

Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 (DRAFTv2)

Introduction

Angus Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. The Council also has a statutory duty of Best Value under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. This means that it must plan to continuously improve its performance, while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost. It must do this with regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

To fulfil this duty, elected members and senior officers are responsible for putting in place arrangements to ensure that Angus Council has proper governance and that it delivers its functions. These include:

- setting the strategic direction, vision, culture and values of the Council;
- effective operation of corporate systems, processes and internal controls;
- engaging with communities;
- monitoring progress against strategic objectives;
- delivering services cost effectively; and
- ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for the management of risk.

To this end, the Council has approved and adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance (the Local Code). This is consistent with the principles and recommendations of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government and the supporting guidance notes for Scottish authorities.

The Local Code sets out the core principles of good governance and the key policies, procedures and structures which demonstrate Angus Council's compliance. It is also applicable in general terms to elected members and officers on external bodies. A copy of our [Local Code of Corporate Governance](#) is available on the Council's website at www.angus.gov.uk.

This annual governance statement explains how the Council has complied with the terms of the Local Code for the year ended 31 March 2020. It also meets the requirements of the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, which require all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement. The statement covers relevant governance issues as they affect those entities included as part of the Council's Group Accounts, reliance having been based on their respective governance statements and internal audit annual reports.

COVID-19

During March 2020, towards the end of the 2019/20 reporting period relating to this Annual Governance Statement, the Council was required to initiate an emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. By necessity this has involved significant changes and disruption to the manner in which Council services are normally delivered – some services have stopped entirely, others have been under immense strain due to increased demand, and some new services have been established with pace and urgency to respond to the needs of our citizens, communities and businesses in need.

As a direct result of this, changes to existing strategic and operational governance arrangements, along with some new governance arrangements have been deployed as part of our response. This has included special and robust measures to support proper decision making and continued democratic accountability. These changes were considered and agreed by full Council at its meeting on 3 April 2020, included in a suite of reports as follows:

- [Report 121/20](#), [Appendix 1](#), [Appendix 2](#) – the report sets out proposed arrangements to be put in place in terms of decision making at council and committee level in light of the COVID 19 pandemic and also proposes extending the delegated authority of certain Officers, until such time as it is deemed to be appropriate to revert back to the current Scheme of Delegation and the Orders of Reference of Committee.
- [Report 122/20](#) – the report informed members of the actions taken by the Chief Executive in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Report 123/20](#) – the report sought Council approval to some additional temporary delegations regarding finance and procurement activity to allow urgent business to be conducted and to maximise the ability of the Council to respond to current and emerging COVID-19 issues.
- [Report 124/20](#) - the report sought to provide an update on the actions of Angus Council in preparation, readiness and the ongoing response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- [Report 126/20](#) – the report advised Council of the financial support and resilience arrangements being put in place nationally to help local people, businesses and our key suppliers and seeks approval of a number of local support measures to complement those national arrangements.

A key part of maintaining assurance in relation to the ongoing procedure and policy matters during the pandemic has been provided by the Councils emergency management and disaster recovery governance arrangements. These have been delivered through regular Bronze (operational), Silver (tactical) and Gold (strategic) meetings. Records of these meetings are available to provide a full audit trail of decision making. These have also been reflected in the Councils ongoing Sitrep reports which have been issued to all the Council's elected members throughout the pandemic.

A number of aspects of the impact of our response to COVID-19 are also reflected in the 'Annual Review of the Governance Framework' below. This also includes an extract of review information from the Internal Audit Annual Report (2019/20) prepared by the Council's Service Leader Internal Audit, providing an independent audit view of the Council's response.

The Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, values and culture by which the Council is governed. It enables the Council to monitor progress against the outcomes set out in the [Council Plan](#).

The governing body of Angus Council is the full Council. Some functions, including setting the annual budget and Council Tax, can only be discharged by the full Council. The

following standing committees were in place during 2019/20:

- Children and Learning;
- Civic Licensing;
- Communities;
- Development Standards;
- Policy and Resources; and
- Scrutiny and Audit.

The core constitutional documents of the Council are:

- Standing Orders, which regulate the proceedings at Council meetings;
- Order of Reference of Committees, which details the Council's committees, sub committees and their associated remits; and
- Scheme of Delegation to Officers, which details the delegation to a range of appropriate officers.

All are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are fit for purpose. The most recent update, approved by full Council in May 2019, reflected previous changes to the Council's management structure and legislative changes at that time ([Report 146/19](#)). It is planned to do a further review during financial year 2020/21.

Internal Financial Control

Within the Council's overall governance framework there are specific arrangements in place as part of the system of internal financial control. This system is intended to ensure that reasonable assurance can be given that assets are safeguarded, transactions are authorised and properly recorded and material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period.

It is based on a framework of financial regulations, regular management information, administrative procedures (including segregation of duties), management supervision, delegation and accountability. Development and maintenance of the system is undertaken by managers within the Council. Controls cannot eliminate the risk of failure to achieve strategic priorities and outcomes, but the system is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level.

Statutory Roles

The Council's Chief Executive is responsible and accountable for all aspects of executive management.

The Council's financial management arrangements comply in all material respects with the governance requirements of the CIPFA *Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016)*. The Council's Chief Financial Officer (Director of Finance), is involved in the development of all strategic and financial policy matters and has direct access to all elected members. They report directly to the Chief Executive on all matters including

their statutory role. For the year under review (2019/20), the Chief Financial Officer was able to fulfil the requirements of the role through the arrangements which existed.

The Council's Monitoring Officer (Director of Legal & Democratic Services) is responsible for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with. The Director of Legal & Democratic Services has been in post since 23 April 2019. From 1 April 2018 to 22 April 2019, the Monitoring Officer was the Service Leader Legal & Democratic Services.

Adult social work services are delivered under the direction of the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership, established under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014. The work of the partnership is overseen by the Integration Joint Board (IJB). Agendas, reports and minutes of the IJB are published on the Council website. The IJB Chief Officer is a member of the Council's Corporate Leadership Team. The postholder of this position changed during the course of the 2019/20 reporting period and the current position is being filled on an interim appointment basis.

The Council's Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) (Director of Children, Families & Justice) is responsible for providing effective professional advice to elected members and officers in the authority's provision of statutory social work duties. The CSWO also provide professional governance and leadership in the delivery of social work and social care services. The role of CSWO complies with revised guidance issued by Scottish Ministers in July 2016. The CSWO's annual report details the arrangements that are in place within Angus to allow the CSWO to fulfil this role and provides assurance to elected members as to the governance of statutory social work services in Angus. The CSWO assurances cover all social work services, including those that come under the responsibility of the IJB. The CSWO's 2019/20 annual report will be submitted to Council in October 2020. The 2018/19 annual report ([Report 349/19](#)) is available on the Council website.

Internal Audit Service

The Council operates an internal audit service which reports directly to the Chief Executive. The in-house team is supplemented by additional IT audit input from a contractor. The service is led by the Service Leader Internal Audit, who reports on a functional basis to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee. The Service Leader Internal Audit reports in their own name, retain final edit rights over all audit reports and provide the Scrutiny & Audit committee with an annual report on governance, risk and internal control.

The internal audit service operates in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). As required by PSIAS, an external quality assessment was due to be undertaken before the end of 2019. This was delayed by late finalisation of the peer review process through which the assessment is being made. The self-assessment submitted in March 2020 as part of the process confirmed the service is compliant with PSIAS. The Covid-19 pandemic has however further delayed completion of the external assessment. These delays mean that there is a minor non-compliance with PSIAS in relation to not having an external review undertaken within five years of the previous external review.

A new edition of CIPFA's guidance on the *Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Sector Organisations* was published in April 2019. The Head of Internal Audit is the Service Leader Internal Audit within Angus Council. A review of the organisational and Head of Internal Audit responsibilities under the Principles within the guidance confirms that the Council and Service Leader Internal Audit comply with the Principles. A detailed self-assessment, reported to Scrutiny & Audit Committee in November 2019 ([Report 387/19](#)), identified a small number of areas where actions could be taken to further strengthen the internal audit planning process and audit involvement in changes to systems and policies. These are included as part of other operational improvement work relating to risk management and the use of Pentana (the Council's performance management system).

The Counter-Fraud Team (CFT) is a specialist resource which reports to the Service Leader Internal Audit and operates within Strategic Policy, Transformation & Public Sector Reform Directorate.

Angus Council acknowledges its responsibility for ensuring the risks and negative impacts associated with fraud are managed effectively and any allegations of fraud and corruption are investigated by CFT staff in partnership with Council colleagues where appropriate. The continued work of CFT plays a key role in the Council's response to the risk of fraud and corruption.

The team has overall responsibility for assessing and investigating allegations of fraud and corruption and for reporting findings. A self-assessment against the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption confirms that the Council has adopted a response that is appropriate for its fraud and corruption risks (Report 159/20). During 2019/20 the Team Leader Counter Fraud also developed on-line counter fraud training that was made available to all Council staff through Always Learning.

All of the allegations investigated during 2019/20 were of low financial value or non-cash related and none has had a material impact on the Council's financial standing. [Report 386/19](#) in November 2019 and [Report 160/20](#) in June 2020, both to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee, contain further detail on the work of the Counter Fraud Team.

The Council recognises that there is an increased risk of fraud during a period of extensive change. In response to this, an additional member of staff has been appointed to the Counter-Fraud team on a temporary basis, from 20 May 2019 to 31 March 2021. In addition, the Internal Audit plan for 2019/20 included a review of cash handling procedures and controls across the Council. The review concluded the systems in place provided substantial control assurance.

Annual Review of the Governance Framework

The Council conducts an annual review of the effectiveness of its overall governance framework. The review is undertaken on behalf of the Chief Executive by the Corporate Governance Officers Group. This group is responsible for monitoring compliance with the principles of good governance. It also makes recommendations for additions and/ or improvements to the governance framework to reflect any changes in the way the Council does business and any new legislation affecting the Council's governance arrangements.

The annual review of the governance framework is informed by:

- annual assurances from service directors, who are responsible for the development, maintenance and improvement of the governance arrangements within their own directorate;
- an annual assurance statement and questionnaire completed by the Chief Officer, Angus IJB;
- annual assurances from the S95 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Chief Social Work Officer;
- consideration of governance issues by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee, including internal and external audit reports, counter-fraud updates, corporate risk register updates and complaints summary reports;
- reports from other scrutiny bodies and inspectorates;
- a review of the governance statements prepared by subsidiaries and associates included in the Council's Group Accounts; and
- assurance letters received from the Chair of the IJB Audit Committee and the Chair of the AngusAlive Board.

In addition to the above, the Council's Service Leader Internal Audit conducts an independent review of the Council's risk management processes, systems of internal control and corporate governance processes as part of their Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20 ([Report 162/20, Appendix 1](#)).

Their review of 2019/20 included the opinion that:

“6. In my professional judgement as Service Leader Internal Audit, notwithstanding the delays caused in completing work due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, sufficient and appropriate audit procedures have been conducted and evidence gathered to support the basis and the accuracy of the conclusions reached and contained in this report. The conclusions were based on a comparison of the situations as they existed at the time against the audit criteria. The evidence gathered meets professional audit standards and is sufficient to provide senior management with the proof of the conclusions derived from the internal audit.

7. In my opinion the Council has a framework of controls in place that provides reasonable assurance regarding the organisation's governance framework, effective and efficient achievement of objectives and the management of key risks, and proper arrangements are in place to promote value for money.

8. The internal audit work of the year has identified a number of areas of good practice and good internal control. Significant improvement has continued to be made in addressing implementation of internal audit recommendations. A number of level 1 recommendations have again been made with the more material findings highlighted later in this report.”

The conclusion from the review activity outlined above is that in 2019/20 the Council continued to demonstrate that the governance arrangements and framework within which the Council operates are sound and operating effectively.

Improvement Areas

The annual review process identified the following areas where improvements have been made during 2019/20, or where further improvements are planned for 2020/21 to enhance the Council's governance framework. Progress will be reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee. An update on the improvement actions identified in the 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement was reported to the Scrutiny & Audit committee in June 2020 (Report [164/20 Appendix 1](#)).

- The Local Governance Review (LGR) is a Scottish Government and COSLA led joint initiative which complements the work that has been ongoing in Angus since 2015 to better engage local communities in determining priorities and decisions about what is needed in their areas and how to achieve it. As part of the ongoing developments of the LGR, Angus Community Planning Partnership have continued to provide comprehensive responses to the Local Governance Review working groups and has been working with the Improvement Service through the Community Planning Improvement Board to explore new ways of working with communities. This new way of working has included exploring demand management and community wealth building.
- The Fairer Scotland Duty (Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010), places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland to pay due regard to (actively consider) how they can reduce inequalities of outcome, caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. Local Authorities are included in this and are required to publish a written assessment showing how they have done this.

To date in Angus, Fairer Scotland Duty assessments are completed in a manner that is compliant with the Council's duties under the legislation. An integrated Fairer Duty Assessment template is being developed as part of a Lean review of the Council's entire committee process which will be digital and more efficient in exploring impacts to communities and the people of Angus. While this work has been progressed to an advanced stage, its completion has been delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic work currently taking priority.

It is however planned that, in due course, training in the new template and process will take place once the work is complete. That training will include support for improving the current approach to completing Equalities Impact assessment (EIA) and Fairer Scotland Duty implications which need to be highlighted. [NEW ACTION – AC-CGOV-00038](#)

- The [Council Plan 2019-2024](#), [Finance & Change Plan 2020](#) and [Workforce Plan 2020](#) were approved by full Council in February 2020. These documents set out the Council's strategic direction, vision and priorities, along with planned changes to demonstrate how the available resources are being targeted towards delivering and improving outcomes for the citizens and businesses of Angus. These are to be reviewed to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the approach set out at that time.

- The Council is operating in a challenging climate, with reducing resources and increasing expectations. This position is actively monitored and managed by Directorate management teams and by the Corporate Leadership Team. The associated risks are included as part of the revised Corporate Risk Register ([Report 15/20](#), [Appendix 1](#)), which was considered by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee in January 2020. These risks are to be reviewed to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Council's Change Programme has been running since June 2017. It has delivered savings of £9.632m in 2018/19, savings of £9.975m in 2019/20 and planned to achieve a further £10.244m savings which was used in setting the 2020/21 balanced budget position. The [Finance & Change Plan 2020](#) includes a full list of the future Change Programme savings and areas of specific investment which will contribute to delivery of the Council's outcomes. The Change Programme projects are about transforming services by finding innovative and less expensive ways of providing services and, in some cases, reorganising and reducing the workforce. Very few change projects are expected to result in a reduction in service to customers – many are intended to make improvements. The most recent Change Programme update was considered by the Policy & Resources Committee on 1 September 2020 (Report **XXX/20**). That report highlights the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the original 2020/21 targets, along with recovery plans.
- As the Council changes while managing this alongside business as usual activity, risk requires to be considered, addressed and reviewed continuously. An updated [Risk Management Strategy](#) was approved by the Policy & Resources committee in January 2019. An in-depth review of the corporate risk register was undertaken and agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team during 2019. The Council's [updated Corporate Risk Register](#), along with a new [Risk Management Step by Step Guide](#) and [Detailed Reference Guide](#) were considered and agreed by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee in January 2020 ([Report 15/20](#)).

Internal audit reviewed risk management arrangements during 2019/20 and concluded that risk management arrangements were revised during 2018/19 and rolled out and embedded during 2019/20. Whilst there is still further work to be done, the new arrangements are working well at a corporate level to share and integrate risk priorities across the Council whilst supporting services to be more accountable and responsible for all aspects of risk underpinning their business objectives ([Internal Audit Annual report 2019/20](#), Report [162/20](#)). A specific risk register item for COVID-19 response has also been developed.

- Within the Risk, Resilience and Safety Service, the Health & Safety Compliance Team holds the legal duty to provide advice and guidance to ensure that the Council complies with its statutory duties to manage the health and safety of its employees and others affected by its activities. A strategic action plan to address required improvements that were identified was agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team during 2019.

The key actions identified in the strategic action plan have now been progressed which includes the provision of an updated Health & Safety Policy for the Council. This is a

significantly revised version which meets the necessary standards, including compliance with the Health & Safety Executive's management system which is the HSG65 (revised) model of plan, do, check and act. The progress with this work is being monitored and a number of identified operational actions have to be concluded. This is partly due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19 pandemic. Progress will be monitored at such times as these activities can resume.

- In the final quarter of 2019/20, the results of an Angus Health & Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) whistleblowing investigation were shared with the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO). A number of actions were identified for progression by the AHSCP management team. A specific point regarding the complexity of operating two separate organisations' whistleblowing policies in an integrated service delivery context with multi-professional teams and leadership routes emerged. The Council is reviewing the existing policy and guidance in the context of integration. [NEW ACTION AC-CGOV-00044](#)
- Business Continuity Plans have been fully reviewed and updated. This is undertaken as a minimum on an annual basis. This has included a full review of IT requirements and recovery time objectives. A training and exercising programme and action plan is also in place.
- Angus Council are currently 'Cyber Essentials' accredited and PSN compliant until June 2020. Work is being progressed on the assessment for next year's PSN compliance and expect to achieve this in June 2020. We do not anticipate renewing Cyber essentials accreditation as advised by Scottish Digital Office as this is of marginal incremental benefit to local government.
- All Emergency and Resilience Plans have been reviewed and updated where required. This is undertaken annually as a minimum requirement. Updated versions are on ResilienceDirect and, where applicable, on the Council website. Angus Council also remains an active and participatory member of the Regional Resilience Partnership, and Tayside Local Resilience Partnership in the planning and preparation for the response to and recovery from major incidents and emergencies. This has played a significant part in the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Scheme of Delegation to Officers, which forms part of the Council's core constitutional documents, was updated in May 2019 ([Report 146/19](#)). It is planned to do a further review of this during financial year 2020/21.

Further work was undertaken during 2019/20 to review and update any operational sub-delegations required to ensure that across the Council these reflect the current management structure and operational arrangements. It has been identified during the course of this year's annual review of the governance framework that further improvement work is still required. [CONTINUE ACTION – AC-CGOV-04](#)

- The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (PRSA) requires authorities to prepare and implement a Records Management Plan (RMP). The [RMP for Angus Council and](#)

[Angus Licensing Board](#) was approved by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland in March 2017. The last Progress Update Review was submitted in September 2018 and the next submission is June 2020. The [PRSA Assessment Team's report](#), issued in January 2019, concluded that: "Angus Council and Angus Licensing Board continue to take their statutory obligations seriously and are working hard to bring all the elements of their records management arrangements into full compliance with the Act and fulfil the Keeper's expectations." The update review process identified that a lack of space may inhibit or prevent archive material from Angus Council being stored in the archive collection. It was highlighted last year that options to address this risk are being discussed with Angus Alive. This continues to be the position while Angus Alive consider these long term storage requirements, alongside a broader initiative to improve our current approach. In the interim, archive storage arrangements are being actively managed in an appropriate manner. [CONTINUE ACTION – AC-CGOV-05](#)

- In 2019, seven data protection breaches were reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). No formal action was taken by the ICO but the ICO do make recommendation for each report. A new Data Protection Policy was approved in May 2018 and is available to all staff on the Council's Intranet. All staff are provided with training in basic data protection law and practice as part of their mandatory induction training. Staff must complete the data protection training annually. It has been identified during the course of this year's annual review of the governance framework that further improvement work is required. [NEW ACTION – AC-CGOV-00039](#)
- Freedom of Information (FOI) requests continues to increase - a further 8% increase during 2019. This has coincided with a reduction in staff numbers. In order to counteract this trend of increasing demand and reduced resources, officers have investigated ways in which the statutory processes of recording, monitoring and reporting can be streamlined and digitised. This was examined along with the complaints handling process and priority was given to progress the complaints module, which is now approaching completion. Work will then be progressed on the FOI module. [CONTINUE ACTION – AC-CGOV-06](#)
- The Council operates the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman's (SPSO) complaints handling procedure for local authorities. During 2019/20, only 60.6% of stage 1 complaints and 51.1% of stage 2 complaints were closed within the target timescales set by SPSO guidance (5 working days for stage 1, 20 working days for stage 2). Further detail is included in Report [XXX/20](#) to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee considered in August.
- Concerns were raised by internal audit relating to the performance of the Environmental Health Service in 2019. An action plan was agreed, and additional staff resources were put in place in order to address concerns around ability to deliver statutory functions. The action plan is now substantively complete. The one outstanding action which relates to rationalising the content of current guidance, policies and procedures, has been extended from July 2020 to September 2020 due to prioritising staff resource towards the Council's COVID-19 pandemic response.

- Internal Audit matters highlighted as part of last year's annual review of the governance framework also included a requirement to improve the adequacy of controls in the Council's ResourceLink system. That has now been addressed by the completion of the associated action plan. During the course of this year's audit plan, user access controls in the Northgate Housing System have also been identified as having only limited assurance. The recommendations in the Internal Audit report (Report 161/20 refers - considered by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee at its meeting on 16 June 2020) have been agreed, however development of an action plan is currently outstanding due to staff resources being prioritised towards the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the action plan is agreed, progress will be monitored by internal audit and reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee.

The identification of similar user access control issues in more than one system will be addressed by raising a new action to ensure suitable council-wide arrangements are put in place to avoid recurrence. [NEW ACTION – AC-CGOV-00040](#)

- Internal Audit have also identified limited assurance in audits relating to 'Climate Change Targets 2020' and 'Progress Towards Cashless Council'. Action plans are in place to address the areas of risk identified and progress will be monitored by internal audit and reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee.
- Improvement action has been identified to review the end to end process for the billing and collection of payments for adult social care. This relates to the administrative processing efficiency of the complex system that involves financial assessment staff, care managers and sales ledger staff. Some of the teams involved in the process have been the subject of organisational changes and it is considered that the system could be improved. [NEW ACTION – AC-CGOV-00043](#)
- The Scrutiny & Audit Committee were unable to carry out a self-assessment against the 'Good Practice and Evaluating the Effectiveness' checklists in the CIPFA Audit Committee guidance. This was due to the COVID-19 pandemic occurring in advance of the date arranged for the review to take place. Notwithstanding that, officers have reviewed the outcome of the previous year's assessment and incomplete actions have been carried forward. The updated summary is included in Appendix 1 of the annual report from the committee to full Council ([Report 165/20](#), [Appendix 1](#)). Progress with the ongoing actions will be monitored by the committee and reported as part of the 2020/21 self-assessment. [CONTINUE ACTION – AC-CGOV-07](#)
- The Scrutiny & Audit Committee's Scrutiny Panel review into Parking Charges was reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee in December 2019 ([Report 384/19](#), [Appendix 1](#)). The report highlights the need for fuller options appraisals and associated information to be presented that will allow informed discussions by elected members. It also highlighted a need for more rigorous challenge by elected members where necessary. Consultation exercises should be included when there is significant impact to the public and further transparency of decision making processes. The action plan was agreed and this will be followed up and reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee in November 2020.

- A judicial review was instigated in respect of the decision of Council at its meeting on 7 February 2019 to demolish the former Lochside Leisure Centre in Forfar. The judicial review hearing took place on 18 July 2019 before the Outer House of the Court of Session. The Council was successful in the court case. The court decision was appealed by the petitioners to the Inner House of the Court of Session. The appeal was heard on 5 May 2020. The decision is awaited ([Report 93/19](#)).
- The Heads of Terms for the Tay Cities deal was signed in November 2018. Governance arrangements for the Tay Cities Region Joint Committee were approved by Council in March 2019. Internal governance arrangements are in place to support this. The 2019/20 internal audit plan included a review of the Tay Cities Deal to be undertaken in conjunction with the internal auditors of the partner councils, however this has been delayed. An Audit Scotland report on Scotland's City Region and Growth Deals was however shared with the Scrutiny & Audit Committee in January 2020 and this included the Angus position in relation to the scrutiny tool checklist for Councillors ([Report 69/20](#), [Appendix A](#), [Appendix B](#)).

A further 'exempt' report was subsequently considered by full Council relating to closing the deal. Tay Cities Deal partners continue to liaise with both governments to ensure the deal is signed off. Project governance arrangements are agreed and robustly framed around developing Strategic Business Case, Outline Business Case and Final Business Case documentation for consideration and agreement at appropriate bodies.

- A Brexit officer group was established in December 2017. A number of update and information reports have been submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee. The [Brexit information page](#) on the Council website signposts information available from other organisations, including the Scottish Government. The [Business Angus website](#) also provides information aimed at local businesses. A Brexit Officer was appointed in December 2019, on a temporary contract, funded by Scottish Government.
- In terms of the Council's emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Councils Service Leader Internal Audit has included the following in the 2019/20 Internal Audit Annual Report:

"My overview of the Council's response to the pandemic has provided good positive assurance about our disaster recovery planning in practice, managers' awareness of the need to maintain good governance in change, and risk management arrangements. There are good examples of innovations, partnership working, new business processes and solutions, and new technology being embraced in order to deliver services to the community in the Council's role as a Category 1 responder to carry out the following three essential functions: Caring for the Vulnerable; Liaising with Resilience Partners; and Supporting Economic Recovery. This was achieved using amended governance arrangements, new ways of decision-making, leadership and implementation of virtual meetings, conference calls, and systems remote access. The Council has already carried out a review of how the emergency centre has functioned and

another is planned. A number of management fora have also considered lessons identified. Further reviews within services will undoubtedly take place at an appropriate time during 2020 to highlight any further lessons identified for the future.”

Some Directors have identified improvements to governance arrangements within their own service, but these are not considered material enough to affect the overall assessment of the Council being generally compliant with the requirements of our [Local Code of Corporate Governance](#).

Actions to address the improvement areas highlighted (both **CONTINUE ACTIONS** and **NEW ACTIONS**) in this annual governance statement are detailed in Appendix 1. Progress will be reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee in January and June 2021.

Conclusion

Angus Council is committed to achieving good standards of corporate governance to ensure that:

- resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities;
- there is sound and inclusive decision making; and
- there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities.

The Corporate Governance Officers Group, on behalf of the Chief Executive, maintains an overview of all aspects of the Council’s governance framework and is focussed on ensuring that good standards of governance are maintained as the Council works to fulfil its ambitions as set out in the Council Plan.


The Council recognises the contribution effective governance makes to the stewardship of resources and the achievement of outcomes. The maintenance of effective governance arrangements is particularly important during times of change, as the organisation becomes leaner and adopts new ways of delivering services.


Certification


It is our opinion that reasonable assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of Angus Council’s systems of governance and that the annual review demonstrates compliance with the core principles of good governance.


Margo Williamson		Councillor David Fairweather
Chief Executive		Leader of the Council


Annual Governance Statement Action Plan


Action Code	AC-CGOV-00038		<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Start Date	
Action Title	Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) and Fairer Scotland Training				
Description	Develop and Implement training on the new Template				Due Date
					31-Mar-2021
Latest Note					


Action Code	AC-CGOV-00039		<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Start Date	
Action Title	Data Protection Training				
Description	Improvements to the Data Protection training and Increase in completion by all staff over the coming year.				Due Date
					31-Mar-2021
Latest Note					

Action Code	AC-CGOV-00040		<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Start Date	
Action Title	Develop Corporate Adequacy of Controls Action Plan				
Description	Develop action plan to address the adequacy of controls in all Corporate System.				Due Date
					31-Mar-2021
Latest Note					


Action Code	AC-CGOV-00043		<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Start Date	
Action Title	Review Social Care Billing Process				
Description	Review the end to end process for assessing, billing and recovering payments for social care.			Due Date	31-Mar-2021
Latest Note					


Action Code	AC-CGOV-00044		<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Start Date	
Action Title	Review Whistleblowing Policy				
Description	Review the Councils existing Whistleblowing Policy and guidance in the context of integration.			Due Date	30-Sep-2020
Latest Note					


Action Code	AC-CGOV-02		<input type="text" value="100%"/>	Start Date	24-Sep-2019
Action Title	Risk Register Refresh				
Description	The refreshed Corporate Risk Register and revised risk management guidance will be submitted to the Scrutiny and Audit Committee.			Due Date	30-Sep-2019
Latest Note	The Corporate Risk Register and risk management guidance were submitted to this committee on 24 September 2019 (R311/19)				


Action Code	AC-CGOV-03		<input type="text" value="100%"/>	Start Date	01-Jul-2019
Action Title	Develop a Strategic Health & Safety Action Plan				
Description	We will develop and implement a strategic health & safety action plan to address the issues identified from the recent audit and gap analysis.			Due Date	31-Oct-2019
Latest Note					

	This action was completed as part of addressing the update to the Corporate Risk Register which confirms the provision of a Strategic Health & Safety Action Plan which is now in place for CLT.			
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Action Code	AC-CGOV-04		<input type="text" value="75%"/>	Start Date	15-Nov-2019
Action Title	Update and Review Scheme of Delegation			Due Date	30-Sep-2020
Description	Operational schemes of delegation across the council will be further reviewed and updated during 2019				
Latest Note	Date extended to 30 March as approved by S&A committee 16 June 2020				

Action Code	AC-CGOV-05		<input type="text" value="10%"/>	Start Date	03-Jun-2019
Action Title	Adequate Storage of Archive Documents			Due Date	31-Mar-2021
Description	We will work with ANGUSalve to ensure adequate storage for archived documents.				
Latest Note	Date extended to 31 March 2021 as approved by S& A Committee 16 June 2020				

Action Code	AC-CGOV-06		<input type="text" value="55%"/>	Start Date	14-May-2020
Action Title	Complaints and FOI system			Due Date	30-Sep-2020
Description	We will develop Firmstep to provide automatic recording, monitoring and reporting of Freedom of Information requests and complaints				
Latest Note	Date extended to 30 September 2020 as approved at S&A Committee 16 June 2020				

Action Code	AC-CGOV-07		<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Start Date	02-Sep-2019
Action Title	Scrutiny & Audit Action Plan				

Description	We will monitor progress in completing the Scrutiny & Audit Committee action plan.	Due Date	31-Mar-2021
Latest Note	Date extended to 31 March 2021 as approved by S&A Committee 16 June 2020		