

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Progress on issues arising from the 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement.

Meeting/Date: Corporate Governance Panel – 25 March 2015

Executive Portfolio: Resources: Cllr J A Gray

Report by: Internal Audit & Risk Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement included four areas for improvement.

Due to the good progress that has been made across all four improvement areas it is considered that all will 'achieved' prior to the preparation of the 2014/15 Annual Governance Statement.

The four areas for improvement identified are:

- Develop the themes and aims of the Corporate Plan through service delivery plans, performance measures and employees performance targets
- Publicise the vision statement and strategic themes and outcomes to key stakeholders;
- Review partnership commitments with an emphasis on the benefit obtained and contribution towards the Corporate Plan;
- Continue to educate and train employees in good procurement and contracting practice to ensure that they understand how to act and comply with the requirements of the Code of Procurement.

Appendix A provides details of the action that has been taken against each improvement area.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Panel note and take into account the progress that has been made in introducing the key improvement areas arising from the 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement when undertaking their 2014/15 governance review.

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1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

- 1.1 This report informs the Panel of the progress that has been to date in introducing the four key improvement areas that were contained in the 2013/14 annual governance statement.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Panel need to be assured that sufficient action has been taken to deal with the four areas for improvement identified. The four areas are :

1. Develop the themes and aims of the Corporate Plan through service delivery plans, performance measures and employees performance targets;
2. Publicise the vision statement and strategic themes and outcomes to key stakeholders;
3. Review partnership commitments with an emphasis on the benefit obtained and contribution towards the Corporate Plan; and
4. Continue to educate and train employees in good procurement and contracting practice to ensure that they understand how to act and comply with the requirements of the Code of Procurement.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Not applicable.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS?

- 5.1 If sufficient and timely action is not taken, this may lead to the actions having to be repeated in the 2014/15 annual governance statement and
- adverse comments being reported by the external auditor;
 - poor governance procedures remaining in place which may affect the delivery of the Council's objectives.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 Action has already been taken to deal with the areas identified.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

- 7.1 Good corporate governance structures underpin everything that the Council does. Effective delivery of the Corporate Plan requires sound procedures and processes to be in place. These seek to ensure that decision making complies with laws, regulations and proper governance practices.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None.

11 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

11.1 The Panel require assurance that the significant areas for improvement identified during the 2013/14 annual governance review process are being addressed. Details of the action that has been taken is included in appendix A.

The Corporate Management Team are satisfied that the four issues identified have been addressed. In the case of partnership working, the initial work undertaken has identified further work areas. Plans are in place to progress this.

12. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix A – Annual Governance Statement 2013/14 – Key improvement areas:
Current position

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annual Governance Statement 2013/14

CONTACT OFFICER

David Harwood. Internal Audit & Risk Manager
Tel No. 01480 388115

Key Improvement Area	To be delivered by	Current position	
Develop the themes and aims of the Corporate Plan through service delivery plans, performance measures and employees performance targets.	March 2015	A new Service Plan template was prepared in December 2014 for use for 2015/16 Service Plans. This Plan allows for strong links to be made between the Corporate Plan priorities and the key actions required by the services. These actions include performance measures and will form part of a Performance Indicator (PR) suite linking in with other organisation wide PIs and Corporate Plan PI's. All actions need to be owned by an individual along and key contributors identified so it can be linked to individual appraisals. This should ensure the 'golden thread' from Corporate Plan to employee appraisals.	
Publicise the vision statement & strategic themes and outcomes to key stakeholders.	May 2015	The Corporate Plan 2014-16 was agreed in April 2014 and was made available to all staff and through our web site to all stakeholders. The Key Actions and Performance Measures in the Plan are reported on quarterly to Overview and Scrutiny Panels and to Cabinet. The Corporate Plan is being refreshed for an updated version to be issued in April 2015 for the final year of the Plan.	
Continue to educate and train employees in good procurement and contracting practice to ensure that they understand how to act and comply with the requirements of the Code of Procurement.	On-going	<p>The continuance of measures previously reported as taken to improve compliance with the Code of Procurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 67 staff attending training courses. • A publicised and schedule plan of 12 training courses covering the significant procurement areas. • Monthly checks of the electronic contracts register to ensure full completion, with appropriate follow-up action taken. <p>In addition, a programme has started of visits to individual Service's Team meetings to brief Managers on any changes to procurement practice and gather intelligence on forthcoming procurements.</p>	
Review partnership commitments with an emphasis on the benefits obtained and contribution towards the Corporate Plan.	March 2015	<p>A initial review of partnership commitments has been completed and was reported to the Senior Management Team on 16 February. The aim of the review was to establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of partnerships with the corporate plan • To help us decide whether the current definition of partnerships and 	

Key Improvement Area	To be delivered by	Current position	
		<p>assessment criteria need amending, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To find out if any of the partnerships do not meet the assessment criteria. <p>Further work is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine priorities for partnership attendance; • Compile a definitive list of all partnership meetings that are attended by employees. The list will focus on providing detail on the desired outcome of partnership attendance e.g. a collaborative approach to service delivery or setting policy and strategy, or just for networking purposes. 	