

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 26 JANUARY 2021

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – ACTION PLAN UPDATES

REPORT BY VIVIEN SMITH, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC POLICY, TRANSFORMATION AND PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

ABSTRACT

This report presents an update in relation to the Action Plan included in the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement. It also includes an update in relation to the Action Plan from the 2019/20 Scrutiny and Audit Committee Annual Report to Council.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny and Audit Committee:

- (i) review and scrutinise the update to the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan included in Appendix 1;
- (ii) review and scrutinise the update to 2019/20 Scrutiny and Audit Committee Annual Report Action Plan to Council included in Appendix 2;
- (iii) approve the extension to the completion dates on specific actions as set out in sections 3.2 and 4.2 of this report; and
- (iv) agree that a workshop is arranged with the Scrutiny and Audit Committee to be held on 29 April 2021 (10am to 12 noon) to undertake a self-assessment exercise to support the ongoing work of the Committee.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/COUNCIL PLAN

2.1 This report supports the Council's commitment to the principles of good corporate governance, which in turn support services in the delivery of local outcomes set out in the Community Plan and the Council Plan.

3. 2019/20 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT: ACTION PLAN UPDATE

3.1 The final 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement was included in the Council's [2019/20 audited Annual Accounts](#), which were approved by this Committee at its meeting on 24 November 2020 (report 291/20 refers). The Annual Governance Statement included an Action Plan summarising improvement action to be taken forward during 2020/21 to strengthen the Council's corporate governance.

3.2 An update to the Action Plan is included in Appendix 1. Members are asked to review and scrutinise progress. Approval is also sought to extend the completion dates on the following actions:

- AC-CGOV-00044 Review Whistleblowing Policy: propose that target date for completion is extended to 31 March 2021 (current target 29 January 2021).
- AC-CGOV-04 Update and Review Scheme of Delegation (for individual services): propose that target date for completion is extended to 30 June 2021 (current target 30 September 2020).
- AC-CGOV-05 Adequate Storage of Archive Documents: propose that target date for completion is extended to 31 March 2022 (current target 31 March 2021).
- AC-CGOV-06 Complaints and FOI system: propose that target date for completion is extended to 31 March 2021 (current target 30 September 2020).

3.3 A further update will be reported to this Committee in June 2021 as part of the annual corporate governance review.

4. SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT: ACTION PLAN UPDATE

4.1 The Scrutiny and Audit Committee 2019/20 Annual Report was approved by the Council at its meeting on 10 September 2020 ([Report 216/20](#) refers). Appendix A of that report provided an update to the Committee's Action Plan. Members may recall that the Action Plan was developed from the Committee's self-assessment workshop held in March 2019.

4.2 An update to the Action Plan is included in Appendix 2. Members are asked to review and scrutinise progress. Approval is also sought to extend the completion dates on the following actions:

- GC-S&A-0007 Risk Management Training: propose that target date for completion is extended to 30 June 2021 (current target 31 March 2021).
- GC-S&A-0009 Roles of CLT & other Groups: propose that target date for completion is extended to 30 June 2021 (current target 31 March 2021).

4.3 The Scrutiny and Audit Committee would normally undertake a self-assessment exercise during the course of the year to inform areas for improvement. The self-assessment is based on checklists included in the CIPFA Audit Committee Guidance. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, no self-assessment exercise was undertaken during 2020. However, it is recommended that a self-assessment exercise for the Committee is arranged to take place on 29 April 2021 (10am to 12 noon), so that the work of the Committee may be supported and areas for improvement identified for further action.

4.4 A further update will be reported to this Committee in August 2021 as part of the Committees draft annual report for 2020/21. That report will also include any new actions identified as part of the 2021 self-assessment exercise.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.


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List of Appendices:


1. 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement: Action Plan Update
2. 2019/20 Scrutiny and Audit Committee Annual Report to Council: Action Plan Update


APPENDIX 1
2019/20 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan


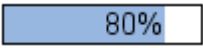
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|---------------------|---|---|--|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Action Code | AC-CGOV-00038 |  | <div style="background-color: #add8e6; width: 50px; height: 15px; display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black;">20%</div> | Start Date | 21-Dec-2020 | |
| 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 | Training for members of CLT arranged. Further training for other EIA/FSD authors to follow in January 2021. | | | | | |



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| Action Code | AC-CGOV-00039 |  | <div style="background-color: #add8e6; width: 50px; height: 15px; display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black;">100%</div> | Start Date | 24-Dec-2020 | |
| 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 | <p>Data Protection training is mandatory and requires Angus Council, AHSCP and ANGUSalve staff to carry out this training annually.</p> <p>Statistics for staff who have completed this mandatory training and staff who have not completed the training between the specific time periods are reported to the Information Governance Working Group and the Information Governance Steering Group annually.</p> <p>The training is reviewed every year to ensure information provided in the training is accurate and up to date.</p> <p>Team Leader Information Governance continues to look at ways of improving or supporting this training, eg attending team meetings, when asked, to discuss service specific data protection breaches. Work is also ongoing with Graeme Pert in the Comms Team to investigate if training scenarios could be turned into cinematic/animations.</p> | | | | | |


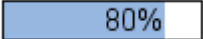
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| Action Code | AC-CGOV-00040 |  | <input type="text" value="10%"/> | Start Date | 30-Dec-2020 |
| Action Title | Develop Corporate Adequacy of Controls Action Plan | | | | |
| Description | Develop action plan to address the adequacy of controls in all Corporate System. | | | Due Date | 31-Mar-2021 |
| Latest Note | Action Plan as started and will include both a checklist for all corporate systems specific to user controls as well as monitoring mechanisms. This work will be completed by 31st March noting that monitoring will take place at regular intervals thereafter. | | | | |


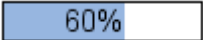
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| Action Code | AC-CGOV-00043 |  | <input type="text" value="20%"/> | Start Date | 18-Dec-2020 |
| Action Title | Review Social Care Billing Process | | | | |
| Description | Review the end to end process for assessing, billing and recovering payments for social care. | | | Due Date | 31-Mar-2021 |
| Latest Note | <p>Progress was stalled due to COVID priorities. Meetings have now resumed & some work has taken place internally within AHSCP. The focus going forward will be on ensuring the process prior to producing an invoice is efficient. AHSCP have also been provided with management information regarding their debt.</p> <p>Resourcing to undertake detailed process mapping of the existing end to end process has now been agreed using AHSCP internal audit consultancy resources originally intended for another piece of work which can slip due to COVID-19. This will allow the current process to be fully documented and areas for improvement and streamlining identified for implementation.</p> <p>While best endeavours will be made to achieve the due date of 31 March 2021, there is a risk that an extension will be required.</p> | | | | |

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|---------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Action Code | AC-CGOV-00044 |  | <input type="text" value="75%"/> | Start Date | 11-Dec-2020 |
| Action Title | Review Whistleblowing Policy | | | | |
| Description | Review the Councils existing Whistleblowing Policy and guidance in the context of integration. | | | Due Date | 29-Jan-2021 |
| Latest Note | Redrafted policy shared with Legal and HR for comment. At this stage, it is requested that the target date for completion is extended to 31 March 2021. | | | | |


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|---------------------|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Action Code | AC-CGOV-04 |  |  | Start Date | 15-Nov-2019 |
| Action Title | Update and Review Scheme of Delegation (for individual services) | | | | |
| Description | Operational schemes of delegation across the council will be further reviewed and updated during 2019 | | | Due Date | 30-Sep-2020 |
| Latest Note | <p>Next meeting of the operational scheme of delegation working group scheduled for January 2021. The business areas of HR/DE/IT/BS, S&L, CFJ and IJB are still in progress and to be concluded. Progress with this work has been impacted due to COVID-19. This is also linked to the work of the MOG relating to the update of the Council's Standing Orders as the information from that work will cascade into the operational scheme of delegations.</p> <p>At this stage, it is requested that the target date for completion is extended to 30 June 2021.</p> | | | | |


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|---------------------|--|---|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Action Code | AC-CGOV-05 |  |  | Start Date | 03-Jun-2019 |
| Action Title | Adequate Storage of Archive Documents | | | | |
| Description | We will work with ANGUSalve to ensure adequate storage for archived documents. | | | Due Date | 31-Mar-2021 |
| Latest Note | <p>The work to address this action is linked to Angus Alive's ambition to provide a resource centre which may be a longer term solution and will require external funding. In the short term, the Council Assets team are assessing options to consolidate storage of archives/ collections with materials currently stored at The Yard Forfar, The Mart Forfar and the Hunter Library at Restenneth Priory by Forfar. This is also now linked to considering the Council's estate needs post COVID-19 and what assets may now be available to provide suitable storage, and having capacity for new material if required. The Council Assett team along with Angus Alive colleagues will therefore work closely to develop a strategy that will establish a proposed way forward to address this action.</p> <p>In order to allow time for this strategy to be progressed, it is proposed the target date for completion is extended to 31 March 2022.</p> | | | | |


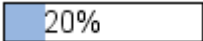
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| Action Code | AC-CGOV-06 |  |  | Start Date | 14-May-2020 |
| Action Title | Complaints and FOI system | | | | |
| Description | We will develop Firmstep to provide automatic recording, monitoring and reporting of Freedom of Information requests and complaints | | | Due Date | 30-Sep-2020 |
| Latest Note | <p>Whilst indicative dates had been discussed for phase 2 testing and 'go live', we have been advised by Granicus that some issues on the issues log cannot be investigated until 5 January onwards, which may impact on these dates.</p> <p>At this stage, it is requested that the target date for completion is extended to 31 March 2021.</p> | | | | |



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| Action Code | AC-CGOV-07 |  |  | 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 | <p>Update report for CLT to be followed by report to January 2021 S&A re progress (Appendix 2 of Corporate Governance Action Plan Update report to S&A Committee on 26 January refers).</p> <p>Parking scrutiny items to be updated to S&A 1 Dec 2020. Only 1 if these actions is still o/s, with revised date January 2021.</p> | | | | |

APPENDIX 2
2019/20 Scrutiny and Audit Committee Annual Report to Council Action Plan

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|---------------------|--|---|----|-------------------|-------------|
| Action Code | GC-S&A-00007 |  | 0% | Start Date | |
| Action Title | Risk Management Training | | | | |
| Description | Obtain further risk management training as risk management strategy develops. (Brought forward from the 2018/19 action plan) | | | Due Date | 31-Mar-2021 |
| Latest Note | <p>Due to the impact of COVID-19, work on progressing further training has been delayed. However, options to deliver this training virtually are being examined and arrangements progressed to deliver this over the next few months.</p> <p>It is requested that the target date for completion is extended to 30 June 2021.</p> | | | | |

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|---------------------|--|---|------|-------------------|-------------|
| Action Code | GC-S&A-00008 |  | 100% | Start Date | 18-Dec-2020 |
| Action Title | CLT Highlight Report | | | | |
| Description | <p>Report to CLT to be prepared highlighting issues raised by Members during Scrutiny & Audit Committee self-assessment workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure risk management issues are included in all relevant committee reports • Review how the committee is kept informed on the Change Programme to allow for more scrutiny of the higher risk areas • Better use of plain English in all committee reports. Consider improving the format of reports so that they are easier to read on screen • Better transparency & reporting to stakeholders <p>(Brought forward from 2018/19 action plan)</p> | | | Due Date | 31-Mar-2021 |
| Latest Note | <p>A report was submitted to the Corporate Leadership Team highlighting the issues raised by elected members during the 2019 Scrutiny & Audit committee self-assessment covering 4 key areas. This was considered at the CLT meeting on 17 November 2020. Actions to address the matters raised along with follow-on measures (where applicable) were agreed. Further details can be made available if required.</p> | | | | |

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|---------------------|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Action Code | GC-S&A-00009 |  |  | Start Date | 18-Sep-2020 |
| Action Title | Roles of CLT & Other Groups | | | | |
| Description | Officers to draft a briefing paper on the roles of the Corporate Leadership Team and other groups. | | | Due Date | 31-Mar-2021 |
| Latest Note | <p>An initiative associated with this action was discussed at the Corporate Governance Officers Group (CGOG) at its meeting on 9 November. It was identified that this relates to the work initiated at the Senior Leaders Forum in relation to the various internal groups that are established to support council work. This links to internal audit '3-lines' model of best practice and assurance mapping and it was agreed that a further piece of work would be jointly progressed by the Service Leader (IA) and Service Leader (G&C) to take this forward.</p> <p>It is requested that the target date for completion is extended to 30 June 2021.</p> | | | | |

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|---------------------|--|---|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Action Code | GC-S&A-00010 |  |  | Start Date | 30-Jun-2020 |
| Action Title | CIPFA Annual Governance Statement Briefing | | | | |
| Description | Officers to circulate the CIPFA briefing on Annual Governance Statements. | | | Due Date | 30-Jun-2020 |
| Latest Note | <p>Complete</p> <p>The CIPFA briefing is now available on the elected members section of SharePoint.</p> | | | | |