

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 23rd November 2022

Report of Monitoring Officer

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with an update on the Action Plan referred to in the AGS in connection with other governance issues identified.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the progress and steps yet to be taken on the Action Plan be noted.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2022 the Council issued its Annual Governance Statement (AGS) following the Audit Committee's consideration of the document on 20 July 2022. The AGS identified various issues to be addressed. These are split into two categories – (a) Other Governance Issues and (b) Significant Challenges for 2022/33 and beyond. This report deals with the first category. That is the issues identified as "Other Governance Issues".
- 1.2 As set out in the AGS, an Action Plan has been put together to address the areas identified. The issues covered by the Action Plan include:
- (a) Updating the Code of Corporate Governance
 - (b) Policy review/updating
 - (c) The Corporate Complaints Policy and other service complaint procedures
 - (d) Publication of Information
 - (e) Information on the Council's website
 - (f) The Raising Concerns Policy
 - (g) The use of electronic signatures
 - (h) Publication of key officers on the Council's website

- 1.3 Good progress is being made against the Action Plan. Although, more work is yet to be done.

Work undertaken/to be completed

- 2.0 A revised Code of Corporate Governance has been produced and has been submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration. The amended code is in line with the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government 2016. It is an important document helping to ensure that the Council keeps its governance arrangements up to date and relevant.
- 2.1 Work has started on reviewing Council policies and on how these documents are managed, maintained and effectively reviewed in the future. A list of policies and key information is currently being collated. The next step will be to involve services in the process of producing a comprehensive list of policies and relevant information. A target date of February 2023 has been given for the completion of this work.
- 2.2 The Council's Corporate Complaints policy and other service complaint policies are being reviewed for consistency and clarity. Ensuring that the Authority's approach to complaints and the process of making complaints is clear and uniformed will ensure that issues can be easily raised, without confusion, creating greater transparency and accountability. The relevant policies are currently being amended for consideration by the Senior Management Team. A target date of January 2023 has been given for the completion of this work.
- 2.3 The information that the Council publishes under the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 is currently being considered. This work requires careful review between our finance team and other services. A target date of April 2023 to tie into the start of the financial year, has been given for completion of this work.
- 2.4 The information displayed on the Council's website is being examined. In particular, officers are looking at whether further content can be added to inform local residents about Council Tax and how the City Council uses its contribution. A target date of December 2022 has been given for this piece of work.
- 2.5 The Raising Concerns Policy is being reviewed. It is not thought that much work is needed on the policy. It has been noted that contact detail in the policy needs updating. At target date of November 2022 has been set for this work.
- 2.6 The Council's position with regards to electronic signatures is being reviewed. A draft policy on the use of electronic signatures has been produced. The draft policy will need to be circulated to Council services for comment. A target date of March 2023 has been given for this work.
- 2.7 The Authority is looking to ensure that it better identifies key senior officers on its website. This work is pending the outcome of the Council's OBR process.

3.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Audit Committee members are asked to note the progress and work yet to be done under the Action Plan on the other governance issues identified in the AGS.

**CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety,
Sustainability and Rural Proofing):**

The Council must keep its governance processes under review and must ensure that it take steps to ensure that its processes are kept up-date and relevant. Good governance ensures that resources are properly used for the community it serves. Implementing the action plan on other governance issues helps ensure the Council's good governance.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct financial implications arising from this report

**OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services,
Property, Open Spaces**

No direct resource implications arising from this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 officer has seen this report and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Deputy Monitoring Officer has helped draft this report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact Officers: Monitoring Officer

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Ref: N/A