

This report is public	
Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023 – Update on Actions	
Committee	Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee
Date of Committee	20 March 2024
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services – Cllr Dallimore
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	
Report of	Monitoring Officer & Assistant Director of Law & Governance, Shiraz Sheikh

Purpose of report

To consider an update on actions from the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2022/2023.

1. Recommendations

The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Consider and comment on the update on the actions arising from the Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 At its 26 July 2023 meeting, the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (AARC) approved the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the financial year 2022/2023.
- 2.2 The report gives the Committee an update to the actions that was included in the Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no financial implications as a result of this update report. Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer)
Legal	The Council has a legal duty to agree an Annual Governance Statement. This report does not itself raise legal implications but this update on the actions arising from last year's AGS is consistent with the responsibility of this Committee to ensure the effectiveness of the Council's Governance.

	Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer & Assistant Director of Law & Governance 28 February 2024			
Risk Management	There are no risk implications associated directly with this report. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team, 28 February 2024			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		x		Not applicable
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		Not applicable
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		Not applicable
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		Not applicable
ICT & Digital Impact		x		Not applicable
Data Impact		x		Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy		x		Not applicable.
Council Priorities	Not applicable			
Human Resources	Not applicable			
Property	Not applicable			
Consultation & Engagement	Senior officers for each area have been consulted and provided updates on progress as set out in section 4 of this report			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 At its 26 July 2023 meeting, the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (AARC) approved the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the financial year 2022/2023.
- 3.2 Local authorities are required to prepare an AGS to be transparent about their compliance with good governance principles and to give an opinion on the effectiveness of those arrangements. As part of the process, authorities are expected to highlight particular areas of focus for the year following. This report updates the Committee on the actions identified for 2023/24 in the AGS.

4. Details

Annual Governance Statement Actions for 2023/2024

- 4.1 The Annual Governance Statement outlined the following areas and expected outcomes for particular focus in 2023/24:

Action	Timescale for completion	Responsible Officer(s)	Update
Ensure that the Council has sufficient and appropriately qualified staff to deliver its programme of work and projects.	Ongoing	Assistant Directors / Human Resources	The responses received suggest that each Directorate has appropriately trained staff with relevant qualifications with professional bodies such as CIPFA and RICS. There is an issue with in local government around recruitment that seems to be an ongoing challenge in some areas.
Increase awareness of all officers to Council's policies and procedures via training and workshops.	Ongoing	Assistant Directors	Information is shared at the various directorate team meetings. Online training videos and details of polices and standard operating procedures are available on the intranet for example

			on the Unit 4 Accounting System. Human Resources have recently rolled out management training on key HR activities and plan to develop this programme further.
Implement Procurement Strategy for the Council with procurement strategy acting as a lever for cascading corporate priorities down to services and capital projects delivered through commercial partners with alignment between the two.	2 October 2023	Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director of Law & Governance / Procurement Manager, Mike Sullivan	A new Procurement Strategy was approved by Executive at the meeting of 2 October 2023.
Ensure value is delivered through contract management and afforded time, technical expertise and people to discharge them.	Ongoing	Assistant Directors / Procurement Manager, Mike Sullivan	Staff work closely with contract providers to ensure they are delivering what is required of the contract. Provision of advice via Sharepoint for staff acting as Contract Managers to assist them in identifying potential risks to the delivery of a contract. Further training seminar delivered at the January 2024 Procurement Seminar
Ensure Procurement and Contracts guidance is in place and embed a culture of compliance.	September 2023	Procurement Manager, Mike Sullivan	A Procurement and Contracts Support team has been created on MS Teams for all staff to access guidance with the latest update being made in January 2024.

			<p>A number of templates, toolkits and user guides have been developed for staff to access and use via the intranet.</p> <p>A Procurement and Contracts guidebook is due to be published shortly providing more detailed guidance for CDC officers involved in purchasing activities or contract administration.</p>
Ensure contracts and procurement are procured in accordance with the contract tailored procurement and contract strategies with strong internal control.	August 2023	Assistant Directors	Staff have attended procurement training workshops and have created procurement and contract strategies to ensure procurements have followed appropriate processes
Ensure Health and Safety processes and guidance are in place and understood.	Ongoing	Human Resources	Staff briefings are used to keep staff informed of any changes to corporate arrangements to reflect best practice. To support this the team undertake inspections and audits of the workplace across the District including the 2 Depots and report back to Management any findings.
Ensure Business Continuity Plans are reviewed and updated annually.	TBC	Corporate Director of Communities	This action is awaited.
Develop and implement Asset Management Strategy which provides an overview of our land and property assets, ensuring focus is	March 2024	Assistant Director of Property	Property Asset Management Strategy is on agenda for Executive at March 2024 meeting

<p>maintained on our main priorities for managing, maintaining and developing our assets over the next five years. The strategy should inform policies enabling us to develop action plans, agree priorities and make decisions to meet our longer-term objectives.</p>			
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4.2 Constitution Review Working Group

A full review of the Constitution started in December 2023. A Constitution Review Group (CRG) was established, comprising the Monitoring Officer and his deputy, officers from Democratic and Elections and five members representing the political groups of the Council. The members of the political groups were selected by the Group Leaders. The terms of reference are attached at Appendix 1.

The following changes were approved by Full Council on the 26 February 2024.

- Updated Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.
- Updated Contract Procedure Rules
- Revised Monitoring Officer Changes (under delegation)

The draft work programme is included for information at Appendix 2.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to note the update. This is not recommended as it is good practice for the Committee to review progress against actions arising from the Annual Governance Statement.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 In line with Annual Governance Statement process, this report provides an update on actions taken to date during 2023/2024 in respect of recommended actions arising from the 2022/2023 Annual Governance Statement.

Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A
Subject to Call in	N/A
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix	Appendix 1 Constitution Review Working Group Terms of Reference Appendix 2 Constitution Review Working Group draft work programme Appendix 3 Annual Governance Statement 22-23
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
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