

Annual Governance Statement 2009/10 Action Plan

Progress report - Governance and Audit Committee

13 January 2011

Deadline met. Progress made in line with deadline date







Slightly off track but underway









Progress off track / deadline not met


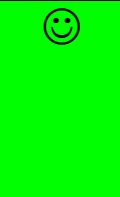





Governance issue identified	Proposed action	Responsible officer / body	Sep - Nov quarter position / progress made	Deadline date	Completion date
<b>1. Within this section are the governance issues identified in previous Annual Governance Statement action plans, which have not been completed for various reasons and will therefore be updated and incorporated into the 2009/10 action plan.</b>					
Health and safety risk assessments need a thorough review to ensure they encompass lone working, out of hours and enforcement tasks and a corporate approach is needed, especially in high risk areas such as Grounds Maintenance, the Port and Harbour and Waste & Recycling.	The risk assessment process needs to be addressed and has been identified in the East Kent Human Resources Partnership Health and Safety Strategy, which is currently in draft to provide assurance to the Corporate Management Team.	EKHRP	The EKHRP health and safety case consultants continue to assist Thanet managers in undertaking and reviewing risk assessments relating to work activities, equipment, premises, events etc. Work has begun on a risk assessment approach that will be used across the four East Kent authorities, however the form and risk rating matrix that will be used is already being trialled in Thanet. Work is also beginning with the reformed H&S committee to create guidance for managers in managing the risk of lone working, out-of-hours work as well as sharing information on customers that pose a risk to visiting officers. This is due for completion early in the New Year. The H&S Strategy and SLA have now been accepted by all four partner authorities.		Ongoing
Member training and development needs, especially around specific areas such as planning, scrutiny and governance, needs to be enhanced to ensure that the committees are effective and that members are suitably able to undertake their roles within these committees.	The council plans on surveying members to identify future training and development needs, with a view to establishing a more formally structured Member development programme.	Glenn Back	The council plans on surveying members to identify future training and development needs, with a view to establishing a more formally structured Member development programme. In view of the proximity of the District elections, it is anticipated the survey will take place in June 2011.		Jun 2011 (survey)

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<b>2. The identified areas detailed below have arisen from our numerous assessments into the council's governance arrangements for 2009/10 and have been deemed to be significant by the Governance Group. These will be addressed during 2010/11 and for those already actioned an update has been provided.</b>						
The East Kent Audit Partnership's work throughout 2009/10 indicated areas of concern regarding systems of internal control in the following areas:	In each of the cases indicated above, actions plans have been agreed with Managers and are being progressed as directed.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO Compliance</li> </ul>		Karen Paton	September and October stats of orders monitored indicate 100% compliance.		31-Mar-11	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative Margate CSO Arrangements</li> </ul>		Derek Harding	Action completed			01-Jun-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overtime Claims</li> </ul>		Sarah Carroll	Current control system in place has raised the assurance level to reasonable. CMT continue to closely scrutinise overtime spend. A VfM review is in progress and KCC have been advised of the relevant Audit recommendations for purposes of claiming overtime through payroll. The overtime claim form has been revised by KCC to bridge the gap prior to self service implementation.		TBC	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Health Food Safety</li> </ul>		Penny Button	The Food Safety Team have seen considerable changes in recent months regarding their work allocations and introductions of consistency & audit checks, there has been a significant improvement in the work undertaken. We have one outstanding item from the Audit which needs to be resolved completely, the shellfish sampling, work has been completed on risk assessments & the possibility of outsourcing has been investigated.		End Dec 2010	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homelessness</li> </ul>		Victoria May / Stuart Clifton	<p>Actions are on target, but some need continual monitoring. More attention is being made to the recovery of Rent Deposit debts, following the corporate recovery policies, but a lack of resources within Housing Options means that effective early recovery of the Rent Deposit loans is difficult. Attempts are ongoing to obtain amounts from CASA support to show how underwriting charges have been calculated for previous years, but CASA cannot provide this information. Bond Scheme is still being worked on, though no longer with Credit Union as it was not cost effective to do so. Home Debt Help campaign has been launched, advertised and is underway to tackle issues of repossessions and rent arrears and project is working well. Homelessness prevention activity is continuing to increase.</p>		Ongoing
<p>A directory of key documents referred to should be produced with a brief summary of their content, purpose, application to managers and where the documents can be located. This should be referred to annually in the staff development notes/team briefings and should be published on TOM. It would also provide a useful induction tool.</p>	<p>Work on a manager / officer handbook to be undertaken during 10/11 which will inform officers of key documents, processes, systems and responsibilities.</p>	Nikki Morris	<p>Some initial research work has been undertaken. The Improvement Forum may be taking this forward as a project following it's meeting on 22 November.</p>		31-Mar-11
<p>The issue of compliance with corporate policies and procedures (especially CSOs and the Gifts and Hospitality procedure) needs to be reviewed to ensure consistency across the council.</p>	<p>To be considered by CMT and the use of sanctions for non-compliance to be made more explicit.</p>	CMT (via Nikki Morris)	See comments below		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO awareness</li> </ul>	A formalised procurement programme be developed. Risk in procurement management to be added to the council's corporate risk register. A skills audit be undertaken for all managers involved in procurement activity, to be used to inform future training programmes.	Karen Paton	Purchase to Pay project progressing. Originators reduced. Training programme in preparation.		31-Mar-11	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gifts and Hospitality procedure</li> </ul>	Declaration of interest and gifts and hospitality register processes to be communicated as priority.	Glenn Back	Refresher session was delivered to senior managers at Senior Managers' Conference on 04/10/10. <b>Completed.</b>		01-Sep-10	04-Oct-10
A lack of capacity at the managerial level to undertake the statutory functions that the council is required to carry out could result in governance issues for the council.	Regular workforce reporting to CMT ensures that resources are allocated as appropriate.	CMT (via EKHRP)	Workforce reports provided to CMT on a monthly basis. EKHRP to attend each CMT meeting to present each report.		Ongoing	
There is a lack of knowledge of the council's staff charter, which details mutual expectations between employees and employer.	Due to time elapsed this needs to be revisited to ensure its relevance and communicated to all staff.	Sarah Carroll	The Council has now launched its core values and priorities. This clearly identifies how the council will conduct its business and has superseded the unpublished Staff Charter at this point in time.			No further action
There remains gaps across the organisation in staff that have undertaken child protection training. A substantial number of employees have done this training.	The Child Protection Committee should be charged with reviewing compliance and ensuring that this training is included in the induction programme. An annual compliance report is made to Cabinet.	Carla Wenham-Jones	All staff trained except Parks and Gardens. Guidance document created for them to read. Guidance document to be added to LAN Consent which provides evidence of training being provided. Induction package for new staff includes child protection training. Audit 2010 provided Reasonable Assurance for internal controls. 9 recommendations being actioned, most relate to EKHR.		End Sept 2010	

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The council has tried a number of approaches to carrying out value for money reviews, but there has been a lack of commitment to the process from some areas, which has impacted on the review programme and created problems for the resources allocated to undertake these reviews.	The council's approach and commitment to value for money needs to be discussed and agreed to ensure that future reviews and the overall programme are undertaken in a timely way and add value.	Nikki Morris	The Improvement Board, Improvement Project Team and Improvement Forum have now been established which will be looking at service improvements throughout the authority, taking into account value for money.		Ongoing	
Changes in staffing structures must be communicated appropriately to ensure there is no confusion over responsibilities and authorities. More changes are taking place and this is still a live issue and clarification needs to take place on the member and officer scheme of delegations.	Delegations to Cabinet Members and officers were reviewed by the Constitutional Review Working Party in 2009/10 for implementation in 2010/11. These will be placed on TOM as a reminder to managers. This also needs to be added to the corporate risk register.	Harvey Patterson	Following further changes to the composition of Cabinet, Council received a report on 15 July 2010 setting out the new Cabinet portfolios and a revised Scheme of Delegations for Cabinet Members. This will be added to TOM alongside the Scheme of Delegations to Officers approved by Council at the annual meeting on 13 May 2010.			
<b>3. To comply with best practice the Governance and Audit Committee determined that it would consider annually whether it meets its terms of reference and how it has impacted on the internal control environment. The Committee carried out the National Audit Checklist and identified some actions which it recommends will improve performance against best practice for the forthcoming year. These issues have already been actioned and an update is provided but will continue to be monitored to ensure they are effective.</b>						
The Audit Committee meets on a quarterly basis, however on occasions the agendas for these meetings are quite heavy and meetings tend to go on for a number of hours.	That the Committee consider increasing the number of times the Committee meet to relieve pressure on full agendas, and holding a separate meeting in June to deal with the Statement of Accounts.	G & A (via Nikki Morris)	Action completed. Governance and Audit Committee agenda will continue to be monitored.			June 2010
An induction checklist for new Audit Committee members should be available which details key things and explains their key roles and responsibilities	Training requirements to be discussed, a regular item on agenda entitled 'Future items or training for the Committee', making reference to the programme of reports and a Member guidance pack issued at the first meeting of the cycle.	G & A (via Nikki Morris)	Member guidance pack completed and provided to Committee Members. Presentation to be given to all members in May 2011 on the remit of Governance and Audit Committee.			June 2010

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Members who have missed a meeting need to ensure they are appropriately briefed on the business conducted in their absence. The substitute who attends for the member feeds back on outcomes of the meeting.	Set up a pool of substitutes to ensure they receive appropriate training and ensure that substitutes are aware of their responsibilities to feed back.	G & A (via Nikki Morris)	Guidance on the use of substitutions and their responsibilities has been detailed within the member guidance.		June 2010
Ensure that the minutes clearly state all agreed actions, the responsible owner, when they will be done by and any advice given from any stakeholders.	Minutes are currently produced which note any actions required but need to ensure owners and timescales are noted within actions.	G & A (via Nikki Morris)	An action plan is prepared from each meeting which will feature as an item on the agenda to ensure members are confident actions have been carried out and reported back to the Committee.		June 2010