
Report to Housing, Health and Care Committee

Date of Meeting: 22 August 2013

**Subject: Governance Improvement Plan 2011/12
Housing and Community Safety Services**

Report by: Head of Housing and Community Safety Service

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. In October 2012, members of the Resource and Audit Committee requested that all services present their Governance Improvement Plan to the relevant service committee to provide assurance of actions agreed and to enable members to make the clear link to the service's business planning process.
- 1.2. This paper therefore provides the Committee with an update on progress with Housing and Community Safety Services Annual Governance Statement process for 2011/12 following the Annual Governance Panel challenge which took place in May 2012.
- 1.3. Key issues identified as a result of this process are set out and an update on progress is provided within the resulting Governance Improvement Plan 2012/13.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommend that Housing, Health and Care Committee:
 - 2.1.1. note the outcome of the Housing and Community Safety Service Annual Governance Panel 2011/12;
 - 2.1.2. note progress with the Governance Improvement Plan 2012/13 and provide comment and challenge as appropriate;
 - 2.1.3. note the intention to explicitly link Governance Improvement Plans to service and team objectives within service business plans for 2013/14.

3.0 Introduction and background

- 3.1. In April 2011, the Scrutiny Committee agreed the process the Council would take to move from the Statement of Internal Control for 2011 towards the issuing of a formal Governance Statement in March 2012.

- 3.2. The Local Code of Governance and the Governance Strategy were approved by the Council in March 2012 and set out the vision, principles, objectives, actions and values which the Council will adhere to in order to ensure that there is a robust and effective governance framework in place and that the fundamental principles of good governance are embedded across the organisation at every level.
- 3.3. The Council authorised the Governance Manager to establish the Governance Panel as a pre-requisite of the introduction of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The Governance Panels were established and operated for the first time early in the 2012/13 financial year.
- 3.4. The Council was able to issue an Annual Governance Statement as part of the 2011/12 annual accounts.
- 3.5. As this was the first time this activity had been carried out for all services, the process will continue to be refined in future years.

4.0 Considerations

- 4.1. This report confirms the results of the first Annual Governance challenge for Housing and Community Safety Services and provides details of the agreed actions resulting from the initial Governance Challenge session which took place in May 2012. The action plan is provided for information only and as confirmation of the outcomes of the first Governance challenge process.
- 4.2. A number of thematic questions were asked of each service with responses presented to a Governance Panel in May 2013.

The eight themes reported against are:

- Leadership
 - Relationships
 - Risk
 - Internal Compliance
 - Business Planning
 - External Compliance
 - Information to support decision-making
 - Evaluation & Review
- 4.3. The Governance Panel comprised managers from other services and, in the case of Housing and Community Safety Services, external (Fife Council) audit support. The role of the panel was to challenge any response where evidence was not apparent or had not been clearly articulated. In addition, a number of identified service-led actions were challenged to provide further clarification.

4.4. The Housing and Community Safety Service's Certificate of Assurance identified six key areas for improvement. These were:

- Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities require to be clarified
- Stakeholder engagement
- Workforce planning/succession planning
- Procurement
- Contract Management
- Information Management

A copy of the Certificate of Assurance is attached at **Appendix A**

Information relating to actions taken to instigate improvements in each of these areas is attached at **Appendix B**.

4.5. The required improvements have been allocated to lead officers and the improvement actions have been included in service operational plans. The Service's Business Plan will take into account the areas where improvement is required and identify these as a risk if warranted or as part of the service improvement objectives for the period covered by the business plan.

4.6. It is proposed to move the timing of the Governance Panels to earlier in the year, ideally to January / February so that the improvement actions can be incorporated earlier into the service business planning process for the following 12 month period.

5.0 Sustainability Implications

5.1. There are no sustainability implications associated with this report

6.0 Resource Implications

6.1. *Financial Details*

6.2. There are no financial implications arising from this report

N/A in this instance

6.3. *Staffing*

6.4. There are no staffing implications associated with this report

7.0 Exempt Reports

7.1. Is this report exempt? Yes No

8.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) Our Priorities

- The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses
- Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive
- People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment
- Our communities are safer
- Vulnerable people and families are supported
- Substance misuse and its effects are reduced
- Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing
- The environment is protected and enhanced for all
- The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence

(2) Council Policies

Governance Strategy

9.0 Equalities Impact

9.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

N/A on this occasion Yes No

10.0 Legality

10.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

11.0 Appendices

11.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

Appendix A - Certificate of Assurance, 2012

Appendix B - Governance Improvement Action Plan; Housing and Community Safety Service.

12.0 Background Papers

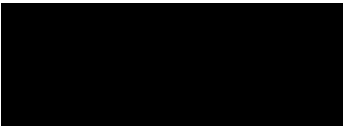

12.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes (please list the documents below) No

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	TEL NO / EXTENSION
Ahsan Khan	Head of Housing & Community Safety	Extension : 2473

Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Garry Dallas	Director of Services to Communities	
Elaine McPherson	Chief Executive	



CERTIFICATE OF ASSURANCE

FOR THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2013

To: Director of Finance & Corporate Services

From: Director of Services to Communities

Services : Housing

I am aware that you, as the Proper Officer in terms of section 95 of the Local Government (S) Act 1973 are responsible for ensuring that the financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk. Clackmannanshire Council's system of internal control is reviewed at least once in a year.

To assist you in that process, I confirm that I have considered the standard of internal controls in my area of responsibility. I can confirm that I have undertaken a review of the internal control arrangements in my area of responsibility.

As part of that review process my Head of Service for Community & Regulatory Services together with his Management Team has completed an Assurance Questionnaire which evidences the controls and systems in place in relation to the following areas :

- Financial Management
- Major Investment
- Risk Management
- Business Planning
- Project Management
- Procurement
- Human resources
- Equality & diversity
- Health & Safety
- Fraud & Corruption
- Information Management
- Voluntary Organisations & Sponsored Bodies
- External Compliance
- Law & Regulation

The Assurance Questionnaire also evidences the systems, processes, culture and values in place to support the following :

- Effective leadership
- Effective community engagement
- Good stakeholder relationships
- Clarity as to roles, responsibilities and accountabilities

Having done that I can confirm that the following areas have been highlighted for improvement and you and the Chief Executive may wish to consider this when preparing the Governance Statement

- Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities require to be clarified within service in light of separation of the Housing and Community Safety functions from Community & Regulatory Service
- Stakeholder engagement - need for more effective engagement and partnership working with other internal stakeholders on corporate initiatives
- Workforce planning / succession planning - to ensure that we have sufficient skills and knowledge within the service to deliver our corporate and operational objectives in the most effective and cost efficient way
- Procurement - further work required to embed the corporate Procurement Strategy across the service and improve the Council's Procurement Capability Score
- Contract Management including implementation of SLAs
- Information Management - ensure staff are aware of the legal obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998, The Freedom of Information (S) Act 2002, the Environmental Information (S) Regulations 2004 and Public Records(S) Act and identify service champions

Apart from the above, I can confirm that controls in my area have been, and are, working well. There are, in my opinion, no other significant matters arising which would require to be raised specifically in the assurance you are required to give the Chief Executive

Certified by _____

Garry Dallas

Director of Services to Communities

Date

**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN
Housing and Community Safety Service
August 2013**

Relationships with Internal and external Stakeholders

Principle	Checklist	Action Required	Progress as at August 2013
<p>Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.</p> <p>CIPFA Core Principle 2</p>	<p>How do Members and Officers within the Service work together to achieve a common purpose and have clearly defined functions and roles.</p>	<p>Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities require to be clarified within the service in light of separation of the Housing and community Safety functions from Community and Regulatory Service.</p> <p>Head of Housing & Community Safety to be appointed.</p> <p>More comprehensive review of Housing & Community Safety structure required.</p> <p>Lean system training to be conducted.</p> <p>Housing Options concept to be agreed.</p>	<p>Head of Housing and Community Safety appointed.</p> <p>Review of structure underway.</p> <p>Systems thinking approach to processes, to be embedded in development of IT system and structure</p> <p>Housing Options service currently under development as part of review of service structure.</p>
<p>Ensuring appropriate internal control and compliance in respect of our duties and responsibilities towards our staff.</p>	<p>How does the service ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and development.</p>	<p>Workforce planning / succession planning - to ensure that we have sufficient skills and knowledge within the service to deliver our corporate and operational objectives in the most effective and cost efficient way.</p> <p>Housing Strategy priorities to be agreed.</p>	<p>To be linked to training review, PRDs, and development of staff structure.</p> <p>Housing Strategy priorities agreed.</p>

Principle	Checklist	Action Required	Progress as at August 2013
		<p>Service based objectives to be agreed and team plans developed.</p> <p>Annual Performance Review and Development meetings to be held with all staff resulting in individual work plans and identification of training and development needs.</p> <p>Training plans to be established.</p>	<p>Service based objectives agreed and team plans are being established.</p> <p>Schedule of PRD meetings is in place for 2013/14.</p> <p>Training Needs analysis completed (Arneil Johnston) and Training Plan began for Housing Options and wider staff. Non-HRA Plan completed. HRA plan to be based on completed PRDs (and housing options)</p>
<p>Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning.</p> <p>CIPFA Supporting Principle - Core</p>	<p>Are there effective mechanisms in place for consultation and feedback both internal and external?</p>	<p>Stakeholder engagement - need for more effective engagement and partnership working with other internal stakeholders on corporate initiatives.</p> <p>Build upon good practice in relation to tenant involvement, to engage customers of wider service.</p>	<p>Head of Service ensuring that corporate working built in to staff structure review, IT project and full engagement in all corporate initiatives / working groups e.g. Welfare Reform, Annual Governance Statement Panel, Community Safety, etc.</p> <p>Comprehensive consultation approach for development of policy and business planning including Clackmannanshire Local Housing Strategy, the Council's Allocations Policy and the review of the HRA</p>

Principle	Checklist	Action Required	Progress as at August 2013
			<p>Financial Business Plan 2013 to 2018.</p> <p>Achieved Customer Service Excellence Accreditation.</p> <p>Ongoing consultation and development of formal approach to tenant involvement in service planning and scrutiny to meet the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.</p> <p>Conducted the Homelessness Users Forum.</p> <p>Full tenant survey currently underway.</p>

Risk management

Principle	Checklist	Action Required	Progress as at August 2013
<p>Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place.</p> <p>CIPFA Supporting Principle</p>	Are there up to date SLAs in place?	SLA and tendering required for all work, including minor suppliers under £10k.	<p>Priority list of invoiced work is complete.</p> <p>Review of SLAs underway.</p>

External Compliance and Accountability

Principle	Checklist	Action Required	Progress as at August 2013
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<p>Ensuring performance and compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations.</p>	<p>Can you demonstrate improvements in the procurement practice within the service?</p>	<p>Embed corporate procurement strategy at service level and align process to improve Council procurement capability score.</p> <p>Ensure that the Service can demonstrate value for money and compliance with Contract Standing Orders.</p>	<p>Designated staff have attended training sessions on Contract Standing Orders.</p> <p>Authorised signatory levels have been reviewed and aligned with council's Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>Monitoring Officer is a member of the Corporate Review Group for Service Level Agreements with voluntary organisations.</p>
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Information Management to Support Informed Decision Making

Principle	Checklist	Action Required	Progress as at August 2013
<p>Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs.</p> <p>CIPFA Supporting Principle - Core 4</p>	<p>Are the processes for handling personal data compliant with the requirements of the Data Protection legislation?</p>	<p>Ensure staff are aware of the legal obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information (S) Act 2002, the Environmental Information (S) Regulations 2004 and Public Records (S) Act.</p> <p>Identify service champions.</p>	<p>Information Management Strategy approved in October 2012.</p> <p>Service Retention Schedule has been finalised, approved and implemented.</p> <p>Procedures in place and work underway to review all paper files.</p> <p>90% of house files have been sifted to remove old records in line with the approved Service Retention Schedule.</p> <p>Work ongoing to scan documents into IDOX.</p> <p>Service Champions identified.</p>

