

Subject: ACTION PLAN UPDATE - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/2021

Report to: Audit and Risk Committee – 7 March 2022

Report by: Kaye Bate, Corporate Risk Officer



SUBJECT MATTER

This report seeks to inform members of the progress made in relation to further work identified / action required to address issues identified in the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 action plan for the following year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Committee receives and note the action taken to address the issues identified.

1 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Annual Governance Statement was approved by Audit and Risk Committee on 14 June 2021.
- 1.2 The review process highlighted areas where further work was required to strengthen the governance and internal control environment. Detailed below is action taken to address the issues raised or proposed action to be taken.

2 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT – ACTION PLAN

- 2.1 The COVID 19 pandemic has had an impact on the delivery of the action plan for 2021/2022. Work is continuing to ensure that there are robust governance arrangements, risk management and internal control measures in place within the Council. Policies and procedures are being reviewed and implemented throughout the Council to ensure the safety and wellbeing of officers, members and customers during the pandemic and preparation for returning to the office environment. Systems of internal control were required to be reviewed which resulted in revised working practices and processes at the start of the lockdown and the requirement to introduce alternative / additional control measures.

At the start of the pandemic Officers were re-deployed to assist with the delivery of the service offered by the new Community Team and COVID 19 business grants. Whilst some of this work has continued during the year, the management team along with their services have continued to deliver on a number of the Councils priorities and provide a response to the pandemic.

- 2.2 The table below illustrates action taken to address the 6 key issues / actions raised in the action plan for 2021/2022.

	Further work / areas to be addressed		Responsible Officer	Due Date
1	Internal Audit recommendations should be implemented within the agreed timeframe and adequately actioned by management to ensure we have robust internal controls environment to safeguard the council's assets in all service areas. COVID 19 has impacted on the delivery of recommendations by the agreed implementation date, although it is hoped that this work will start to be prioritised.	Work continuing to implement audit recommendations by the due date and progress is being made for those recommendations with future dates. Progress is also being made to implement outstanding recommendations. ELT and Audit and Risk Committee receive regular update reports. To ensure responsibility and accountability all recommendations are assigned to Heads of Service or Directors to ensure that the appropriate action is taken and where there are resource issues these will be discussed at ELT. COVID-19 has had an impact on the delivery of some recommendations by the due date. Work in Progress	Management Team	30/06/2022
2	The Officer Register of Gifts and Hospitality process is to be reviewed during 2021/2022 and further work is to be undertaken to raise awareness and ensure compliance.	Register of Gifts and Hospitality to be held electronically, process currently under review. Work in Progress	Corporate Services Manager	31/03/2022
3	Procurement and Contract Management - The procurement strategy will be updated and presented for approval. The process for the review and publication of the contracts register is to be finalised. The contract management arrangements are to be reviewed by the Monitoring Officer to strengthen this area of governance.	The first draft of the strategy has been produced and reported to ELT in December 2021 and will then be reported through the Committee approval process. Further work to strengthen governance and contract management arrangements will be undertaken once the Procurement Strategy has been approved. Work in Progress	Finance Director and Monitoring Officer	31/10/2021 Revised Date: 31/03/2022
4	Corporate Governance Internal Audit Report 2018/19 – The outstanding recommendation for site paper storage arrangements to be reviewed to ensure compliance with GDPR regulations is to be implemented.	With minimal staff working from the offices due to COVID this continues to be difficult to recommence. Agile working arrangements to be introduced in early 2022 at which point this project can recommence. A further review will be conducted in April / May 2022. Limited Progress	Corporate Services Manager	31/07/2021 Revised Date: 30/06/2022
5	Corporate Health and Safety Report 2017/18 – a variation to	The new contract incorporating the recent Asset changes has been drafted and	Head of Property and	31/10/2021 Revised

	Further work / areas to be addressed		Responsible Officer	Due Date
	the GY Norse contract is to be raised to ensure that reference to responsibilities of GY Norse under the Health and Safety act 1974 are clearly outlined.	approved by GYBC. Waiting confirmation from Norse solicitors for completion. Amendments have been made and agreed by all parties so Internal Audit have confirmed that sufficient progress has been made to sign this action off Action completed	Asset Management	Date: 31/01/2022
6	The Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan are to be reviewed and presented for approval.	A new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which was signed off by Policy and Resources Committee in November 2021. The strategy and associated action plan was then consulted on with both internal staff and external stakeholders which concluded on 31 January 2022. Now commencing work on the action plan for 2022/23. Year 1 of the action plan is primarily focused around gathering community and workforce intelligence and putting in place key building blocks regarding performance & governance requirements. End of delivery of Year 1, a detailed progress review report will be brought to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration, setting out the emerging findings and evidence, and proposing any necessary changes to the strategy, to ensure that the Council is well placed to prioritise the most significant issues for the authority and the community it serves. Action completed	Head of Organisational Development	31/07/2021 Revised date: 31/12/2022

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICAITIONS

3.1 None

4. RISK IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The report shows that action has been taken or progress is being made to address the issues where further work had been identified or action was proposed / being taken. The COVID 19 pandemic has had an impact on the delivery of the action plan.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 None

Areas of consideration: e.g., does this report raise any of the following issues and if so, how have these been considered/mitigated against?

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation	No
Section 151 Officer Consultation	No
Existing Council Policies	No
Financial Implications within existing budgets	No
Legal Implications (including human rights)	No
Risk Implications	No
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment	No
Crime & Disorder	No
Every Child Matters	No