

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Report prepared by Angela Woodhouse

1. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ACTION PLAN UPDATE

1.1 Issue for Decision

- 1.1.1 To note the update on the action plan as reported and recommend further actions as appropriate.

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Policy and Communications

- 1.2.1 That the update on the annual governance action plan be noted and the Committee recommend further action if required.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.3.1 The Audit Committee are a key part of the governance structure at the Council. In July this year the Committee approved the annual governance statement, it was agreed that an update on the action plan arising from the annual governance statement would be reported to the Audit Committee on a six monthly basis. This provides the opportunity for greater Member involvement throughout the year. An updated action plan has been provided at **Appendix A**
- 1.3.2 Since the action plan was presented in July action has been taken in all the areas highlighted for further development. The Corporate Governance working group has held two quarterly meetings. The group considered and agreed a revision to budget headings in the constitution within the budget and procedure rules to reflect CIPFA requirements. The Council's risk management approach has also been considered and referred to Corporate Leadership Team. It has been agreed that a new strategic risk register will be created in 2015-16 for the new Strategic Plan.
- 1.3.3 With regard to an update on the audit reports with limited assurance in 2013-14, updates were not available as the reviews are subject to formal sign-off. The Audit Team can provide an update on the action

taken in respect of those reviews at the meeting should Members wish to ask questions regarding there progress.

- 1.3.4 The Cabinet has been proactive in engaging the public in decision making through its approach to the budget and strategic plan consultation. This has involved face to face engagement with residents of the borough at venues throughout the borough to determine what residents would prioritise in relation to budget spending. The Council has also engaged Design South East to assist with resident involvement in the Local Plan. A new Parish Charter is also in the process of being drafted to ensure a consistent and agreed approach to parish engagement for key services such as Planning.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 The Committee could choose not to receive an update on the progress with the Annual Governance Statement. However, this would reduce member involvement in Governance.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.6.1 The Council has a Corporate Priority to achieve corporate and customer excellence, high standards of corporate governance are integral to achieving this priority

1.6 Risk Management

- 1.7.1 The Statement incorporates the essential elements of a well-managed Council which ensures that many elements of the Strategic Risk Register are addressed.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1. Financial
2. Staffing
3. Legal
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
6. Community Safety

- 7. Human Rights Act
- 8. Procurement
- 9. Asset Management

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

Appendix A - Annual Governance Statement Action Plan Update

<u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u>		<u>THIS BOX MUST BE COMPLETED</u>	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, this is a Key Decision because:			
.....			
Wards/Parishes affected:			
.....			