



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 10 AUGUST 2023
Subject	ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23 AND ACTION PLAN for 2023/24
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Andy Graham, Leader of the Council Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes, CEO Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Cheryl Sloan, Business Manager, Governance, Risk & Business Continuity Email: cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report presents the Audit & Governance Committee with the new Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 and Action Plan for 2023/24 and the Local Code of Corporate Governance.
Annexes	Annex A – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 and Action Plan 2023/24 Annex B Local Code of Corporate Governance
Recommendation(s)	<i>That the Audit and Governance Committee: Review and agree the revised Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 and Action Plan for 2023/24. Consider and approve the revised WODC Local Code of Corporate Governance 2022/23 to be signed off by the Leader and Chief Executive</i>
Corporate priorities	All
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	NA

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.
- 1.3 As part of the Annual Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 and Action Plan for 2023/204 has been developed and will be presented to Executive. The draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2022/23 and Action Plan 2023/24 is being presented to the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 1.4 Also included is the draft Local Code of Corporate Governance.

2. OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The AGS 2022/23 and the incorporated Action Plan for 2023/24 provides an overview of the Council's governance arrangements and is based on evidence from a variety of sources. A copy of which is attached at Annex A to the report.
- 2.2 The AGS incorporates the current governance arrangements and explains how some of these changed over the course of the 2022/23 year.
- 2.3 As part of this, an Annual Governance Action plan is developed, identifying the key areas of focus for the following financial year. There are 14 key actions within the 2023/24 Annual Governance action plan, these include:
 - MTFS refresh
 - Treasury management
 - Service transformation
 - Invoice approval hierarchy
 - Aged debt and credit control
 - Project and programme reporting
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Raising awareness of contract procedure rules
 - Financial management
 - Risk management
 - Emergency planning
 - Portal content management
 - Business continuity
 - New HR policies

2.4 The plan identifies the specific tasks that will be undertaken in the respective areas of focus and sets timescales for their completion.

2.5 Also included is the Local Code of Corporate Governance which sets out how WoDC delivers good governance.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1 None

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 If the Council's governance arrangements are weak then the 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 2023/24 financial year identified in the AGS provide a clear set of priorities for the continual improvement of governance and mitigation of risk.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

7.1 An equalities impact assessment is not required for this report

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

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

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1.1 The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- Draft Statement of Accounts for 2022/23

9.1 These documents will be available for inspection online at www.westoxon.gov.uk or by contacting democratic services democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.