

2019-20 AGS – Significant Governance Issues: Status Report

The following is a summary of the status of the agreed actions that were identified to address the significant governance issues were identified and recorded on the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2019-20:

1. Governance Issue	Planned Action	Status	Comments
<p>An important part of both the 2020-25 corporate business planning process and the council's Workforce Strategy is the requirement for service areas to identify and consider future organisational development requirements and including the resilience of the service and, in particular, succession planning. This is however an area where further actions are required within service areas in terms of having in place formal/ informal succession plans noting that the 2019 Resources Review, which saw the reorganisation of council's senior management, resulted in some areas of experience exiting the organisation and gaps opening in skills levels or resilience.</p>	<p>Work during the first coronavirus lockdown looked at skills survey for staff against critical services with Business Plans updated to reflect this. Lessons learned from lockdown period to be pulled together through EMB to help understand key skills issues and identify any gaps.</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>The exercise to review the lessons learned from the initial lockdown period were superseded by work that was focused on redeployment planning for the 2nd wave of the pandemic which, by necessity, focused on skills and requirements in this context.</p> <p>As the council moves into the Covid 'recovery phase' the Directorate Management Teams, with the support of their respective HR Business Partner, will refocus on this issue, as reflected in the draft 2020-21 AGS actions. Key service reviews are already in train across Adults, Children's and proposals in draft for Property Services.</p>
2. Governance Issue	Planned Action	Status	Comments
<p>A resourcing review of the council's top 50 management posts was undertaken in 2019. This 'Resources Review' was designed to ensure that the organisational structure was aligned with the five key strategic themes, agreed with Council in July 2019, to address the opportunities and challenges the city faces over the next five years and beyond. Associated with this process was the creation of a new reporting hierarchy comprising the 'Executive Management Team (Executive Directors and Chief Executive), Senior Leadership Team (Service Directors and Heads of Service), Leadership Team (including service managers).</p>	<p>New organisational structure to be in place 1st April 2020</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>All Senior posts were recruited to by the end of 2019 with all new postholders and organisational structures in place 1st April 2020</p>

2019-20 AGS – Significant Governance Issues: Status Report

During this process it was necessary for interim postholders to be in place and/or appointed to certain senior management posts whilst the appointment and recruitment process was undertaken and completed.

3. Governance Issue	Planned Action	Status	Comments
<p>Lack of consistent adherence and compliance by officers to policies such as Employee Gifts & Hospitality and Registration of Outside Interest, and Travel and Subsistence. The AGS self-assessment returns indicate that there are still pockets across the Authority that are unfamiliar with the required arrangements and declarations that should be completed.</p> <p>This position was also supported with the results of the follow-up Internal Audit review for, Ethics, where agreed actions had been delayed. The actions outstanding are regarding staff awareness/ registration and the need to update the policy.</p>	<p>Policies to be reviewed and refreshed, where necessary, and communicated to relevant staff.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Policies were communicated and an HR policy group was established to review and update policies. This group meets regularly and has a policy schedule for updating all policies – horizon scanning ensures any changes to legislation are addressed promptly.</p> <p>A second ‘follow up’ Internal Audit report issued in September 2020, focussed on awareness of, and compliance with, the Registration of Outside Interest Policy and the Gifts and Hospitality Policy, showed an improved position with an assurance level of ‘Reasonable’.</p>
4. Governance Issue	Planned Action	Status	Comments
<p>An agreed process has been developed whereby Internal Audit provides a periodic report to the council’s Executive Management Team in respect of ‘follow up’ reviews on any ‘limited’ or ‘no assurance’ audit reports. This is in terms of seeking to prompt or ensure, on a consistent basis, that the agreed management actions have been implemented or otherwise satisfactorily progressed. This is reflected in the Chief Internal Auditors Annual Report and Opinion</p>	<p>Revised reporting arrangement to be developed and built into the revamped performance reporting framework for the Executive Management Team.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Full implementation of this process, which commenced in February 2020, was adversely impacted by Covid 19. The Corporate reporting dashboard was however introduced in July 2020 with all key governance reporting (Information Governance, Internal Audit & Risk) at quarterly meetings from January 2021.</p>
5. Governance Issue	Planned Action	Status	Comments
<p>In order to manage the council’s performance effectively the council’s revised Senior Management Team needs to review monitoring reports regularly.</p>	<p>Both the Council Plan and performance outcomes were revised for the Corporate</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>As per the above, the Corporate reporting dashboard was introduced in July 2020 with Performance, together with all key</p>

2019-20 AGS – Significant Governance Issues: Status Report

	<p>Plans to conclude a new regular comprehensive monitoring report, and the planned regular reviews of performance at a corporate level, have been disrupted by the Resource Review, which introduced a new senior management structure and team, and the response to the COVID pandemic.</p>	<p>Business Plan 2020 – 2025 (approved in Feb 2020) with a comprehensive monitoring approach, including finance, workforce, audit, health and safety and performance matters to be developed.</p>	<p>governance areas, being reported at the same quarterly meetings from January 2021. The process and format continue to be refined.</p>	
6.	Governance Issue (c/f from 2018-19)	Planned Action	Status	Comments
	<p>Whilst a number of actions have been implemented in order to improve officer compliance with the council's procurement policies it was considered to be too soon to for assurance to be provided that they have been fully effective in terms of modifying behaviours. The intention was that, as part of the 2019/20 Internal Audit Annual Plan, an audit review would look to obtain evidence and assurance of modified officer behaviours in respect of compliance with procurement policies.</p>	<p>The Internal Audit review of 'Contract Framework and Procurement', was originally scheduled for March 2020 but had to be deferred to 2020/21 due to the impact of Covid-19.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>The Internal Audit review of 'Contract Framework and Procurement' report was issued in Q4 20-21 and concluded that 'Reasonable Assurance' could be placed on the arrangements in place.</p>