

Overview of Service Assurance Statements 2016/17

Background

All Assistant Directors were asked to complete the annual review and update of their Service Assurance Statements for 2016/17. This process involves the following elements:

- Review of the operation of the Council's system of internal control within their service area and identification of supporting evidence
- Assurance that the control environment operated effectively during 2016/17 in respect of the service areas for which they have responsibility
- Review of actions taken during the year to address any weaknesses and identification of any further areas for improvement in 2017/18.

When reviewing arrangements last year, Assistant Directors identified ten actions to improve governance arrangements during 2016/17.

Summary of progress against actions for delivery in 2016/17

Action identified for 2016/17	Progress	Service Area
Category: Strategic direction and statutory obligations		
Operational risk register to be created for the capital contracts service	Capital Contracts Risk Register is now in place	Housing Management and Investment
Competency refresher training required to ensure staff with Certificates of Technical Competence within Environmental Services maintain 'continuing competence'	Refresher training for all appropriate staff carried out in October 2016.	Stevenage Direct Services
Recruitment process to be completed for Planning Policy and Development Management	Recruitment process is complete	Planning and Regulatory Services
Implement changes in Housing working practices to reflect the legal requirements of the Housing and Planning Bill, e.g. pay to stay, sale of high value voids, etc.	Housing have progressed this action as far as possible and are currently awaiting guidelines from the DCLG regarding timescale and process. Action to be carried over to 2017/18.	Housing Management and Investment
Through the current round of service planning, Housing Management service to capture all elements of the day to day business and link all deliverables into the FTFC programme	The overarching HRA Business Plan was approved by Executive November 2016. Day to day business is aligned to the FTFC Programme through Performance and Development Appraisals	Housing Management and Investment

Action identified for 2016/17	Progress	Service Area
Category: Strategic direction and statutory obligations (continued)		
Undertake a further review of Housing Management	The Housing Management service has been reviewed in light of the Housing Quality Network report and as part of the Senior Management Review. Further review will be carried out as part of the Future Council – Business Review in 2017/18.	Housing Management and Investment
Community Grants website page to be updated to include 2016/17 grant allocations	Community Grants website page was updated.	Communities and Neighbourhood
Category: Business Continuity		
Business continuity plans for Housing Services to be updated to incorporate the senior management restructure	As a result of the recent Senior Management Review, a review of all the council's business continuity plans is now required. This will form part of the annual business continuity plan review process.	Housing Management and Investment
Category: Performance Framework		
Undertake a review of the way performance data is managed and communicated within the Housing Property Services and Asset Management Service	New arrangements are now in place	Housing Management and Investment
Category: Partnerships		
Produce partnership arrangements for the new Shared Building Control service	Partnership agreements for the new Building Control Shared Service were produced and agreed. The new Shared service went live in January 2017.	Planning and Regulatory Services

Actions for completion in 2017/18

A total of 34 actions to enhance service governance arrangements were identified by Assistant Directors/Strategic Director for delivery in 2017/18.

A number of new actions identified for delivery in 2017/18 reflect Future Council Business Unit Reviews and enhancement as a result of the recent Senior Management Review.

One action, to implement changes in Housing working practices to reflect the legal requirements of the Housing and Planning Bill, is being carried over from 2016/17 to 2017/18 as changes cannot be fully implemented until further guidance is available from DCLG.

Action identified for 2017/18	Service Area
Category: Strategic direction and statutory obligations	
Action carried over from 2016/17: Implement changes in Housing working practices to reflect the legal requirements of the Housing and Planning Act e.g. sale of high value voids, fixed term tenancies etc.	Housing Management and Investment

Appendix Four

Learning and Development programme for Stevenage Direct Services to be reviewed and strengthened. Internal review of Waste and Fleet Management service to be carried out.	Stevenage Direct Services
Production and implementation of 2017/18 Priority Plan for Stevenage Direct Services	Stevenage Direct Services
Review of internal communication systems for Stevenage Direct Services to enhance communication arrangements	Stevenage Direct Services
Waste and Recycling Scrutiny review to be carried out	Stevenage Direct Services
Review of statutory duties in the Repairs and Voids service to enhance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication of legislative changes; • response to customer feedback; • accessibility to Health and Safety policies; • sub-contractor health and safety arrangements; • programming and delivery of projects 	Stevenage Direct Services
Enhancements to ensure staff in the Repairs and Voids service can deliver the service's business vision and values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out job evaluation for senior level roles to recruit the correct calibre of staff • Continue negotiations with the Unions and implement revised trade skill levels and roles 	Stevenage Direct Services
Service Plan for the Regeneration service to be created to link resources to projects	Regeneration
Resources required to fulfil the Regeneration Programme over 2017/18 to 2020 to be assessed	Regeneration
Customer Focus Team to provide Customer Feedback training to the Estates Team	Finance and Estates
Carry out a review of Financial Regulations to reflect changes required due to Senior Management Review	Finance and Estates
Current Business Unit Service Plan (Corporate Services and Transformation) to be reviewed and enhanced in light of the recent Senior Management Review	Corporate Services and Transformation
Consideration to be given to creating new Support Service Satisfaction questionnaires for services within Corporate Services and Transformation business unit to inform ongoing improvement	Corporate Services and Transformation
IT Service Plan to be created in 2017/18 for incorporation into Business Unit Service Plan.	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
Evolution and development of Service Catalogue to assist Self Service provision to enhance service delivery	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
IT Customer Satisfaction Survey to be reviewed in light of changes to the satisfaction survey collection arrangements	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology

Appendix Four

Following review of current arrangements, re-implement the Service Desk IT system	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
Implement recommendations resulting from the SOCITM review of the ICT Shared Service to strengthen ICT arrangements	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
Produce and publish Corporate Document Retention Guidelines for staff to enhance information management protocols	Legal Services
Implement new procedures, as required, to ensure compliance with the new General Data Protection Regulation which becomes effective from May 2018.	Legal Services
As part of the housing transformation programme, organisational development learning and support to promote customer focus service delivery to be implemented	Housing Management and Investment
Transactional analysis to be carried out to determine resources required to deliver Housing transformation programme and priority areas	Housing Management and Investment
Following an independent review of the Council's Housing Stock in relation to compliance (mechanical and electrical), a five year action plan has been established. The Plan requires initial progress in 2017/18.	Housing Management and Investment
Recruit to new Compliance Manager post in light of new compliance activities arising from transfer of services as part of the Senior Management Review	Housing Management and Investment
Carry out a review of job descriptions for roles affected by the change in service provision as a result of Senior Management Review and the housing transformation programme.	Housing Management and Investment
Staff Performance and Conduct	
Carry out a review of Waste and Recycling Health and Safety procedures to enhance current arrangements	Stevenage Direct Services
Implementation of HR&OD Action Plan to strengthen the skills and capabilities of staff to ensure delivery of the council's FTFC objectives	Corporate Services and Transformation
Category: Performance framework	
Expand business unit performance monitoring and management to inform Corporate Services and Transformation Business Unit improvement	Corporate Services and Transformation
Consolidated set of performance measures to be agreed through IT Shared Services Partnership Board	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
A review of Street Cleansing performance data collection and performance reporting to be carried out	Stevenage Direct Services
Enhance Stevenage Direct Service's Operational Risk Registers to reflect strategic and longer term risks	Stevenage Direct Services

A Risk Register for the FTFC Regeneration Programme is in place. In addition an Operational Risk Register to be created for the Regeneration service to highlight business unit risks	Regeneration
Category: Partnerships	
Review governance arrangements for the new Legal Shared Service when the new service has been established	Legal Services
Membership of IT Partnership Board to be reviewed and aligned to the new council management arrangements and structure	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology