

Annual Governance Statement 2009/10 Action Plan

Progress report - Governance and Audit Committee

15 March 2011

Deadline met. Progress made in line with deadline date



Slightly off track but underway

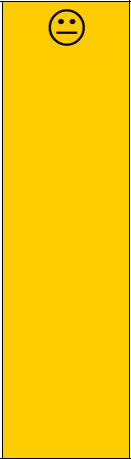
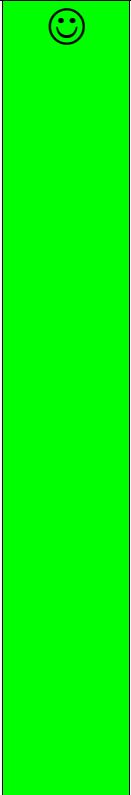


Progress off track / deadline not met




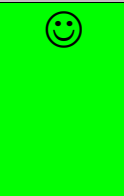





Governance issue identified	Proposed action	Responsible officer / body	Dec - Feb quarter position / progress made	Deadline date	Completion date
1. Within this section are the governance issues identified in previous Annual Governance Statement action plans, which have not been completed for various reasons and will therefore be updated and incorporated into the 2009/10 action plan, to be undertaken during 2010/11.					
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	Work is ongoing by the EKHRP health and safety case consultants in assisting managers to undertake and review risk assessments relating to work activities, equipment, premises, events etc. A practical example of this is a risk assessment for works on the renovation of seafront shelters at Margate which has introduced controls against the possible exposure to lead poisoning from old paint work. Additionally a draft risk assessment guidance note will be presented to the committee in March. The 2nd health and safety committee meeting took place in December with issues identified as ongoing for presentation at the March meeting. This included work on a draft lone working policy and a demonstration of an electronic personal safety system to committee members. Following completion of the restructure process health and safety maps will be issued to managers together with training in their application and use.		Ongoing

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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)	
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.						
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"> • CSO Compliance 		Karen Paton	Dec and Jan stats of orders monitored indicate 100% compliance.	☺	31-Mar-11	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Margate CSO Arrangements 		Derek Harding	Action completed	☺		01-Jun-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overtime Claims 		Sarah Carroll	Recommendations were made in October to KCC for the 'universal claim' form to include reasons from overtime claimed. Confirmation received in February that this will be actioned alongside verification / authorisation by manager. Audit have undertaken a review of 'payroll controls' which included an element of reporting. CMT continue to scrutinise overtime and recommendations from the VfM review will be shared with CMT in March.	☺	TBC	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Health Food Safety 		Penny Button	<p>The one outstanding item, shellfish sampling, is still outstanding due to further changes in the requirements of the sampling regime to now possibly include oysters and different sampling points as well as staff absence has meant that this hasn't been progressed to completion. Various options for completion of the regime have been discussed including using existing staff or staff from other teams until outsourcing becomes possible.</p>		End Mar 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness 		Victoria May / Stuart Clifton	<p>Homeless prevention work is still continuing and is effective in keeping the number of homelessness acceptances low. The number of households in temporary accommodation remains fairly low, though there has been a slight increase from the previous quarter. Both homelessness acceptances and households in temporary accommodation is likely to rise over the coming quarters due to changes in Housing Benefit reform and also in line with government cuts nationally as part of the CSR. Rent Deposit debtors are continuing to be chased and Bond Scheme still being explored. Final meeting with CASA to locate accounts for Old Schools Lodge been held.</p>		Ongoing

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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.	Work on a manager / officer handbook to be undertaken during 10/11 which will inform officers of key documents, processes, systems and responsibilities.	Nikki Morris	Progress is being made on this project. A draft Customer Charter has been prepared and will be circulated to the Improvement Forum. Pages are under construction on TOM.		31-Mar-11	
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.	To be considered by CMT and the use of sanctions for non-compliance to be made more explicit.	CMT (via Nikki Morris)	See comments below			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO awareness 	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	Roles and responsibilities scoped and communicated to originators and authorisers. A follow up internal audit Compliance with CSO's has seen the Council's assurance level increase from limited to Reasonable		31-Mar-11	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gifts and Hospitality procedure 	Declaration of interest and gifts and hospitality register processes to be communicated as priority.	Glenn Back	Completed.		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

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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	Parks and Gardens Child Protection training undertaken in January 2011. IT met with and will be loading LAN Consent onto Thanet log-in system.		End Sept 2010	01-Feb-11
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	Tom was updated following the May 2010 meeting. This will however need to reviewed again following the implementation of the new corporate structure.		19-May-11	
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.						
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

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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)	Governance and Audit Committee regularly receive training on matters they are to review at their meeting. There is a regular item on each agenda entitled 'Future items or training for the Committee'.		June 2010
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