



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 27 MARCH 2025
Subject	ANNUAL GOVERNANCE 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 and Regulatory Services, 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 and Governance Committee with a progress update against the Annual Governance Action plan for 2024/25
Annexes	Annex A – Annual Governance Action Plan
Recommendation(s)	That the Audit and Governance Committee resolves to I. Note the progress update against the Annual Governance Action Plan 2024/25.
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 Action Plan is a forward-looking plan which sets out the areas of improvement / focus for the current financial year (2024/25).
- 2.2** 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
- 2.3** 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 also includes a RAG rating to show whether the actions are on target (green), off target but action being taken to ensure delivery (amber) or off target and no action has yet been agreed to resolve the situation (red). Where an action has been completed it is coloured grey.
- 2.4** An updated Action Plan is attached to this report at Annex A. All actions are either 'complete', 'on target' or 'off target with action being taken'. Below is a summary of the actions which have been highlighted as being 'off target' and why.
 - 2.4.1** Emergency planning and business continuity. With the transfer of services on 1 November 2024, a decision was made to introduce locality-based emergency 'on-call' arrangements, rather than the partnership arrangement which was in place prior to the transfer. This has been a significant area of focus for the emergency planning team to ensure teams were secured and trained, ready for 1 April 2025. This has meant that whilst Business Continuity Plans have been reviewed, the further development of these plans will be a focus for 2025/26.
 - 2.4.2** Risk Management. Significant work has been undertaken to refresh the process for managing risk across the council. Now that this is in place, the Risk Management

Policy is being updated to reflect this, and as part of this update, a risk maturity self-assessment will be completed. This work is likely to carry over into 25/26.

2.4.3 Financial Management. Whilst this work is underway, it will not be presented for approval until next financial year.

2.4.4 Procurement. Whilst the new contract procurement rules are now in place and will be tabled at Council for approval in March, training will continue into next financial year.

2.5 The Audit and Governance Committee are requested to note the updates in this report.

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

None.