

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2017/18

1. WHAT THE COUNCIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR

- 1.1 The Council is responsible for: carrying out its business in line with the law and; in accordance to proper accounting standards and a duty to use public money economically, efficiently and effectively, and to account for it properly. The Local Government Act 1999 requires the Council to keep under review and improve the way the Council work, to offer value for money and provide an efficient and effective service.
- 1.2 To provide assurance that the Council has complied with these requirements the Council has arrangements ("governance framework") to oversee its activity. These arrangements are intended to ensure that the Council do the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in good time and in a fair, open, honest and accountable way. These arrangements act as an alert protocol to ensure compliance.
- 1.3 This 2017/18 Annual Governance Statement explains how the Council has followed its governance framework to provide assurance that it has complied with its responsibility and duty in line with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

2. THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The Council's governance framework comprises of a six stage process:
- **Stage 1:** Distribution of Management Assurance Statements (MAS) to Heads of Service/Deputy Directors.
 - **Stage 2:** Completion and return of MAS.
 - **Stage 3:** Analysis of completed MASs.
 - **Stage 4:** Compilation of Corporate Action Plan and Production of AGS using analysis of MASs.
 - **Stage 5:** Recommendation by Audit & Performance Review Panel for sign off of AGS by the Leader and the Managing Director.
 - **Stage 6:** Sign off of AGS by Leader and the Managing Director.
- 2.2 Senior Officers are required to use the MAS to provide assurance about the internal systems of control, and any exceptions they have been identified, and the sources of assurances which they have used. The MASs are used to inform the annual, 2017/18, AGS which identifies the material governance issues affecting the Council.
- 2.3 The Council uses a local code of corporate governance consistent with principles required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations. The code is available on request from the Head of Law & Governance, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RF.

3. THE AIM OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The governance framework consists of the systems, processes, culture and values which govern the Councils behaviour and by which the Council engage with and lead the community, together with the standards to which the Council is held to account. The framework allows the Council to monitor how it is achieving its long-term aims

and to consider whether these aims have helped to deliver appropriate services which represent value for money.

3.2 The Council approved a four year plan in July 2017 through to March 2021 and this has informed the 2018/19 Annual Service Plans. Together these documents help the Council focus on its six strategic objectives:

1. Healthy, skilled and independent residents
2. Safe and vibrant communities
3. An excellent customer experience
4. Growing economy, affordable housing
5. Attractive and well-connected borough
6. Well-managed resources delivering value for money

3.3 The governance framework cannot eradicate risk of failure, is it designed to identify risk and its links with the internal audit function seeks to ensure risk is address and or mitigated. It is part of a wider system of internal control. All internal controls are designed to:

- Identify and prioritise the risks that could prevent the Council from achieving its policies, strategic vision and priorities.
- Assess the likelihood, and likely consequences or the risks.
- To manage the risks efficiently, effectively and economically.

3.4 The AGS supports the published approved statement of accounts.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

4.1 The current 'Public Sector Internal Audit Standards' (PSIAS) came into effect from 1 April 2013 and were revised in March 2017. The standards recognise that a professional, independent and objective internal audit service is a key element of good governance and they encompass the mandatory elements of the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors International Professional Practices Framework. A PSIAS external assessment has been carried out for internal audit activities during 2017/1 which concluded that the Internal Audit Service is assessed at the current draft stage as "generally compliant" for 2017/18, with areas identified where compliance could be improved.

5. GOVERNANCE MEASURES

5.1 In addition to the external PSIAS assessment, the Chief Audit Executive reviews Internal Audit through gathering information and feedback from council's management, panels and committees and by comments from other review agencies and inspectorates such as CQC and Ofsted.

5.2 Value-for-money is a strategic priority. The Council maintains Contract Rules which govern Council spend.

5.3 The Council maintains Anti Fraud and Anti Corruption strategies and policies alongside the Shared Audit and Investigation Service.

5.4 The Council is still undergoing a Transformation Programme, which is recorded in the Corporate Risk Register and assigned to the Managing Director. RBWM also consults its staff and their unions.

5.5 The Council's Constitution details the responsibilities of the Managing Director, Executive Directors and Senior Leaders, including the Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer (Head of Finance). The Managing Director has specific objectives

agreed with the Leader of the Council. These are monitored and reviewed as part of an annual performance appraisal.

- 5.6 Self-assessment has revealed three areas carried over from the 2015-2016 AGS still requiring improvement. Accordingly, these are reiterated in the 2017-2018 Action Plan, which will be progressed during 2018-19. In addition the analysis of the MASs has identified two further areas which have corporate wide implications and are included in the new plan.
- 5.7 The review of governance is overseen by the Council's Audit and Performance Review Panel, which is responsible for ensuring the production of the AGS and recommending it to the Leader and Managing Director for signature, while noting progress in addressing any governance issues.
- 5.8 This review has confirmed that the Council have the main processes and documents in place. These processes and documents are defined in the framework.

6. SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 6.1 Completion of the MASs by the Senior Management Team ensure identification of the most serious risks. The most serious risks, identified in the 2017/18 are captured in a corporate action plan alongside expected outcomes and target dates, see appendix 2.

Over the next year, the Council will be taking steps to tackle the issues listed in the Corporate Action Plan so that the Council can further improve its governance arrangements. The Council is satisfied that these steps will bring about the improvements that the Council identified in its review of effectiveness and the Council will monitor these improvements as part of its next annual review.

Signed on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead:



**Alison Alexander
Managing Director**

Date: 20.6.18



**Cllr Simon Dudley
Leader of the Council**

Date: 20.06.18

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead - Annual Governance Statement 2017/18 Corporate Action Plan

Ref	Corporate Governance issue	Management action and response	Responsibility	Expected Outcome	Target Date
AGS18.1	Business Continuity Plans for the organisation. (Carried forward from 2015/16)	Senior Management Team have confirmed that Business Continuity Plans are in place, however, in order to strengthen the process Management Team will obtain independent validation.	Senior Management Team	Internal audit to be commissioned to independently review the BCPs during 18/19.	December 2018
AGS18.2	Lack of and timeliness of responses to internal Audit reports.(Carried forward from 2015/16)	Senior Management Team Agreed that all internal audit draft reports are responded to, including agreed required actions. Head of Finance will bring a quarterly report to Senior Management Team of all outstanding responses and any learning points.	Senior Management Team Deputy Director & Head of Finance (s.151 Officer)	All draft internal audit reports are responded to in a timely manner with lessons learned and best practice shared with SMT.	June 2018 September 2018 December 2018 March 2019
AGS18.3	Budget pressures	Quarterly checks by s.151 Officer that robust budget monitoring has taken place at all levels of the organisation.	Deputy Director & Head of Finance (s.151 Officer)	Quarterly budget report to Senior Management Team sets out budget pressures.	June 2018 September 2018 December 2018 March 2019
AGS18.5	Health and Safety	The approved 2018/2019 internal audit plan includes high risk Health and Safety areas. Head of HR will bring Quarterly report to SMT setting any reported H&S issues together with any learning points and best practice.	Senior Management Team Head of HR		March 2019 June 2018 September 2018 December 2018 March 2019