

AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**23 November 2015**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes**Annual Governance Statement 2015/16, Action Plan Update**

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

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. The updated annual governance action plan be noted
2. Further action if required be identified and agreed

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Audit, Governance and Standards Committee	23 November 2015

Annual Governance Statement 2015/16, Action Plan Update

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In July 2015 the committee approved the Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan. The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with an updated action plan.
 - 1.2 The report provides an update on the action that has been taken to improve governance.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The action plan attached at Appendix A was produced and published with the Annual Governance Statement.
 - 2.2 The actions arose from areas identified in the governance statement as requiring additional action and assurance.
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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.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The committee is asked to consider the updated action plan attached at Appendix A, and make recommendations for further action as appropriate.

Areas of Action

- 4.2 A number of areas are covered by the action plan including:
 - Information Management
 - Corporate Governance
 - Strategic Plan
 - Resident Survey
 - Risk Register
 - Planning Support Shared Service
 - Committee System
 - Audit Reviews
 - Mayor Appointment Process
- 4.3 Action has been taken in all areas. The Data Protection and Emergency Planning audit reviews following action are now no longer rated as weak.

Teams across the council have been involved in developing the corporate risk register led by the Audit Committee. Common themes have been identified across services relating to financial and staffing pressures, there will be Senior Officers and Councillors workshop in December. The decision for Tunbridge Wells to leave the planning support shared service was taken on 5 November 2015. Arrangements are now in place to manage this process. The Democracy Committee will conduct a formal review of the committee system. The review of the Mayor appointment process has been conducted and a report will be coming to the Democracy Committee.

- 4.4 The resident survey includes budget consultation as well as consultation on the top issues for our residents, trust in the council and value for money. The results will inform the update of our Strategic Plan and new Medium term Financial Strategy.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The updated action plan has been reported to and informed by the Corporate Governance Group. Councillor consultation is via this committee.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The Annual Governance Statement and action plan are published on the Council's website and communicated to Corporate Leadership team

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	High standards of corporate governance are integral to achieving our corporate priorities.	Head of Policy and Communications
Risk Management	The annual governance statement has identified	Head of Policy and Communications
Financial	Good governance is integral to good financial arrangements	Section 151 Officer
Staffing	The action plan includes ensuring staff are aware of our priorities.	[Head of Service]
Legal	Good governance arrangements are essential in ensuring robust and lawful decision-making and therefore minimising the risk of legal challenge. The action plan focuses on specific area to ensure a programme of continuous	Team Leader Corporate Governance

	improvement.	
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	No implications from this action plan	Policy & Information Manager
Environmental/Sustainable Development	No implications from this action plan	Head of Policy and Communications
Community Safety	No implications from this action plan	Head of Policy and Communications
Human Rights Act	No implications from this action plan	Head of Policy and Communications
Procurement	No implications from this action plan	Head of Policy and Communications
Asset Management	No implications from this action plan	Head of Policy and Communications

8. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix A, Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2015-16

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annual Governance Statement 2014-15