

Annual Governance Statement 2009/10 Action Plan

Progress report - Governance and Audit Committee

22 June 2011


Deadline met. Progress made in line with deadline date

Slightly off track but underway

Progress off track / deadline not met



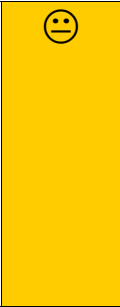
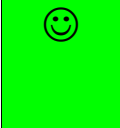
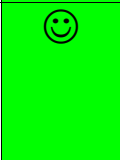

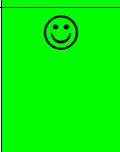
Governance issue identified	Proposed action	Responsible officer / body	Mar - May quarter position / progress made	Carry forward to 10/11 action plan	Deadline date	Completion date
<p>1. Within this section are the governance issues identified in previous Annual Governance Statement action plans, which 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.</p>						
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>EKHRP</p>	<p>H&S maps have been completed in line with the recent restructure which has taken place. Appropriate senior managers are now being contacted to arrange for H&S consultants to either attend weekly managers meetings or to contact managers on an individual basis to hand over their maps. At this point the H&S consultants will ensure that they understand the process and confirm that all specific risks have been identified. A meeting of the H&S committee took place in March at which the draft risk assessment guidance note was reviewed. This is now finalised and will be made available to all managers with bite size sessions arranged to ensure managers are aware of the new risk assessment forms and reminded of how to complete them in line with the guidance note.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

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			<p>Following the March H&S committee meeting a premises inspection form was agreed and is being used in office based environments to ensure working conditions, housekeeping etc are in order. These forms are being completed by H&S reps. or supervisors and team leaders with only a minimal input from managers. They will be reviewed by H&S consultants during audits of these areas. An area of concern which was raised by HSE was the ladder leading to the fuel barge at Ramsgate Harbour. This area has been the subject of discussion and it has been decided that several new control measures will be put in place which will include a harness system for staff members using the ladder, reinstatement of a new ladder, better access from the quay and the installation of a lockable cabin on the quay to house an intrinsically safe laptop and printer. This will be used to complete the necessary paperwork following the sale of fuel and which will greatly reduce the need to walk to the harbour office.</p>			
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Glenn Back</p>	<p>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.</p>		<p>No</p>	<p>Jun 2011 (survey)</p>

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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	Feb and March 2011 100% compliant.	☺	No	31-Mar-11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative Margate CSO Arrangements 		Derek Harding	Action completed	☺	No	01-Jun-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overtime Claims 		Sarah Carroll	VFM review completed and presented to CMT. Recommendations have been agreed and these will enable CMT to monitor spend on overtime, agency, hired & contracted and consultants. The recommendations will be rolled out as work on the Business Hub progresses. A priority for 2011/12 is for the EKHR Partnership to undertake a review of remuneration which will include the council's current overtime policy.	☺	No	31-Mar-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Health Food Safety 		Penny Button	The shellfish sampling is still outstanding due to changes in requirements. We have this week completed the ten weeks of oyster sampling required by Cefas once these results have been processed and sent to Cefas they will make a decision on the sampling regime required for oysters. Once we have this information we will be able to take a paper to SMT for the possibility of outsourcing.	☹	No	End Sept 2011

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness 		Victoria May / Stuart Clifton	<p>The number of approaches from households for housing advice and as homelessness appears to have risen over the last 3 months in comparison to previous years. The number of households in temporary accommodation has also risen slightly. Homeless prevention work is still continuing and is effective in keeping the number of homelessness acceptances down, however, with one FTE vacant post within the service and a further two FTE posts in the team having their contracts ending over the next 8 weeks, it is going to be extremely difficult to run the service and meet statutory housing advice and homelessness obligations if these posts are not able to be filled.</p> <p>The impact of the changes in Local Housing Allowance and cuts in entitlement has yet to be seen, but this poses a significant risk of an increase in homelessness over the coming months, particularly when the 9 month protection period on claims comes to an end. Rent Deposit debtors are continuing to be chased, but the corporate recovery team have advised that they can no longer write back on rent deposit debts that have previously been written off. Bond Scheme is due to be implemented from 1st July 2011 to replace the Rent Deposit Scheme. Some accounts for Old Schools Lodge has been provided, but no longer using this hostel as temporary accommodation.</p>	No	Ongoing	
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	This project needs to be considered as part of the analysis work being undertaken with regards to the Business Hub and how processes are improved and communicated.	No	31-Mar-12	

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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	Further training to be undertaken during 2011-12 now the new structure is in place.	😊	No	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.	😊	No	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 will now be reported through the Performance Board and a representative from the EKHRP will be in attendance.	😊	No	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		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.	Janice Wason	The council restructure means that a review of staff who are child protection trained needs to be undertaken as many people have moved roles. This review will be conducted over the summer and training organised for the newly identified candidates.	😐	No	01-Sep-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	Following feedback from those involved with the Improvement Forum, a new approach is being considered, which will then be communicated throughout the authority.	😊	No	Ongoing	

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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	The combination of the officer restructure and the adoption of a 'Strong Leader' Cabinet requires a comprehensive review of the Scheme of Delegations, the completion of which will be a key target for the Monitoring Officer for 2011/12. In the meantime, on 19 May 2011 Council has approved an interim Scheme of Delegations reflecting the revised officer structure		No	31-Aug-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.		No		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)	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'.		No		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.		No		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.		No		June 2010