

Non-Executive Template

REPORT TO:	Audit and Governance Committee 7 July 2022
SUBJECT:	Update on the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 Action Plan
LEAD OFFICERS:	Andrew Hunkin, Interim Monitoring Officer
WARDS:	All
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	Public

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

The report provides an update on the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2020/21 Action Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The financial impact was set out when the Action Plan was adopted. This is just an update on progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:

1. Notes and agrees on the progress the Council has made in regard to achieving the recommendations set in the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 Action Plan.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. At its meeting on 25 January 2022, the General Purposes and Audit Committee received and approved the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2020/21. It also agreed to receive a progress report on the implementation of the AGS 2020/21 Action Plan soon after the completion of the 2021/22 financial year.
- 1.2. The purpose of an AGS, which is published with the Statement of Accounts, is to provide an accurate representation of the Council's governance arrangements in place during the year and to identify areas where there are

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significant gaps or where improvements are required. These gaps and improvements were set out in the AGS 2020/21 Action Plan.

- 1.3. The Council has a number of internal control boards that hold Senior Accountable Officers and Project Managers to account for the delivery of programmes within the Croydon Renewal Plan to ensure sustainable improvement is achieved within agreed timescales and cost. On 13 June 2022, the Performance, Finance and Assurance Internal Control Board (PFA ICB) meeting reviewed the implementation of the AGS 2020/21 Action Plan and this is attached at Appendix 1.

2. DETAIL

- 2.1. The Action Plan has 41 actions. 24 of these are complete, 14 are being implemented and three are not underway.
- 2.2. Of the 14 being implemented:
 - 2.2.1. The whistleblowing policy and associated summary was launched in May 2022. Presentations for staff and managers to introduce the revised policy have been prepared. Training for Designated Assessors is taking place in July.
 - 2.2.2. A new process has been developed for the production of the Annual Governance Statement and the draft Annual Governance Statement is planned to be prepared by September 2022.
 - 2.2.3. The recommendations arising from the independent review of the Council's financial management arrangements continue to be implemented.
 - 2.2.4. Finance training for non-finance managers is being developed.
 - 2.2.5. The Capital Board was established in 2021 and is receiving monthly capital updates. Steps are in place to move to tighter project management of the Capital Programme which will involve highlight reporting across the key domains of time/cost/quality, including risks/issues, etc.
 - 2.2.6. The PFA ICB is currently determining how to proceed with the financial appraisal skills training for project leads.

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- 2.2.7.** The Constitution was reviewed following the move to the Mayor and Cabinet model. A work programme is being developed for other parts of the Constitution to be reviewed.
 - 2.2.8.** The Corporate Health and Safety Board is reviewing health and safety processes and implementing actions arising.
 - 2.2.9.** Quarterly statutory officers meetings are held. Terms of reference are being reviewed to include a review of compliance and potential conflicts of interest. This will be completed in July
 - 2.2.10.** The Officer Code of Conduct Protocol was approved in March 2022. An officer e-learning module has been developed and will be launched in July.
 - 2.2.11.** The Member induction programme is being implemented. Essential items will be completed by the end of July. Further training has been identified through to the end of November. The Ethics Committee will consider what more needs to be done.
 - 2.2.12.** The officer induction programme has resumed. Changes following the election of the Mayor are being incorporated.
 - 2.2.13.** The PFA ICB is considering a proposal to commission an external assurance review to benchmark against best practice standards in public sector risk management
 - 2.2.14.** Scrutiny forms part of the member induction programme and further development will be ongoing through 2022/23.
- 2.3.** The three not underway are:
- 2.3.1.** Review of record retention policy and procedures.
 - 2.3.2.** Develop and implement programme of work to ensure all information management policies and training are updated and backlogs addressed.
 - 2.3.3.** Establish and implement processes to ensure Publication Scheme appropriately updated.
- 2.4.** There is currently a lack of capacity to address the above recommendations. However the Information Management team has been restructured and recruitment is almost complete. Plans and programmes are already in place to deal with the backlog.

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- 2.5. The PFA ICB will continue to monitor this Action Plan and any outstanding actions will be considered and incorporated into the 2021/22 Action Plan.

3. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Approved by:

4. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Approved by:

5. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 5.1. This is an update on the Action Plan already approved. There are no changes to the HR considerations set out at that time.

Approved by: Dean Shoesmith, Chief People Officer

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1. The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the provisions set out in the Sec 149 Equality Act 2010. The Council must therefore have due regard to:
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 6.2. The Council will ensure that its governance pays due regard to the requirements of Equality Act 2010.

Approved by: Denise McCausland Equality Programme Manager

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.1. There is no environmental impact arising from this report.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

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8.1. There is no crime and disorder impact arising from this report.

9. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

9.1. WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?

No

9.2. HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?

No

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APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

Appendix 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 Action Plan