

Annual Governance Statement – Mid-Year Update

Final Decision-Maker	Audit, Governance and Standards Committee
Lead Director	Angela Woodhouse, Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Angela Woodhouse, Director of Strategy, Insight 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 for 2021-22 as requiring action.

Purpose of Report

For noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That the update on progress with the current Annual Governance Statement Action Plan, at Appendix A, be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Audit, Governance and Standards Committee	16 January 2023

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1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Effective corporate governance arrangements ensure the Council’s priorities are understood and delivered.</p>	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>Effective corporate governance arrangements ensure the Council’s cross cutting objectives are understood and delivered.</p>	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Risk Management	The most significant risks from the Corporate Risk Register are included within the action plan in the Annual Governance Statement.	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Financial	Carrying out the actions identified in the action plan helps to ensure that the Council maintains high governance standards.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Legal	Section 6(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires all local authorities to:	Interim Team Leader (Contentious

	a) conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control required by regulation 3; and (b) prepare an annual governance statement; Under the Council's Constitution one of the functions of the Committee is to oversee the production of the Council's Annual Governance Statement. The Annual Statement demonstrates measures are in place to ensure good governance arrangements which enable the Council to meet its statutory requirements.	and Corporate 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.	Corporate Insight, Communities and Governance team
Equalities	Good governance will ensure the Council is adhering to the public sector equality duty. The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	No implications	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	No implications	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Procurement	No implications	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Biodiversity and Climate Change	Environmental impact is included in the review of the governance arrangements	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Annual Statement of Corporate Governance for 2021-22 was considered and approved by the Committee in July 2022 before being signed by the Leader and Chief Executive. The statement contained an Action Plan for 2022-23. This report provides an update on the progress made against the Action Plan as set out in Appendix A.

- 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:
- Embedding the new process for Part II items
 - Data Protection Action Plan
 - Actions to ensure compliance with the Financial Management Code
 - Learning from Governance Failings at other Local Authorities
 - Community Governance Review
 - Effective decision making and constitution
 - Transparency of decision making on Garden Communities
 - Key Corporate Risks
- 2.4 Progress has been made across all actions as outlined in Appendix A. The new process for part II items was introduced when the new governance model and constitution were brought in, in May 2022. The Monitoring Officer and Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance delivered training to officers across the council on the new process. The starting point for reports will always be in favour of publication of as much information as possible about the information considered and decisions the council takes, and only in limited circumstances should information be withheld, where there is a justification, in law, for doing so. Where this information is withheld it is via an appendix rather than the whole report.
- 2.5 Audit, Governance and Standards Committee received an update in November on progress against the Data Protection Action Plan as part of the Information Governance Report. Actions taken include a review of operational guidance, policies and procedures and then promotion to staff. Actions in progress include how we record and document staff reading and understanding policies and procedures and completing a review of CCTV which is currently underway.
- 2.6 With regard to the Community Governance Review, the terms of reference have been adopted and the first stage consultation is underway. It closes on 29 January with the proposals for 2nd stage consultation due to be agreed by D&GP Committee in March 2023.
- 2.7 A working group has just been set up to review the constitution and recommend any changes required to ensure effective decision making led by Councillors.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee could decide not to consider the Action Plan update provided at Appendix A, however the Action Plan is a key part of the Committee's governance remit. The Committee can also request further information to seek assurance on the progress of the Action Plan if required.
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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.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only. An update on the Key corporate risks has been included in the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The Committee is invited to provide feedback on progress with the Action Plan.
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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.
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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
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.