

Annual Governance Statement Update

Final Decision-Maker	Audit, Governance and Standards Committee
Lead Director	Director of Finance, Business and Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the progress with the Annual Governance Statement actions.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That the Annual Governance Statement Update be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Audit Governance and Standards	13 January 2020

Annual Governance Statement Update

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Effective corporate governance arrangements ensure the council's priorities are understood and delivered.</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Cross Cutting Objectives	Effective corporate governance arrangements ensure the council's priorities are understood and delivered.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Risk Management	The AGS considers and gives assurance on the Council's approach to risk management.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Financial	This report has no direct financial implications. Carrying out the actions identified in the AGS helps to ensure that the Council maintains high governance standards.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	There are implications for staff in relation to undertaking training.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Legal	There are no legal implications.	
Privacy and Data Protection	Good governance is integral to upholding the principles of data protection.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	Good governance will ensure the Council is adhering to the public sector equality duty.	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	There are no implications	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no implications	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Procurement	There are no implications	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Annual Statement of Corporate Governance for 2018-19 was considered and approved by the Committee on 30 July 2019. The statement contained an Action Plan for 2019-20. This report provides an update on the progress made against the Action Plan.
- 2.2 The actions outlined in Appendix A arose from areas identified in the corporate governance statement as requiring additional action to maintain the council's governance standards.
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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.
- 4.2 A number of areas were identified for action including:
- Ensuring there is sufficient resource to deliver the ambition for embracing growth and enabling infrastructure
 - Property Maintenance; and
 - Governance for Maidstone Property Holdings
- 4.3 Progress has been made in several areas since the action plan was agreed in July 2019.
- 4.4 An update on contract management was given to the Committee in September 2019 where it was highlighted that progress had been made on all recommendations from the Audit review with all but one completed. The internal audit team had now reassessed the assurance rating for contract management to Sound.
- 4.5 With regard to ensuring there is sufficient resource to deliver the council's ambition for embracing growth and enabling infrastructure a draft medium-term financial strategy was agreed by Policy and Resources Committee in November 2019. Over the past year, the priority of 'Embracing growth and enabling infrastructure' has been made more explicit through our developing plans for an Innovation Centre, for Maidstone East and a new Garden Community. Risk assessment reports on the budget strategy are regularly received and reviewed by the Committee.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only. Key corporate risks have been identified in the annual governance statement action plan and their status is included in the annual report on risk on this agenda.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The Committee is invited to provide feedback on the progress with the action plan.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 This report has been provided to update the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and will be publicly available via the committee papers on the council's website. Any recommendations for further action by the Committee in regard to the action plan will be carried forward.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2019-20 Update
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annual Governance Statement 2018-19