



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 25 July 2024
Subject	ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24 and ACTION PLAN 2024/25
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andrea McCaskie, Director of Governance, Monitoring Officer Email: andrea.mccaskie@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Cheryl Sloan, Business Manager for Governance, Risk and Business Continuity Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report provides the Audit Committee with an updated Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 and an Annual Governance Action plan for 2024/25
Annexes	Annex A – Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan
Recommendation(s)	That the Audit and Governance Committee resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approve and agree the updated Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 and Annual Governance Action plan for 2024/25;2. Receive updates on the progress against the key actions at future meetings.
Corporate priorities	All
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Audit and Governance Committee is the Committee of the Council charged with overseeing governance.
- 1.2** Regulation 4 of The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 require the Council to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS), setting out the Council's governance arrangements.

2. Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan

- 2.1** The Annual Governance Statement is backward looking, detailing the governance arrangements which were in place for the previous financial year (2023/24). This also shows the progress which was made against the Annual Governance Action plan for 2023/24.
- 2.2** The Annual Governance Action plan, is forward looking, setting out the areas of improvement / focus for the current financial year (2024/25).
- 2.3** There are 9 key actions within the 2024/25 Annual Governance action plan, these include:
 - Freedom of information
 - Complaints process
 - New service delivery models
 - Council constitution
 - Emergency planning and business continuity
 - Risk management
 - Review of Audit and Governance committee
 - Financial management
 - Procurement
- 2.4** The plan identifies the specific tasks that will be undertaken in the respective areas of focus and sets timescales for their completion. The Action Plan will also include a RAG rating to show whether the actions are on target, off target but action being taken to ensure delivery or off target and no action has yet been agreed to resolve the situation.
- 2.5** Updates on progress will be presented to future Audit and Governance Committee meetings.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1** There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 If the Council's governance arrangements are weak then Council is at risk of failing to safeguard the use of public funds. In turn this would lead to poor external assessments, damaging the reputation of the Council. The areas of focus for the 2024/25 financial year identified in the AGS provide a clear set of priorities for the continual improvement of governance and mitigation of risk.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

6.1 An equalities impact assessment is not required for this report.

7. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no climate or ecological emergency implications arising directly from this report.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.

(END)