



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 19 MARCH 2024
Subject	ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ACTION PLAN 2023/24
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 update on progress against the Annual Governance Statement action plan for 2023/24
Annexes	Annex A – Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2023/24
Recommendation(s)	That the Audit and Governance Committee resolves to: I. Note the action plan and associated progress updates.
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.
- 1.3 The AGS for 2023/24 was last presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 10 August 2023 and is included within the approved Annual Statement of Accounts.

2. AGS ACTION PLAN 2022/23

- 2.1 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

- 2.2 The plan identifies the specific tasks that will be undertaken in the respective areas of focus and sets timescales for their completion, along with any progress up to March 24. The Action Plan also includes 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.

- 2.3 All actions are either complete or on target except for Financial Management which will carry over into next financial year due to the Publica review and Business Continuity Plans, where significant progress has been made, but some of the proposed changes, will carry over.

- 2.4 Any actions which remain open or in progress will transfer into the new Action Plan for 24/25 which will be developed shortly and brought to Audit Committee for sign-off.

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 2023/24 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)