise (October 2018) JD's are being reviewed.</p> <p>All other Services areas have up to date JD's and are used as part of the annual performance review process.</p> <p>Head of Community Services</p> <p>Recommendation made too late for this year's performance assessment cycle, so we have conducted a one off review to pick this up. HR can confirm compliance as they have been provided with the JDs for the employees HR file. From their response we may be the only Service to have officially filed them.</p> <p>Head of Planning and Sustainability</p> <p>Major refresh in progress in the approach taken to setting objectives in performance management, which has been the priority; propose to turn to Job Descriptions as part of the end of year review, once the refreshed approach to objectives is better embedded.</p> <p>Interim Head of Regeneration and Investment</p> <p>JDs are held for all staff in Parking Services, Estates and Economic Development; they are reviewed as part of the annual appraisal process.</p>	
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<p>2 Use of Resources</p> <p>Partial compliance in regards to the Services being able to demonstrate performance levels across the range of services provided.</p> <p>NB this was a theme from the 2016/17 AAS process</p>	<p>All Heads of Service via Policy Team</p>	<p>Expectation:</p> <p>Services are able to demonstrate via periodic monitoring that outlines Service performance across a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators as to the effectiveness of service delivery</p> <p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p> <p>Existing indicators across the Council need to align with the new Corporate Objectives set out in the Corporate Plan. Work is underway to develop high level and service based indicators which measure Corporate Plan delivery.</p> <p>Head of HR, Shared Support Services</p> <p>Monthly (quarterly for HR) performance dashboards are in place for each service area.</p> <p>Housing & Environment</p> <p>A range of additional service indicators have recently begun use in Housing to measure effectiveness of intervention work, outcomes for service users and financial savings, and to monitor the impacts of new homelessness legislation and Universal Credit. The key indicators in Environmental Health are food hygiene inspections and LAPPC process inspection and admin. These areas have the potential to impact on the Council's reputation if work is not completed and annual inspections and other tasks are not carried out. Reporting on these work areas and any contract management involved is to be part of the 1-1 supervision and appraisal process, with periodic updates for Cabinet member.</p>	<p>Open</p>

		<p>Homelessness Strategy objectives are monitored and progress is reported to the Housing Forum.</p> <p>Customer feedback cards are used in the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants and negative reports are investigated by team leaders and used to improve the service.</p> <p>Head of Financial and Commercial</p> <p>Each Service has a range of Performance Indicators which are reviewed on a monthly basis as part of the Service Manager meeting.</p> <p>Head of Community</p> <p>Performance indicators relate almost entirely to the performance management frameworks as set out in contracts and grant agreements, for which quarterly monitoring is in place and firmly embedded.</p> <p>Head of Planning and Sustainability</p> <p>New software introduced that allows real time reporting of quantitative performance data earlier in the year. This has been rolled out to all staff. Awaiting roll out of the corporate software as the point at which to refresh what performance measures need to be measured across the service, and reported corporately.</p> <p>Interim Head of Regeneration and Investment</p> <p>Performance indicators are being developed for Parking Services, Estates and Economic Development and will be monitored going forward.</p>	
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<p>3 Information Governance and Records Management</p> <p>Partial compliance in that further work was required in relation to the management of paper and electronic records which would enable both the ease of location and disposal of records at the appropriate time.</p> <p>NB this was a theme from the 2016/17 AAS process.</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p> <p>Significant progress in the management of paper and digital records but there remain some areas where further work is required. There are significant ongoing issues in managing records to enable them to be located and disposed of at the appropriate.</p>	<p>Open</p>

<p>4 Business Continuity (BC)</p> <p>Partial compliance in that further work was required in ensuring that Services had made adequate arrangements to ensure continued service delivery and that the arrangements have been communicated to all relevant staff.</p> <p>In addition to the above, a test (dry run) should be undertaken to validate the process detailed in the BC Plan on a corporate or on a Service by Service basis.</p> <p>NB this was a theme from the 2016/17 AAS process</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p> <p>Within DLP we have reviewed and updated our Business Continuity Plans and we are in the process of producing a single plan for the whole service by bringing the individuals ones together but we have plans in place.</p> <p>In April 2017 the Senior Management Board agreed a changed approach to Business Continuity which required revised BCP's to be produced for all service areas to identify the steps necessary to maintain service in light of a significant event. All services have now reviewed their BCP's and a comprehensive set of plans are now available and can be linked the overarching Corporate BCP and the plans can now be scheduled for testing.</p>	<p>Open</p>

<p>5 Project Management</p> <p>Partial compliance in that Lessons Learnt reports are not produced and shared corporately for projects completed within a Service, during the year.</p> <p>NB this was a theme from the 2016/17 AAS process.</p>	<p>Corporate Director – Regeneration and Growth for completed projects managed under Prince 2</p>	<p>Significant progress has been made in establishing programme boards; introducing a strict methodology and regular templates to provide a dashboard on projects and enable progress on delivery to be monitored.</p> <p>As regards producing and sharing Lesson Learnt Reports, this is to be resolved by the creation of a folder on the Councils shared directory. In addition all Projects Managers are to be mandated to include all recently completed Lesson Learnt reports in order that they can be shared corporately.</p> <p>Head of Community: Community – confirmed that every completed project has an End Project Report, which incorporates key lessons learned.</p>	<p>Open</p>

Table 2 below provides an update from the respective Head of Service as to the progress made implementing the Area for Improvement from the review of the Local Code of Governance.

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION OWNER	COMMENTARY & SUPPORTING INFORMATION	Status: Open (O) Closed – implemented (CI) Closed - not to be actioned (CNA)
<p>1 Annual report – Feedback</p> <p>Annual report summarising service improvements completed as a result of the feedback the Council has received.</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p> <p>The proposal was to introduce an annual report which considered the learning across the year. Instead an IT system has been introduced which allows for quarterly reporting and includes learning reported each quarter. This is better than Annual Reporting. The IT system includes Information Requests (FOI.) alongside Complaints to provide a comprehensive feedback report.</p>	<p>Closed - not to be actioned (CNA)</p>
<p>2 Annual report – refreshed Corporate plan</p> <p>Progress to be reported on annual basis to assess the implementation, delivery and monitoring of the refreshed corporate plan.</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p> <p>A new Corporate Plan was approved and during this year the plan has been communicated to staff through Talking Point; and material such as screen savers has been revised to communicate the key priorities. The commitment to MLG prevented the performance management framework from being developed, however work is now underway to establish a set of Bellwether (indicative measures) which enable performance against the Corporate objectives to be measured. Services are also underway reviewing their performance management to align with the new plan. Project delivery is measured in accordance with the Corporate Plan.</p>	<p>Open</p>

<p>3 Quarterly financial and performance reporting.</p> <p>Progress to be reported to assess the purpose and applicability the quarterly financial and performance process to be introduced in 2018/19. (1)</p>	<p>Head of Finance and Commercial</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p> <p>Once the new performance management framework is in place there will be a need to link it to the budget planning and financial management.</p> <p>Head of Finance and Commercial</p> <p>Quarterly financial reporting of revenue and capital is now embedded within the reporting framework with regular quarterly reports provided to Cabinet. In addition monthly reports are reviewed by SMB.</p>	<p>Open</p> <p>Closed – implemented (CI)</p>
<p>4 Review of Constitution & wider decision making process</p> <p>Review covering both the Constitution and the wider decision making & governance arrangements to be undertaken.(2)</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p> <p>Initial review of Constitution was undertaken and work begun on improvements to key sections. The work was put on hold by Members in December 2017 pending a final decision on Modernising Local Government.</p>	<p>Open</p>
<p>5 Review of Communications Policy</p> <p>Review to be undertaken to assess the purpose and content of the current Communications policy.(2)</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p> <p>A new vision and strategic direction was identified but the new Communications strategy has not been completed pending a final decision on Modernising Local Government.</p>	<p>Open</p>

<p>6 Review of Engagement Strategy & toolkit</p> <p>Review to be undertaken to refresh and update the current Engagement strategy and toolkit (2).</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p> <p>Due to Modernising Local Government, it has not been appropriate to engage in a new Engagement strategy until a decision was announced. Significant engagement work was undertaken as part of the preparation of the representations.</p>	<p>Open</p>
<p>7 Household Survey</p> <p>Consider the commissioning of a Household Survey during 2018/19 (2).</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p>	<p>Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy</p> <p>Due to Modernising Local Government, it has not been appropriate to engage in a new Household Survey until a decision was announced. Significant engagement work was undertaken as part of the preparation of the representations.</p>	<p>Open</p>

