

AGENDA ITEM 7

Committee	Audit Committee	AC/31/10
Date:	13 December 2010	

Annual Governance Statement 2009/10 – Progress Against the Action Plan

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Background

On 28 June as part of the process for approving the Statement of Accounts 2009/10 the Committee approved the Annual Governance Statement and the associated action plan. As part of the 2009/10 accounts audit, the External Auditors reviewed the Annual Governance Statement and as a result the Statement of Accounts and the action plan were amended. The revised versions were presented to the Committee at its last meeting.

It was agreed in June that the Committee receive regular progress reports against the Action Plan. A copy of the Action Plan with progress to date is attached.

Annex “B”

This table contains key action points to be implemented during 2010/11.

	Findings	Action	Lead Officer	Progress to date
1.	Update the Code of Corporate Governance into an appropriate format as published in ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’ issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), in July 2007.	We will update the Code of Corporate Governance to ensure that it is consistent with the format published by CIPFA.	Philip Thomson as Chair of the Corporate Governance Group	Consultation on the revision of the Constitution and the development of the Code of Corporate Governance has been undertaken with the Audit Committee and Members of the Council. The final proposals are being presented to Council on 14 December. An associated web site project will go live shortly after the agreement of Council has been obtained.
2.	The Corporate Governance Group to continue its ongoing review of Council documentation.	To include a review the Council's Standing Orders, including the Procurement Procedure Rules.	Margaret Lee, Director for Finance	Much of this is being progressed as part of the work referred to against Action 1.
3.	Ensure the Council has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively through the development of a VFM Strategy	Develop strategy to enable effective review of VFM.	Margaret Lee, Director for Finance	A first draft of a VfM Strategy has been produced by Corporate Finance. This has been reviewed by the Assistant

				<p>Director (Financial Strategy) and presented to the Finance Leadership Team for comment and review.</p> <p>The Council's £300m transformation programme and the member challenge process by way of bilaterals operate as a way of delivering VFM. Additionally, the Integrated Budget and Corporate Plan demonstrates the link between performance and finance.</p>
4.	Ensure that recommendations of internal audit are implemented, monitored and reviewed, where governance deficits have been identified.	Implement recommendations from Internal Audit	Philip Thomson as Chair of the Corporate Governance Group	This is being progressed as part of the work referred to against Action 1.
5.	Ensure that recommendations on Safeguarding Children are implemented in line with the agreed Improvement Plan.	Implement actions on the Improvement Plan	Dave Hill, Executive Director for Schools, Children and Families	The Children's Social Care service has managed to achieve against all targets and milestones set by Government and Ofsted. The Chairman of the Government improvement board, Paul Curran, has recently written to the

				<p>Secretary of State and the Leader of the Council indicating that they would expect the Council to come out of special measures and intervention in 2011. The improvement and action plan are being constantly monitored and updated.</p> <p>The Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee has established a Standing Sub-Committee to review Safeguarding: it has completed the first stage of its review and is about to start the second stage, which involves visiting front-line services.</p>
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