

Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 (DRAFT)

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 Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)/ the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) framework, Delivering Good Governance in Local Government and the supporting guidance notes for Scottish Local 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.

This annual governance statement explains how the Council has complied with the terms of the Local Code for the year ended 31 March 2021. 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, just prior to the commencement of the 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 involved significant changes and disruption to the manner in which Council services were normally delivered – some services stopped entirely, others were under immense strain due to increased demand, and some new services were established with pace and urgency to respond to the needs of our citizens, communities

and businesses. Annex 1 of this Annual Governance Statement provides an overview and account that helps to capture the significance of the governance impact that COVID-19 has had on the Council's range of services during 2020/21 and continuing into 2021/22.

As a direct result of this, changes to existing strategic and operational governance arrangements, along with some new governance arrangements were deployed as part of our response. This 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 (held remotely), contained within 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.

[Report 121/20](#) established a Special Arrangements Committee and a Special Education Committee on a temporary basis with delegated powers as set out in that report. The Special Arrangements Committee met on 28 April 2020, 26 May 2020 and 23 June 2020.

At its meeting on 23 June 2020, the Special Arrangement Committee considered [Report 175/20](#) which set out revisions to the interim arrangements that were agreed at the meeting of the Council on 3 April 2020, to allow all members to be involved in the decision making of the Council. That meeting agreed that meetings of all service committees will resume in August 2020 in accordance with the previously agreed timetable of meetings, with the consequential ceasing of meetings of the Special Arrangements Committee and the Special Education Committee.

The meeting also agreed that Council and Committee meetings be held remotely, subject to review in 6 months' time, and that a remote meeting of full Council would take place on Wednesday 12 August 2020. Since that time, and throughout the remainder of the 2020/21

financial year, remote meetings have continued to take place in lieu of physical meetings, with reviews taking place during that period.

The interim arrangements with regard to the provision of Information Reports to committees ceased, and normal reporting arrangements were re-established in November 2020 ([Report 270/20](#) refers).

A further change was made to the Scheme of Delegations to Officers ([Report 328/20](#) refers) relating to ongoing response to COVID-19 arrangements and the operational arrangements required to be put in place to manage the potential worst-case scenario and concurrent resilience risks over winter 2020 and in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic.

A key part of maintaining assurance throughout 2020/21 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, which have been scaled up and down during the 'waves' of the pandemic, 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. Ongoing external communications through a variety of media channels, to keep the public in Angus well informed, linked to a pan Tayside approach, have also been a key part of the Council response.

A review of the impact of our response to COVID-19 on the Council's services during 2020/21 has also been carried out as part of the 'Annual Review of the Governance Framework'. As noted above, Annex 1 provides an overview and account that helps to capture the significance of the governance impact that COVID-19 has had on the Council's range of services during 2020/21 and continuing into 2021/22.

In overall terms, it is considered that the Council has responded extremely well to the enormous challenges raised by the pandemic and in a manner that has been well planned, proportionate and responsive to the changing circumstances. The emergency response has been delivered in a controlled environment, with appropriate governance arrangements deployed to provide robust assurance under the circumstances. Recovery and renewal plans are also being developed as an integrated part of our strategic planning arrangements. A report with an update on Angus Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including ongoing and proposed recovery and response initiatives, as well as providing an updated route map for Angus Council in line with Scottish Government 'Strategic Framework Protection Levels', was considered by the Council at its meeting on 24 June 2021 ([Report XXX/21](#) refers).

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. However, during

the period from 3 April 2020 to 12 August 2020, and as an initial response to conducting Council business during the initial 'wave' of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council agreed to establish two temporary Committees instead of the Council and its standing committees, namely:

- the Special Arrangements Committee; and
- the Special Education Committee.

Following the agreement of the Special Arrangements Committee at its meeting on 23 June 2020 ([Report 175/20](#) refers), the Council and the following standing committees were reinstated and in place during the remainder of 2020/21:

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

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](#)).

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/ Section 95 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 (2020/21), 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 there is compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations.

Adult social work services are delivered under the direction of the Angus Integration Joint Board, established under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014. The work of the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership is overseen by the Angus 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 has continued to be filled on an interim appointment basis during the full course of 2020/21.

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 provides professional governance and leadership in the delivery of social work and social care services. The role of the 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 which have been delegated to the IJB. The Council's CSWO annual report for 2019/20 was considered by the Council at its meeting on 10 September 2020 ([Report 213/20](#) and [Appendix](#) refer) and the CSWO 2020/21 annual report will be brought to the Council in Autumn 2021. The National Chief Social Work Officers [Annual Report](#) Summary 2019/20 is also available on the IRISS 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, retains final

edit rights over all audit reports and provides 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 was to be made and work on the assessment process was further delayed in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As an interim measure, a self-assessment was submitted in March 2020 and confirmed the service was compliant with PSIAS. The external assessment recommenced in September 2020 and the completed report was considered by the Council's Scrutiny & Audit Committee at its meeting on 26 January 2021 ([Report 11/21](#) refers). The report presented the results of the External Quality assessment (EQA) undertaken by the Internal Audit team from Scottish Borders Council. It confirmed compliance with the requirements of the PSIAS and made a small number of recommendations where improvements could be achieved relating to Assurance Mapping and Risk Management.

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 continued to feature during 2020/21 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. It has also played an active role in reviewing potentially fraudulent grant claims as part of the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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](#) refers). During 2019/20 the Team Leader Counter Fraud also developed on-line counter fraud training that was made available to all Council staff through our Always Learning platform.

All of the allegations investigated during 2020/21 were of low financial value or non-cash related and none has had a material impact on the Council's financial standing. [Report 181/21](#)

considered by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee at its meeting on 1 June 2021, contains 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 addition, there is a significant challenge of ensuring that grant funding relating to COVID-19 is appropriately allocated. In response to this, the additional member of staff appointed to the Counter-Fraud team on a temporary basis, from 20 May 2019 to 31 March 2021, has been extended until May 2022.

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, for year 2020/21, the annual review of the governance framework has also considered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Council services over that period, all as set out in this statement and Annex 1.

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 2020/21 ([Report 178/21](#), [Appendix 1](#)).

Their review of 2020/21, includes 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 for the year has identified a number of areas of good practice and good internal control. A number of recommendations to improve systems and controls have been made. The more material findings are highlighted later in this report. Overall during 2020/21 the level of assurance provided from audit work has improved on previous years.*
9. *I have concluded that the Local Code of Corporate Governance is adequate and effective, and although some areas for improvement have been identified, the Code is complied with in all material respects."*

The conclusion from the review activity outlined above is that in 2020/21 the Council continued to demonstrate that the governance arrangements and framework within which the Council operates are sound and operating effectively, notwithstanding the significant challenges in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Improvement Areas

The annual review process identified the following areas where improvements have been made during 2020/21, or where further improvements are planned for 2021/22 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 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement was reported to the Scrutiny & Audit committee in June 2021 ([Report 180/21](#), [Appendix 1](#), Annex 2 refers).

- The Local Governance Review (LGR) which is a Scottish Government and COSLA led joint initiative has been delayed due to the COVID pandemic. Work is currently underway through a National working group to further develop local democracy and compliment the Community Wealth Building work. In Angus the Community Planning Partnership are working on a programme of service design which aims to put communities and their views at the heart of everything we do. An update was provided in a [joint statement by The Scottish Government and The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities \(CoSLA\) on 18 March 2021](#), which will be built in to the 2021/22 programme of Service Design.
- Angus Council, as one of the constituent bodies of the Angus Integration Joint Board and the associated Integration Scheme, along with NHS Tayside, have a legal

requirement to review said Integration Scheme in accordance with the related legislation. This was considered by the Council at its meeting on 10 September 2020 ([Report 220/20](#) refers). A project is now being initiated and co-ordinated on a pan Tayside basis. In relation to this work, it is highlighted that the Council's Chief Social Work Officer has stated in their governance statement that: *"Following changes made to the clinical governance reporting arrangements at a panTayside level, work is required to ensure that the Integration Scheme for health and social care is updated to reflect localised governance channels, including detail regarding agreed practice governance frameworks for social work and social care. Meantime, arrangements are in place with officers to ensure oversight continues."* This matter will be raised as part of the overall project and associated Integration Scheme review work.

- 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.

The Equalities Impact Assessment and Fairer Scotland guidance and template have now been updated. Training has now been developed and is available to staff via the online e-learning system. Two dates have also been set to hold Question & Answer sessions which are bookable for staff to attend. This is currently being communicated to all staff. **COMPLETED ACTION – AC-CGOV-00038**

- The [Council Plan 2019-2024](#), [Finance & Change Plan](#) and [Workforce Plan 2020](#) were approved by full Council in March 2021. 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 have been 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 13/21](#), [Appendices 1, 2 & 3](#)), which was considered by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee at its meeting on 26 January 2021. Separate dashboards and registers are in place for the Council's ongoing response to 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, £9.975m in 2019/20, £8.577m in 2020/21 and plans to achieve a further £5.137m savings which were used in setting the 2021/22 balanced budget position. The latest [Finance & Change Plan](#), agreed by Council on 4 March 2021, includes a full list of the future Change Programme enabling, investment and savings programmes and projects which will contribute to delivery of the Council's priorities. The Finance and Change Plan also includes 'Our Approach to Change (2021/22 to 2023/24)', including how the Council will progress the development of the Change Programme under the four themes of Demand Management; Innovation/

Commercialisation; Partnership/ Collaboration; and Service Contraction. The most recent Change Programme update was considered by the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 4 May 2021 ([Report 132/21](#), [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#) refer).

- As the Council changes, while managing this alongside business as usual activity, risk requires to be considered, addressed and reviewed continuously. The [Risk Management Strategy](#) bi-annual review commenced in March 2021. This will be reviewed by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee during 2021 and approval will thereafter be requested at the next available Policy & Resources Committee. An in-depth review of the Corporate Risk Register was undertaken and agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team during 2020, and reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee at its meeting on 26 January 2021 ([Report 13/21](#), [Appendices 1, 2 & 3](#)). This included a specific risk register item for COVID-19 response.
- Internal audit reviewed risk management arrangements and identified that these were revised during 2018/19 and embedded at a corporate level during 2019/20. Further work to provide training and develop service risk registers was planned for 2020 but this was put on hold due to COVID-19. This work re-started in early 2021 and included training for elected members in April 2021. 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 2020/21](#), [Report 178/21](#)).
- 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, and is reviewed quarterly.
- 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. The introduction of the SHE Assure digital safety management system is currently being piloted with specific services and will be rolled out during 2021.
- During 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. While this improvement action has been progressed towards a conclusion during 2020/21 and has been issued to the respective parties for consultation, it is not yet completed.

CONTINUED 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 were 'Cyber Essentials' accredited and PSN compliant until June 2020. As a result of resourcing issues and other priority work due to COVID-19 the Council was unable to complete all remediation work to achieve PSN last year. PSN connectivity and services have continued and we are preparing for reassessment in May 2021.
- All Emergency and Resilience Plans are reviewed and updated annually where required. The latest 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.
- It was agreed by the Special Arrangements Committee, at its meeting on 26 May 2020, to review the current governance arrangements in relation to the Council's Standing Orders, the Order of Reference of Committees and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers by establishing a short life Member and Officer Working Group ([Report 142/20](#) refers). This work has been in progress during 2020/21 and is now planned for completion during 2021/22. The outcome of the review will thereafter be reported to Council for consideration.
- Further work was undertaken during 2020/21 to review and update all the operational sub-delegations required to ensure that across the Council these reflect the current management structure and operational arrangements. Except for the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership scheme, which has been progressed but remains to be finalised, all the other aspects of this work are complete. **CONTINUED ACTION – AC-CGOV-04**
- It is also highlighted that an update to the Financial Regulations has been in progress during 2020/21. The updated Financial Regulations were considered by Council at its meeting on [insert date] ([Report XXX/21](#) refers).
- 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 2020 and the next submission date is June 2021. The recent PRSA Assessment Team's report, concluded that: "Based on the progress update assessment the Assessment Team considers 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 previous PRSA 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 ANGUSalive. This continues to be the position while ANGUSalive consider these long term storage requirements, and this will be aligned with the 'ANGUSalive Transformation Project' ([Report 224/20](#) refers). In the interim, archive storage arrangements are being actively managed in an appropriate manner. **CONTINUED ACTION – AC-CGOV-05**

- During 2020, three data protection breaches were reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) which was a reduction from 2019 where seven breaches were reported to the ICO. No formal action was taken by the ICO but the ICO did make recommendations for each report and services are required to address these matters. Whilst there was a reduction in breaches reported to the ICO, there were an increase of breaches logged overall: in 2019, 118 breaches were logged; and in 2020, 122 breaches were logged. Regular reports are provided for the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) on Data Protection/ Information Governance/ Freedom of Information compliance. An improvement action was raised as part of the 2019/20 governance review to ensure that data protection training is completed comprehensively by all Council staff. For management purposes that action has been closed off. **COMPLETED ACTION – AC-CGOV-00039**

The 2020/21 governance review has however also identified the continued need to ensure that data protection training is completed comprehensively by all Council staff and therefore a new action has been raised. **NEW ACTION – AC-CGOV-00070**

- It has also been identified that data breaches emerging from Angus Health & Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) should be reported via Angus Council or NHS Tayside (not directly from AHSCP), and the procedure is being revised to address this matter. **NEW ACTION – AC-CGOV-00071**
- A report was considered by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee at its meeting on 1 December 2020 ([Report 311/20](#)) which provided elected members with information about Freedom of Information and Environmental Information requests received by the Council for the period 1 January 2015 until 30 September 2020. This report had been specifically requested by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee to identify key themes of such requests.

- Improvement work to update both the Council's complaints handling system and handling of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests using the Firmstep system was completed during the course of 2020/21. **COMPLETED ACTION – AC-CGOV-06**
- The Council operates the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman's (SPSO) complaints handling procedure for local authorities. During 2020/21, 88.2% of stage 1 complaints and 9.6% 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 186/21**, which was considered by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee at its meeting on 1 June 2021.
- 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 substantively complete. The one outstanding action which relates to rationalising the content of current guidance, policies and procedures, was previously extended from July 2020 to September 2020. This has subsequently been extended to 31 August 2021 due to prioritising staff resource towards the Council's COVID-19 pandemic response.
- The identification of similar user access control issues emerging from previous internal audits in relation to the ResourceLink and Northgate Housing systems was raised as a new action in the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement. The resultant action to ensure suitable council-wide arrangements are put in place to avoid recurrence has now been completed. **COMPLETED ACTION - AC-CGOV-00040**
- The 2019/20 annual governance review also highlighted that Internal Audit had identified limited assurance in audits relating to 'Climate Change Targets 2020' and 'Progress Towards Cashless Council'. The 'progress Towards Cashless Council' action has been completed and the 'Climate Change Targets 2020' action is due to be completed by 31 May 2021. Progress will continue to be monitored by internal audit and reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee.
- Internal Audit have identified IT Interfaces as an area where limited assurance was provided. The limited assurance opinion results from there being a lack of documentation of the design and operation of interfaces for Council systems, as well as a reliance on the knowledge of a small number of staff for their successful day to day operation. An audit action for this item has been established.
- Last year's annual governance review work also identified an improvement action in relation to 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 was considered that the system could be improved. Work to progress this area for improvement continues and includes Internal Audit who are carrying out a review of elements of the process. **CONTINUED ACTION – AC-CGOV-00043**

- The Scrutiny & Audit Committee carried out a self-assessment against the ‘Good Practice and Evaluating the Effectiveness’ checklists in the CIPFA Audit Committee guidance at a ‘virtual’ workshop held on 29 April 2021. The summary of the findings at the workshop are included in Appendix 1 of the annual report from the Scrutiny & Audit Committee to full Council ([Report XXX/21](#), [Appendix 1](#) refers). The action in last year’s Annual Governance Statement has been closed. **COMPLETED ACTION – AC-CGOV-07**

A new action has been created to cover the improvement actions identified during the 29 April 2021 workshop, including one action which has been carried forward. Progress with these actions will be monitored by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee. **NEW ACTION – AC-CGOV-00072**

- The Scrutiny & Audit Committee’s Scrutiny Panel review into Parking Charges was reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee at its meeting in December 2019 ([Report 384/19](#), [Appendix 1](#)). A follow-up report was prepared and considered by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee at its meeting on 1 December 2020 ([Report 308/20](#) refers).

While progress was demonstrated in the report to address the actions, a number of follow-up actions were identified. These follow-up actions are mainly linked to areas of improvement work already being addressed (i.e. options appraisal guidance, Standing Orders etc. Member Officer working Group, public consultation approach being considered by the Corporate Leadership Team). A report providing guidance to Councillors on distinguishing between their strategic role and any operational work, based on the guidance available at a national level and also to clarify the ways in which elected members can raise concerns about operational changes, particularly changes that are likely to affect large numbers of people, was considered by the Council at its meeting on [\[insert date\]](#) ([Report XXX/21](#) refers).

- The Tay Cities Deal (TCD) was signed by members of the Joint Committee and both Governments in December 2020. This has allowed the programme to move to implementation. Governance arrangements are now embedded with all business cases having identified project owners and a reporting process through both Scottish and UK governments, relevant TCD thematic boards, the TCD Management Group, followed by a recommendation to the Joint Committee for approval. Joint Committee meetings have recently increased in frequency to monthly to ensure the timely authorisation of business cases to proceed.

Robust financial processes have been established to both release and monitor spend, supported by a nominated Section 95 officer from the host authority Dundee City Council and the associated finance officers’ group. Progress on the TCD is reported to the TCD Management Group and Joint Committee at each meeting by the Programme Management Office (PMO). An overall TCD risk register is in place and each project has its own risk register. Annual reporting arrangements to both governments will now be established over the next year.

Angus Council was briefed confidentially on the detail contained in the deal prior at its meeting of 17th December 2020, prior to the signing event. An information report was

subsequently submitted to Angus Council to publicly brief on the deal and project progress specific to Angus on 18 March 2021 ([Report 95/21 Appendix](#) refers). A further report on use of Angus Council capital funding to advance projects on a risk basis was also approved at the Council meeting on 18 March 2021 ([Report 106/21](#) refers).

Reporting on the use of this £6m capital fund is monitored as part of the quarterly capital reporting arrangements for Angus Council. In addition, Angus Council has approved a further £250,000 revenue fund to support the development and implementation of the deal projects in Angus as part of its 2021/22 budget setting at the Special Council meeting on 4 March 2021. This is monitored alongside Change Programme funds, reported to the Change Board for consideration and thereafter the Policy & Resources and Scrutiny & Audit Committees. Two posts were also agreed in the 2021/22 budget to help progress the TCD projects in Angus. This will help to ensure excellent governance and capture of benefits realisation from the various projects.

- The Angus Brexit Officer Group continues to meet to ensure that all plans are up to date and in line with the Tayside Resilience Partnership's EU Exit Preparedness and Risk Mitigation Plans. A number of 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 [Invest in Angus website](#) also provides information aimed at local businesses. The Brexit Officer post, funded by Scottish Government has been extended until December 2021.
- The Council's 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement contained a specific section relating to the former Lochside Leisure Centre. The statement set out the context of the court case and related appeal, along with the outcome of the court decision. The outcome of the court decision was put before elected members at Council at its meeting on 10 September 2020 in a confidential (exempt) report. The decision taken by Council was not to appeal the outcome to the Supreme Court and to proceed to consult on the future of the former Lochside Leisure Centre, Forfar. The wider Common Good ramifications of the decision were also highlighted.

Progress in relation to the matters following on from that report are as follows:

- A review of those assets affected by the court case is in progress and Report [XXX/21](#), which was considered by the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 8 June 2021, sought approval to publish a list of properties proposed to be included in the common good register for Arbroath, subject to consultation and subsequent responses. That report also noted that a further report would be brought to Committee in due course seeking approval before taking the steps outlined in the report for each of the other common good burghs;
- The Council's updated approach to accounting treatment of common good assets, including an assessment of the impact on both the common good and general funds, was considered by the Council at its meeting on 13 May 2021 ([Report 138/21](#) and [Appendices A, B and C](#) refer);

- The Council agreed to progress an initial consultation regarding the future use of the former Lochside Leisure Centre, Forfar at its meeting on 5 November 2020 ([Report 269/20](#) refers).

The initial consultation was progressed in the terms agreed by the Council and, at its meeting on 18 March 2021, the Council considered an update on the outcome of the initial consultation to determine the Council's proposals for the building and land; and to agree to progress to formal consultation under Section 104 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 ([Report 98/21](#) refers). At that meeting, the Council agreed to defer the decision.

[Report 139/21](#) was subsequently considered by the Council at its meeting on 13 May 2021, and it was agreed to further defer any decision on the future of Lochside Leisure Centre to the next Council meeting on 24 June 2021, so that members could have all relevant information necessary to make a fully informed decision, taking cognisance of the various matters set out in said report.

- The Council agreed at its meeting on 5 November 2020 to procure an independent external review of all evidence and decisions taken from 2013 to present in determining the decision to demolish Lochside Leisure Centre. ([Report 273/20](#) refers).

The report from the independent review undertaken by Azets, was considered by the Council at its meeting on 18 March 2021 ([Report 97/21](#), [Appendix 1](#) refer). The report from Azets concluded that:

- Based on its review of evidence, the decision by the Council on 7 February 2019 to approve the demolition of Lochside Leisure Centre was not unreasonable;
- Three weaknesses were identified, as detailed in the report, none of which are significant in nature; and
- The main lesson to be learned is the importance of producing options appraisals to support decision-making. It was recommended that Management develop formal guidance for the documentation of options appraisals and that documentation of options in Council and Committee papers be proportionate to the nature of the decision being made.

The Council has since prepared formal options appraisal guidance which was considered by Council at its meeting on [\[insert date\]](#) ([Report XXX/21](#) refers).

- In terms of the Council's emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council's Service Leader Internal Audit has included the following observations from audit work in the 2020/21 Internal Audit Annual Report:

- *“Oversight of Angus Alive, the IJB, and Tayside Contracts continued to provide good and improving oversight during 2020/21. In particular good arrangements were developed to allow effective joint planning and working in response to Covid-19 with the management teams at Angus Alive and Tayside Contracts.”*
- *“The Council plan is aligned with the change programme and the budget. Significant review has taken place during the year to ensure the impact of covid-19 has been recognised as fully as possible.”*
- *“Governance changes to address the Covid-19 impact at both officer and member levels were well planned, proportionate, and reviewed and amended appropriately throughout the year.”*
- *“Audit work undertaken in response to new covid-19 risks identified a high level of good control within new systems being implemented.”*
- *“Covid-19 recovery is being planned at both a strategic and operational level. Officers are working to ensure that these are linked and that recovery is also linked to on-going activity within services and at a corporate level, eg through the change programme.”*

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 ongoing and new improvement areas highlighted (both **CONTINUED ACTIONS** and **NEW ACTIONS**) in this annual governance statement are detailed in Annex 2. Progress will be reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee at its meetings in January and June 2022.

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

Summary of the Impact of COVID-19 on Directorates

1. Background

As part of the annual assurances sought from service Directors, there was also a requirement to provide information in relation to any changes to normal governance arrangements as a result of COVID-19, and reflect on any high lights and low lights of the year from a service delivery perspective. These reflections, written in the prose of our Service Directors and Service Leaders, are set out below to provide an overview and context that helps to capture the significance of the impact that COVID-19 has had on our range of services during 2020/21 and continuing into 2021/22.

2. Children, Families & Justice

Covid-19 has presented significant challenges to service delivery. Alternative approaches were developed to ensure statutory requirements continued to be met after the initial 'Stay at home' order was issued in March 2020. The Directorate has been in the 'Response' phase since this time. Adjustments have been made to key areas of statute as set out in the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020. A Bronze command level (Directorate level) meeting has been in place since February 2020 to manage emerging issues and ensure responsiveness to the changing environment and ensure any issues requiring resolution can be escalated without delay. The Directorate has been routinely represented on the Incident Management Team (IMT) and other coronavirus response subgroups to ensure the needs of the people using our services, and the staff involved in delivery, have been reflected. The Director has provided reports to relevant committees outlining the response to Covid-19 impacts across the service.

3. Communities

Planning and Communities

The Planning and Building Warrants service continued to operate throughout the pandemic. Whilst additional delegated authority was granted to the Service Lead to determine planning applications, this was not used, and virtual Development Standards Committees were convened to determine applications. In addition, Full Council meetings were convened to determine more significant applications. As both processes were largely digital, covid had little impact on service delivery but further digital processes (including neighbour notification and mail handling) were necessary to support this. The Communities teams face to face work was suspended during lockdown, which was a concern in relation to the vulnerable people they work with. Contact was maintained as best as possible but concerns over security meant that certain platforms most used by members of the public couldn't be supported by the teams. The teams were involved in supporting the School hubs during the first lockdown and the HAART and subsequent ARC response which connected them further to communities and individuals. The service is now looking to enhance its digital offer as well as resuming an increasing amount of face to face activity.

Environmental Services

To assist with the response to the pandemic several urgent decisions were required regarding frontline waste, parks and burial operations e.g. closure of recycling centres and suspension of services. The silver COVID-19 IMT group meetings provided a forum to raise key issues and for urgent decisions to be agreed and recorded. This ensured that we could take the

urgent actions required to maintain our frontline critical services effectively. A highlight was the continuation of household waste collections and burial services throughout the pandemic without any major disruption, and also the speedy and effective recovery of services, such as parks maintenance, following a period of lockdown.

Environmental Consumer Protection

During the first few months of lockdown ECP suspended all proactive inspection and sampling programmes. This was relaxed during the summer months but was reintroduced in the autumn and remained in place beyond the end of 2020. ECP staff adapted quickly to new legislation and continued to provide a frontline service by investigating the source of local outbreaks and advising businesses in relation to Covid restrictions in addition to working closely with Police Scotland to ensure enforcement of controls.

Housing

At the start of the pandemic, the robust business continuity plan in place, along with agile digital equipment for the majority of the team, enabled the Housing Service Staff to quickly mobilise and adapt to working from home, and then to engage with customers remotely. During the first few months of lockdown Housing suspended all repairs and maintenance except emergencies and statutory safety checks, as well as all construction projects, house moves and right to repair. Sheltered Housing communal lounges were also closed. There were some relaxations during the summer months when new build housing construction was re-started, as well as a range of planned and unplanned repairs, along with re-let work to enable house moves to re-start. This helped to ease the build-up of homeless households being accommodated in temporary accommodation, including in bed and breakfast, an unusual measure for Angus to have to take. However, a return to essential repairs only in occupied properties was imposed when the lockdown was introduced at the end of 2020. Decisions were made at regular Housing Management Team meetings, and escalated to the Silver Incident Management Team where necessary. This provided effective governance.

4. Education & Lifelong learning

Covid-19 has presented the Directorate with many challenges. The early stages of the pandemic can be characterised as 'reactive.' As far as possible we have tried to remain open and transparent about decisions being made and the rationale. We have ensured we operate within the Council's Scheme of Delegation and, where required, have acquired emergency delegations. We have continued to report to Committee and have taken three 'Education Recovery Update' reports. Leaders within the service have been empowered to make decisions based on their expertise and this is filtering into teams. We have also continued to deliver the 'core' parts of our service. All 59 of our schools have continued to provide learning and teaching throughout the past year. This offer has looked different but has been focused on meeting the needs of our children and young people. We have continued to take 'routine' business to various committees for scrutiny and approval. Strong links have been made with partner services – Transport, Capital Projects, IT, Finance and Property Assets being the most significant. A positive outcome of the past year has been the focus on partnership working. The Incident Management Team (IMT) structure has provided governance oversight to our Covid-19 response and will continue to do so as we move into recovery. There does need to be more recognition that some services are not yet working 'as normal.' There is not always a shared understanding of what different service priorities are. This can lead to difficulties when others perceive the response from this Directorate as slow.

5. Finance

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact across all areas of the Finance Directorate from the suspension of recovery action in Revenues and Benefits in Qtr 1 to enable processing of business support grants to the in-year revision to 2020/21 budgets to the development and implementation of a key supplier support scheme through our procurement team. Our welfare rights team has also been on the front line supporting local people through HAART and now ARC. All across the Directorate workloads have increased significantly in response to the pandemic and this has put great strain on staff at all levels from Director downwards. The internal audit report on COVID impacts and governance (based on an Audit Scotland checklist) submitted to the Scrutiny and Audit Committee last year provides a good summary of the action taken to that point. Much of the additional workload has been caused by seeking to ensure the Council manages its finances and risks appropriately – e.g. a COVID funding register has been created to keep track of the funds available and ensure compliance with their terms, conditions and reporting requirements.

Senior staff time has also been dedicated to supplier support and particularly the processing of support payments to social care providers. The level of diligence applied to those support payments has I believe been exemplary but has led to criticism about the time taken to process requests. Fortunately the entire Directorate (due to the scale of service redesign and savings achieved in recent years) was already highly agile and using digital approaches on a large scale before the pandemic so the impact on service provision has not been significant from enforced home working. We see ourselves continuing to be an agile workforce into the future but the pandemic won't result in significant changes to the work we do or how we do it because many of those changes have already been made. I have no major concerns about my Directorate's response (which is ongoing) nor that of the Council – in fact I think we have done exceptionally well to manage the severe disruption and considerable increases in workload the pandemic has brought about whilst maintaining the services and integrity of our governance and financial processes.

6. Human Resources, Digital Enablement, IT & Business Support

DE and IT highlights covered in Information [Report 96/21](#) and [Appendix 1](#) at Full Council on 18 March 2021. Challenges and concerns include: PSN compliance - as a result of resourcing issues and other priority work due to COVID19 we were unable to complete all remediation work to achieve PSN last year. PSN connectivity and services have continued and we are preparing for reassessment in May 2021. DR testing programme has been delayed as unable to schedule downtime for this. Patching and component resilience testing is ongoing and addressed as a priority Project. Delays - a number of projects have started later than originally planned due to resource diversion to COVID19 related support eg elements of O365, backup project, digital developments. Where possible additional 3rd party resources have been used to improve delivery timescales or plans rescheduled to minimise impact on operations. Use of products – e.g. whatsapp, Zoom. Whilst we are dealing with the unprecedented circumstances brought about by the Covid19 pandemic some products have been enabled for limited use on a temporary basis with the proviso that such use will be reviewed and replaced when conditions allow. Additionally, some service areas have not been involving IT at an early enough stage when procuring IT products and review the of cloud security principles is occurring too late in the procurement lifecycle. Additional costs - additional costs have been incurred to enable staff to work from home meeting DSE requirements and further costs have

been estimated based on predictions of workstyles. Until there is clarity with respect to workstyles these additional costings remain a best estimate. HR & Business Support Challenges and concerns: Project Delays – work associated with achieving efficiencies through digitisation/ automation was delayed due to other corporate demands on those involved in taking this project forward. This is being reviewed as part of our recovery plans. Contact Centre – maintaining an overview of performance was impacted when staff were working from home due to inability to accurately collect call data when employees were using their own broadband connections.

7. Infrastructure

The low lights of this year of the pandemic is the devastating loss of life that we have seen globally and locally along with what will be the long lasting impact that the pandemic will have on our economy and our children's education as well as the mental health of our general population. I am however proud of how the council as an organisation; my teams; and the individuals within them have risen to the challenges that the pandemic has brought, in dealing with the emergency whilst also dealing with their own personal circumstances; in dealing with the latest government requests and guidance whilst putting aside their own fears and anxieties. The teams have transformed our buildings and schools to cope with living and operating in a Covid environment; we have introduced spaces for everyone on our road network; we have delivered school transport despite changing criteria; and our services have delivered as far as practically possible our normal business as the Covid19 restrictions have allowed. In addition, the Incident Management Team of Gold/Silver/Bronze has helped to reduce the impact of the virus on our communities and plan for scenarios that we have fortunately not needed to implement. Our approach to the 2 Sisters outbreak saw us congratulated by the First Minister and was used in the development of the national Test and Protect approach. We maintained our governance arrangements throughout the pandemic as one of the first councils to move to virtual council/ committee meetings. Using the Special Arrangements Committee (SAC) in summer 2020 we continued to report significant items for Committee decision throughout the recess; and post summer we introduced virtual committees returning to a business as usual approach. In April 2020 at the start of the pandemic we sought delegated approval for delegated powers to Directors in the knowledge of some of the foreseeable challenges. The use of the SAC superseded these powers but led to some confusion in the service where decision making had intended to have been streamlined.

8. Legal & Democratic

Committee Services

One of the main changes which impacted Legal and Democratic Services was having Council and Committee meetings remotely rather than in person and ensuring that compliant governance arrangements were in place for these meetings. This was a significant change to how meetings were held previously but despite many challenges and significant more work in arranging and hosting the meetings, it has worked well. Another change was allowing three more senior officers to sign documents on behalf of the Council due to the fact that the council offices were closed due to COVID. There is a formal process in place for signature of documents which allowed this to be done smoothly. One of the highs was the first online Council meeting to which the public were invited which was not only a first for Angus but for Scotland. A low was when a subsequent public council meeting had to be stopped and

continued without the public being present due to a minority of the public who interrupted the meeting inappropriately.

FM Support and Digital Reprographics Unit (DRU)

Mail Distribution – a centralised mail service was set up days after lockdown commence in March 2020. All mail was redirected to the central mailing unit, opened then scanned by the FM team to a private area on Sharepoint, where a member of the relevant team was given access to their service folder to allow them to distribute accordingly. Several other new processes and procedures have been put in place for governance purposes including cheque/cash receipt, receipt and return of personal items such as driving licences and arrangements for certain items of confidential mail. It was agreed at CLT in March that these arrangements would now become permanent and as such all mail has formally been re-directed to the central mailing unit. The DRU team also now print, envelope frank and issue outgoing mail for services which are required to provide their Royal Mail franking code for recharge purposes prior to the mail being printed. PPE – at the start of lockdown in Mar 2020, the FM team took over the responsibility of sourcing, procuring and distributing PPE to all non-care council services, including schools. A manual recording system was implemented initially but a new Firmstep system was then developed where services can now order PPE directly and stock control and recharges made. This system and all other procedures for procuring PPE was subject to an audit early in 2021. There were no recommended actions as a result of this audit, as the systems and processes in place met financial regulations.

Information Governance

The information governance team have been able to carry out all duties since lockdown in March 2020. The team have no issues with the new way of working remotely created as a result of COVID 19 and it works well. Three new members of staff have been recruited during lockdown and have been working from home from the start of their contract. The team keep in regular contact and have full access to induction materials, additional training, working files and systems as they are all available either digitally or electronic.

Legal Team 1 - Registration Service

The Registration Service had to respond quickly to emerging issues arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown. These included: the suspension of birth registration; the curtailment of marriages; the transition to remote death registration; making arrangements for 7 day opening; increased reporting requirements in respect of deaths; the closure of all three registration offices and the amalgamation of functions in Angus House; the resumption of death registrations and dealing with the backlog created. This involved the significant input of IT, the provision of equipment and training to staff. Significant work was undertaken in respect of risk assessments to ensure that staff and customers could interact safely.

Legal Team 1 – Court and Licensing

Legal Team 1 were involved significantly in providing advice and assistance to the Council and its Services to ensure that the legislation introduced in respect of the pandemic was followed and that arrangements made were implemented lawfully (often at very short notice). This included advice in relation to: the restrictions and requirements in relation to the opening of premises and the restrictions on movement and gatherings; the provision of advice to social work colleagues in respect of legal duties in respect of children and families and the legal

provisions in respect of the care and protection of children and adults; the provision of education services and the opening of schools.

Prior to commencement of the COVID 19 Pandemic in March 2020, all meetings of the Angus Licensing Board (the Board) and the Civic Licensing Committee (the CLC) were held in public, but, due to “lockdown restrictions” applicable legislation and Regulations enacted and imposed by the Scottish Government/UK Government, all meetings of the Board and CLC have required to be held remotely. The meetings are held online using Zoom/Microsoft Teams. There were issues initially with regard to the setting up of the remote meetings resulting in the cancellation of the April 2020 Board/CLC meeting, however, those issues were resolved and the meetings are now up and running regularly. Applicants, Agents, licence holders, Police Scotland, internal department employees, invitees, are all able to fully engage in the meetings. In the event a licence holder/and or their Agent/Applicant/witness do not wish to attend the meetings remotely, due to varying reasons, they have the opportunity to provide written representations which are placed before the Board/CLC for consideration and determination, thus facilitating a robust, effective and transparent, remote meeting system. Online ALB/CLC meetings have proved to be effective for Councillors, Officers, invitees/attendees, so perhaps, in the longer term, some meetings can continue to be held by remote means. This of course has to be balanced against the fact, and fully considered, in light of the current Coronavirus legislation which only currently permits meetings to be held remotely. This may/will change as the COVID 19 legislative provisions are relaxed/or no longer in force.

Legal team 2 – Property and Commercial

The highlights for the Property Team have been that: we have managed to continue to deliver our service while working from home and being unable to access the office normally. This is largely true council-wide, although will have been harder for some departments than others. We coped with additional Covid-19 related work, particularly in the early days of lockdown. We have managed to keep in touch with our teams and instructing departments remotely by Teams. We coped with changes to the procedure for registration of title deeds introduced due to Covid. Having managers forums online rather than all travelling to a single location.

9. Strategic Policy, Transformation & Public Sector Reform

The Strategic Policy, Transformation & Public Sector Reform Directorate played a significant role in supporting the Council’s emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic; this has impacted on all the Directorate service areas as set out below. It is highlighted that the Resilience service staff have been at the forefront of leading the corporate incident management response.

Strategic Policy & Economy

The Communications team were diverted almost completely to supporting COVID-19 response. As a result, other work was impacted. It has also meant a 7-day response and evening work required for a far longer period than in any other emergency situation. A review of hours will be undertaken to make recommendations for future needs to meet citizen demand for information and remove single points of failure. Economic Development began to administer some COVID-19 business grants in May 2020 and this continued throughout the year and into to 2021. The number and scale of funds received increased and resulted in approx. 80% of economic development staff being directed to work on grants as well as bringing in staff from SP&P. Staff from IT were also required to work on form developments

almost daily and latterly in February 2021 extra staff were recruited and trained from other services to support the ongoing work. COVID-19 Admin grant monies were used to support these extra hours. There has been significant impact on the planned work of economic development and likely to continue well in to 2021. Plans are in place to increase the pool of trained and available staff to ensure resilience. The Strategic Policy and Planning team were impacted with 3 staff being redeployed to the HAART and Emergency Centre again impacting significantly on capacity. Community Councils were supported to move meetings online and recommended this can continue in future. It was noted turnout at the bi-annual meeting was much greater than at meetings held in person. Council Plan and Community Plan performance reports were completed on time however and revised Council plan prepared and agreed.

The impact of COVID-19 changed the focus of Agile and OD have supported staff to move to a new way of thinking agile. The council values were updated through engagement with staff through a variety of methods and using online tools we improved engagement levels and quality of reports. The Tay Cities Deal signing was delayed but was finally signed virtually in December 2020. Work continued on business cases with Hospitalfield being the first full business case to be agreed. The Angus Fund Outline Business Case has also been approved.

Governance & Change

The Change programme that was agreed at budget setting in February 2020 was impacted significantly by the pandemic. This was both through key staff being re-deployed and services prioritising resources towards the Council emergency response. Board meetings were suspended during March/ April and recommenced in June. The Change Programme savings were re-assessed and scope reduced as part of the budget re-cast in September. Arrangements to deliver the recast savings were back up and running for the remainder of the financial year and achieved 95% of the updated target (report 314/20 refers). The PLED programme was also temporarily suspended due to the pandemic. The team delivering this designed a new approach for post-COVID delivery using a virtual approach and online tools/guidance. The team were also heavily involved in supporting the development of the COVID-19 data dashboard and Scottish Government returns. Learning from this has supported and accelerated the development of a draft Big Data Strategy for the Council, which it was anticipated would be later in the overall PLED programme. Strategic Commissioning was also suspended due to the redeployment of a key member of staff and the key partners own response by diverting resources to COVID-19 response taking over normal activity. A key aspect emerging from the pandemic is the requirement for ANGUSalive to transform and a project is now being progressed to address this. While this was always likely to be needed, the pandemic has accelerated the timing and need for such change. Corporate Governance arrangements were prioritised and were largely delivered in-line with normal arrangements and timings, despite

Internal Audit



Our work in both internal Audit and Counter Fraud has been impacted in a number of ways. All staff have primarily worked from home since March 2020. This has meant that evidence checking has been largely virtual instead of physical throughout the year to 31 March 2021. This has not affected our ability to carry out audits or impacted on the assurance we are able to give, and is likely to be something which will continue going forward due to some Council staff potentially working from home on a more permanent basis and more systems being entirely digital rather than paper based. Redeployment of two staff, one each from Internal



Audit and Counter Fraud teams, to the Emergency Centre impacted on capacity to deliver planned work, particularly in Internal Audit. A revised Internal Audit plan taking account of the reduced capacity and changes in the Council's risk profile due to covid-19 was approved by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee in September 2020. There have been delays in responses from services at all stages of the audit process due to covid-19 impact on capacity within these services meaning that audit timelines have become longer and we have tried to find ways to minimise this impact on finalising reports. The reduction in audit work completed in comparison to that planned has been kept under close watch by the Service Leader Internal Audit to ensure that alternative sources of evidence were identified to allow the annual opinion on internal control, risk management and governance to be delivered without any limitation of scope. Involvement of Counter Fraud staff in the various grants processes has been ongoing in providing advice at development of process stage, through to involvement in reviewing potentially fraudulent claims. Staff have also dealt with reporting of these to Police Scotland and to a variety of national fora designed to share information to identify and prevent fraud across the whole country.



Risk, Resilience & Safety



The work of the service has been impacted significantly. The resilience service has been committed fully to working on covid work since Feb 2020. The manager, risk, resilience and safety and the risk and resilience assistant have been focussed on the ongoing response to the pandemic. In addition, the impact on the safety team has been significant; most of the work of the team has been allocated to dealing with support, guidance, and production of risk assessments for services, to ensure that our staff have been kept safe. The work within the council emergency centre, supporting meetings, analysis of information, recording, risks and support to council services and the resilience partnership continues to require allocated resources from both the resilience team and from other service areas. The Brexit officer continues to support the wider work on covid, alongside the continuation of emerging issues from EU Exit. In summary, the work of the service has been impacted significantly. This is likely to continue. The roll out of training and other areas of work has been impacted because of covid priorities. Risk management and insurance work is continuing as far as reasonably practicable. There are delays, work has been re-prioritised and based on a highest risk.


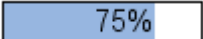
ANNEX 2 - Annual Governance Statement Action Plan


Action Code	AC-CGOV-00038			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	Agreement with director to extend timeline to design more user friendly training with OD, in line with other courses on Always Learning				


Action Code	AC-CGOV-00039			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 ANGUSalive 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>				


Action Code	AC-CGOV-00040			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	30-Sep-2021
Latest Note	<p>This action is now complete with a checklist prepared and distributed to all system administrators of core business systems (document provided). There will also be regular monitoring meetings with system administrator to monitor/update this on a regular basis with the first meeting in May.</p> <p>As such, this is now Business as Usual.</p> <p>This issue is also highlighted in the IT/Applications Strategy with any further work to be captured in the accompanying Applications Roadmap/Action Plan</p>				



Action Code	AC-CGOV-00043			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>Work is continuing to progress and Internal Audit are conducting a review of elements of the process and are due to report shortly.</p> <p>At this stage, it is requested that the target date for completion is extended to 30 September 2021.</p>				


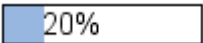
Action Code	AC-CGOV-00044			Start Date	11-Dec-2020
Action Title	Review Whistleblowing Policy				
Description	Review the Councils existing Whistleblowing Policy and guidance in the context of integration.			Due Date	31-Mar-2021
Latest Note	<p>Redrafted policy shared with Legal and HR for comment.</p> <p>At this stage, it is requested that the target date for completion is extended to 30 September 2021.</p>				


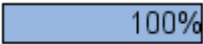
Action Code	AC-CGOV-00070		<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Start Date	
Action Title	Data Protection Training				
Description	The Governance Review 2020/21 has identified the continued need to ensure that data protection training is completed comprehensively by All Council Staff			Due Date	31-Mar-2022
Latest Note					



Action Code	AC-CGOV-00071		<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Start Date	
Action Title	AHSCP Data Breach Reporting Procedure				
Description	The Governance 2020/21 review identified that data breaches emerging from AHSCP should be reported via either Angus Council or NHS Tayside and not directly from the Partnership. A procedure is to be devised to address this matter.			Due Date	30-Sep-2021
Latest Note					

Action Code	AC-CGOV-00072		<input type="text" value="0%"/>	Start Date	
Action Title	Scrutiny & Audit Self Assessment Action Plan 2021/2022				
Description	Action Plan resulting from the S&A Committee Self Assessment Workshop 29 April 2021. This includes one action being carried out from last year action plan.			Due Date	31-Mar-2022
Latest Note					

Action Code	AC-CGOV-04			Start Date	15-Nov-2019
Action Title	Update and Review Scheme of Delegation				
Description	Operational schemes of delegation across the council will be further reviewed and updated during 2019			Due Date	30-Jun-2021
Latest Note	HR/BS/DE/IT completed at 31 March 2021. Education & Lifelong Learning and Children, Families & Justice both nearing completion and to be finalised by 31 May 2021. Angus IJB progressing with only part outstanding. All other Directorates are complete.				

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-2022
Latest Note	Now a formal work theme within the ANGUSalve Transformation Project with opportunities identified for investigation. short term measures now also identified due to damage to existing buildings				

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	31-Mar-2021
Latest Note	Drop in sessions have been received well by services with the last one due to take place on Thursday 22 April 2021. Feedback from these sessions has either been taken on board by the project team or sent to Granicus for comment.				

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	All actions have completed with the exception of one that have been identified and will be added to 2021/2022 S&A Action Plan.					