



AUDIT COMMITTEE

Public

Date of Meeting: 14th January 2009

Title: Annual Governance Statement Action Plan

Report of: Director of Corporate Services

Report reference: CORP 76/08

Summary:

This report appraises Members of progress made on the above Action Plan.

Recommendations:

Members are requested to note the attached Action Plan and the current position relating to each of the areas that have been identified.

Contact Officer: Ian Beckett, Head of Audit Services

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ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT - ACTION PLAN

Code of Corporate Governance - Background

The CIPFA/SOLACE Framework document “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government” requires the Council to revise and update its Code of Corporate Governance and to produce an Annual Governance Statement signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

The Framework also requires the Council to draw up an Action Plan in order to address weaknesses and to ensure that continuous improvement of the system of control is in place.

These documents were reported to Members of this Committee on 23rd June 2008 - reports CORP26/08 and CORP27/08 refer.

Action Plan

An updated Action Plan is attached to this report as **Appendix A** for Members’ information.

Those actions that were identified in the Annual Governance Statement as “significant” have been identified thus (**) on Appendix A.

In accordance with established practice, this Action Plan is monitored and the updated status is reported to Members of this Committee at each meeting.

There are no new areas of risk arising from the Audit reviews or from the Risk Registers that need to be drawn to Members’ attention.

Recommendation

Members are requested to note the attached Action Plan and the current position relating to each of the areas that have been identified.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

APPENDIX A

ACTION PLAN - UPDATED 30th DECEMBER 2008.

	CURRENT STATUS AND ACTION REQUIRED	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET DATE
1	Ensure that the Learning City Strategy is finalised. One of the foci will be on a commitment to the development of staff.	Head of Policy and Performance	Learning City Policy Statement to be considered by Executive Committee at its meeting in January followed by consultation with Community and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
2	Findings of Focus Group of local people on how the Council should report its performance to inform Annual Report.	Head of Policy and Performance	Annual Report published 31 October 2008 (content informed by Focus Group of local people)
3	Community Empowerment Pilots to be developed	Deputy Chief Executive	Ongoing - Project planning and implementation underway in Harraby. Project team of all agencies

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

APPENDIX A

ACTION PLAN - UPDATED 30th DECEMBER 2008.

			<p>managing and developing the project. Stakeholder Advisory Group formed – local people and community representatives. A number of activities and outcomes detailed in project plan, one of which to produce Neighbourhood Action Plan by Spring 2009. Outline project plan developed for Longtown by the three tiers of local government, to be monitored and progressed by Strategic Planning Group (officers and Ward Members). Main aim of this pilot will be to support</p>
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ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

APPENDIX A

ACTION PLAN - UPDATED 30th DECEMBER 2008.

			community led planning (parish planning).
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ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**APPENDIX A****ACTION PLAN - UPDATED 30th DECEMBER 2008.**

4 (**)	Ensure that the National Officer Code of Conduct is adopted in due course. In the meantime, a local Code will be developed based on neighbouring Authorities' Codes.	Head of Personnel and Development	A consultation on a proposed National Code of Conduct has recently begun. It comes from the government and the proposal is to introduce a statutory Code of Conduct for all local government employees. This authority is to respond to this consultation and will include comments from our trade unions. It makes every sense for this authority to await the outcome of the consultation - for example, there may be one common code that we will simply need to implement or (and preferably) there could be some
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ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**APPENDIX A****ACTION PLAN - UPDATED 30th DECEMBER 2008.**

			common principles around which a code specifically for us could be adapted. Either way there seems little point in this authority progressing this matter out of step with these developments. The national consultation ends this month although the time-scale thereafter is not known. It is likely that the Employment Panel would need to become involved.
5	Policy for "Confidential Reporting" Needs to be updated to reflect current staff-structure.	Head of Personnel and Development.	A review of our existing policy for Confidential Reporting is currently under way with a new draft scheduled to come to SMT early in the

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

APPENDIX A

ACTION PLAN - UPDATED 30th DECEMBER 2008.

			New Year. This will be a review and not simply an up-dating e.g. it will embrace the safeguarding children agenda.
6	To ensure that staff appraisals are undertaken in accordance with Council Policy.	Head of Personnel and Development	The Survey results have just been released and show that 88% of appraisals are being undertaken. This is the same figure as last year. The liP assessor found no issue with appraisal at his visit in the summer. It is now reasonable to consider appraisal to be firmly embedded within this authority.
7 (**)	Review arrangements for extracting the figures from the ledger and ensuring that the Service Expenditure Analysis disclosed in the accounts is in accordance with the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice. To be incorporated as part of the 2007/08 Statement of Accounts.	Director of Corporate Services	Ongoing. A full review will be undertaken each year, before the accounts are closed,

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**APPENDIX A****ACTION PLAN - UPDATED 30th DECEMBER 2008.**

			to ensure that the Authority complies with any changes arising from revisions to the Best Value Accounting Code of practice.
8	Ensure that there are robust arrangements for partnership monitoring and governance relating to Carlisle Renaissance. Updated 23/12	Director of Legal and Democratic Services	The founding partners for Carlisle Renaissance (City, County and NWDA) will, in January 09, put in place a Collaboration Agreement to confirm, amongst other things, the governance arrangements. Also, the City Council has recently reviewed and revised its scrutiny arrangements for Carlisle Renaissance.