Committee: Standards Committee

Date: 25th February 2014

Agenda item:

Wards:

Subject: Annual Governance Statement 2012/13 – Improvement Plan Update

Lead officer: Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services

Lead member: Mark Allison, Cabinet Member for Finance

Contact officer: Margaret Culleton,

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Recommendations:

A. That members note the progress on the 2013/14 improvement plan

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1   PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1.   Corporate governance comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities.

1.2.   The Annual Governance Statement is the formal statement that recognises, records and publishes an authority's governance arrangements. It was published with the Council's financial statements in June relating to 2012/13 to ensure compliance with the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2011. These Regulations require authorities to "conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control" and to prepare a statement on internal control in accordance with "proper practice" defined as the requirement for an Annual Governance Statement, as set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework.

1.3.   The Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan is a statement of the actions to be taken by the Council in order to remedy any weaknesses that it has identified in the Council's governance arrangements.

1.4.   This report sets out progress against each of the items in the 2013/14 Improvement Plan which was included in the Annual Governance Statement for 2012/13. This will allow Members to understand the progress that has been made against the actions

and to ensure that the appropriate action is being taken to remedy weaknesses in the Council's governance processes.

2   DETAILS

2.1.   Appendix 1 sets out achievements to date against each of the objectives.

2.2.   Each of the improvement areas have made progress and the majority should be completed by the year end. The AGS working group meets regularly throughout the year, which helps to ensure that progress is made on these areas and to identify other areas where improvements are needed. The AGS for 13/14 will report on those areas that improvement is required.

2.3.   There are ten actions on the improvement plan for 12/13, four of these have now been completed, two part completed and four in progress expecting completion by the end of March 2014.

3   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1.   None for the purposes of this report.

4   CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1.   None for the purposes of this report.

5   TIMETABLE

5.1.   The results of this report will be included in the Annual Governance Statement for 2013/14, which will be completed by 30 June 2014, in accordance with the deadline for the Statement of Accounts.

6   FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1.   There are no specific financial implications.

7   LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1.   There are no specific legal implications.

8   HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1.   There are no specific human rights, equalities or community cohesion implications.

9   CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1.   There are no specific crime and disorder implications.

10   RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. The risk management process is included in the improvement plan in Appendix 1. There are no health and safety implications.

11   APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

11.1   Appendix 1 – update on progress on AGS Improvement programme

12   BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. The Annual Governance Statement 2012/13 was reported to General Purposes Committee on 27 June 2013. An update was presented to General Purposes on the 5th November 2013 These documents do not form part of the report.

Significant governance issues (Improvement Programme 2013/14)

Details	Officer responsible	Update on progress	Status
Business Continuity Plans and Business Impact Assessments To update all Business Continuity Plans and to ensure that Business Impact assessments have been completed	Head of Safety	All Business impact assessments have been reviewed, revised and challenged with Business Partners at departmental management team meetings. From this work critical services have been identified and business continuity plans drawn up for critical services to ensure service delivery is met. Alongside this plans are being aligned to the Disaster Recovery plans being developed by the AD (I&T) which forms the basis of service loss and recovery planning. The strategic business continuity plan and corporate services business continuity plan has been revised and are due to be submitted to CMT shortly. Disaster recovery arrangements with LB Wandsworth, first stage completed, which is a manual process. Now planning to move to a 2nd stage, which is a more automated approach, this went to Cabinet for funding approval in October.	This will be completed by end March 2014
Financial regulations and procedures To review and update	Head of Business Planning	These amendments will go as part of the constitution amendments to GP committee for approval.	In progress- due for completion end of March 2014
Scheme of Delegations To develop and implement a new	Business Partners	CMT, at its meeting on 1 October, agreed a new approach and template for the departmental	**Completed** All schemes now updated.

template and guidance to simplify, streamline and ensure consistency		schemes of management so that these are shorter, simpler and standardised. All departments produced and due to be published revised new-look schemes departments. There will be communication so that staff are aware of requirements.	Copies to be put on the Intranet by the end of February 2014.
Declaration of Interests On-Line form New on-line form for staff to complete their annual returns. This will include declaration of staff relationships	Head of HR	New on-line form has been designed and is currently being tested. Guidance has been issued to Directors and staff guidance has been revised and will be issued when the on-line form is ready. Waiting review of Relationships policy online system to go live 1 April.	Form completed. Due for completion April 2014.
Establish a Partnership Register for the Council Build on the partnership review that was last carried out in 2009, to compile a partnership register for the council that encompasses the key strategic partnership arrangements the council engages in.	Head of Policy, Strategy & Partnerships	A revised Partnership Register was established in July 2013 building on the last review in 2009. This has now been published on the Council's intranet pages under Plans and Strategies. The Policy, Strategy and Partnerships Team will update the Register again in July 2014	**Completed**
Policy Register/metacompliance Guide the way the new policy management software (metacompliance) will be structured to provide a policy register for the council and populate with the dataset of policies that has been established through the policy review.	AD Business Improvements	**Metacompliance – Progress Update** Functional testing completed and Metacompliance is working on all platforms – PC and Wyse. Next stage is to populate the dataset with policies and roll out. Currently discussing this with DMT's	In progress. Due for completion by end of March

| Performance and Risk Management System
To implement a new performance management system to improve the monitoring of targets | Head of Business Planning | **Performance Management** –
Corporate Indicators including Service Plans - Implementation of a cloud based system for the management and governance of performance and risk information known as Covalent is now complete. The new system provides an efficient method for data collection, reporting and on-line management dashboards, allowing instant drill down on data for both performance and risk that will enable decision making. The system will enable consistency of reporting and provide audit trails. The initial implementation phase of the performance module is now complete, and the system is used for the collection of data across the organisation relating to business plan performance indicators, corporate measures and Merton Partnership PI's. End and super user training is now complete and we are currently designing the reports and dashboards to be used for reporting performance. Discussions are taking place with some departments for further roll out of the system.
Departmental Indicators - The system will now be rolled out to encompass departmental indicators
Risk Management - Risk registers to the system. To date, covalent have adapted the risk module to reflect our risk matrix so that risk will continue to be calculated using the corporate methodology. It is anticipated that the transfer of the registers and use of this module will be complete by the end of 2013/14. | Performance Management system **completed**

Risk Management registers being transferred to new system for March/April 2014 review |

Management behaviours To roll out the management behaviour system for all managers to ensure a consistent and suitable level of competency	Head of HR	Management behaviours will be rolled out across the organisation for the first 3 tiers of management and this will be linked to appraisals in 2014 from Autumn 2013. The Council is using 360-degree feedback for these tiers in order to identify strengths and gaps to inform the 2014 appraisal process.	**Completed** – due for roll out at next appraisals from April 2014
Transparency Agenda To publish the remaining requirements of the DCLG Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency	Head of Information Governance/Head of HR	The organisational charts are prepared and are available on the council's intranet. The next stage is to get them ready on the internet which is currently in progress.	In progress expected completion June 2014.
Workforce Development Strategy To complete the strategy in relation to succession planning	Head of HR	The Workforce Strategy Board has been created to develop the document. CMT have approved the PiD, project plan documentation and have agreed the priorities for the strategy. sign-off for the strategy is now planned for March 2014 CMT	In progress – due for completion March 2014

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