

Annual Governance Statement Update

| | |
|---|--|
| Final Decision-Maker | Audit, Governance and Standards Committee |
| Lead Head of Service | Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive Summary

This report provides the Committee with an update on those matters identified in the Annual Governance Statement as requiring action.

Purpose of Report

For noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

To note the update on progress with the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan.

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
|--|------------------|
| Audit, Governance and Standards Committee | 16 November 2020 |

Annual Governance Statement Update

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Impact on Corporate Priorities | Effective corporate governance arrangements ensure the Council's priorities are understood and delivered. | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Cross Cutting Objectives | Effective corporate governance arrangements ensure the Council's cross cutting objectives are understood and delivered. | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Risk Management | The AGS considers and gives assurance on the Council's approach to risk management. | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Financial | Carrying out the actions identified in the AGS helps to ensure that the Council maintains high governance standards. | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |
| Staffing | The action plan will be delivered within current staffing resources. | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Legal | Effective governance ensures that the Council is acting lawfully. | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Privacy and Data Protection | Maintaining high standards in relation to privacy and data protection have been identified in the Annual Governance Statement as a key part of the governance framework and carried forward into the action plan and update. | Policy and Information Team |
| Equalities | Good governance will ensure the Council is adhering to the public sector equality duty. | Policy & Information Manager |
| Public Health | No implications. | Public Health Officer |
| Crime and Disorder | No implications. | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Procurement | No implications. | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Annual Statement of Corporate Governance for 2019-20 was considered and approved by the Committee on 29 July 2019. The statement contained an Action Plan for 2020-21. This report provides an update on the progress made against the Action Plan.
- 2.2 The actions outlined in Appendix A arose from areas identified in the corporate governance statement as requiring additional action to maintain the Council's governance standards.
- 2.3 A number of areas were identified for action including:
- Data Protection
 - Community Resilience
 - Exit from the EU
 - Financial Risk
- 2.4 Progress has been made across all areas as outlined in Appendix A. A full report on data protection including a new Action Plan created as a result of our self-assessment against the Information Commissioner's Office accountability framework tracker is also included on this agenda for information. Work has continued on updating the Council's Record of Processing Activity and the outcomes of the review of CCTV. The pandemic did impact the speed at which this has been completed as the Policy and Information Team were redeployed to assist the Council's response via the Community Hub.
- 2.5 Work on building community resilience and capturing the benefits of the developments in our relationships with community groups, voluntary organisations and parish councils has begun. The Council will be developing a local compact and updating the Parish Charter to reflect the role of all our community groups in emergencies. Communities, Housing and Environment Committee will oversee this work with an update expected in February 2021.
- 2.6 Financial resilience was identified as a risk in the Council's corporate risk register and as a result was included on the Action Plan. The financial impact of Covid-19 is monitored in parallel with regular monthly financial reporting and monthly reports are submitted to the Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) setting out the impact of Covid-19 for Maidstone Borough Council. The impact of Covid-19 is specifically addressed in our quarterly financial performance monitoring reports to members via the service committees.
- 2.7 The corporate risk register included a risk created by the potential exit from the European Union (EU) on unfavourable terms. Officers with emergency planning responsibilities are now meeting regularly to plan for any short-term impacts from EU transition on 31/12/20. The Council is part of the Kent Resilience Forum and participates in regular tactical and strategic coordination groups to plan for EU transition. Individual service

area contingency plans have been reviewed and updated in light of potential threats arising from EU transition.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 The Committee could decide not to consider the Action Plan. Considering the Action Plan is however a key part of the Committee's governance remit.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 As stated in section 3.1 considering the Action Plan is a key part of the Committee's governance remit. The Committee is asked to note the update provided on the actions developed as a result of the annual review of governance.

5. RISK

5.1 This report is presented for information only. Key corporate risks have been identified in the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 The Committee is invited to provide feedback on progress with the Action Plan.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 This report has been provided to update the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and will be publicly available via the Committee papers on the Council's website. Any recommendations for further action by the Committee in regard to the Action Plan will be carried forward.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Annual Governance Statement Action Plan Update

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.