CORPORATE GOVERNANCE	AUDIT MANAGER
AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE	**REPORT NO. AUD2308**

27TH NOVEMBER 2023

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT - UPDATE

SUMMARY:

This report describes the work carried out towards the implementation of the actions defined within the Annual Governance Statement, which was presented to this Committee in June 2023.

RECOMMENDATION:

Members are requested to note the progress towards the implementation of the actions detailed within the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

1   Introduction

1.1   The Council is required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). Reporting publicly on the extent to which we comply with our own Local Code of Corporate Governance including how we have monitored the effectiveness of our arrangements in the year and on any planned changes to our governance arrangements in the coming year. The AGS was reported to this Committee on 1st June 2023.

1.2   The review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework in 2022/23 identified areas for improvement to be actioned during 2023/24, which included the carried forward actions from the 2021/22 AGS. The progress against these actions is detailed within this report.

2   Progress towards actions within the Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

2.1   Members considered the AGS report (AUD23/06) which included actions to be implemented during 2023/24, in response to Governance improvements identified in the AGS 2022/23.

2.2   The table below details the progress to date of items carried forward:

Actions outstanding from 2021/22

Action from 21/22 AGS	Original target date	Last update from March 2023	Revised target date	Update October 2023	Revised target date	Direction of travel
Office 365 governance set-up *(Information Governance Officer and IT Services Delivery Manager)*	June 2022	The work started with Silversands in September 2022 with the pilot going live in March 2023. The pilot focus was on data loss prevention with document labelling as RBC has become a subscriber to LG Inform Plus, and adopted the LG Inform Plus Records Retention schedule. The pilot has just come to an end with the service area (HR and payroll). IG and IT are to have a follow up meeting with Silversands and discuss moving beyond the pilot. There will need to be further wider discussions about how to implement and roll out the document labelling functionality within Office365 council wide. This will need to be planned around other projects that IT will be supporting as there will need to be training delivered on the functionality, possible ongoing support. **PROGRESSING**	TBC	A presentation is planned, by Silversands, to the Corporate Management Team (CMT), in Nov 23. However, the rollout will need to be resourced as currently no additional resource capacity is available. The presentation to CMT will determine the next steps including the resource implications. The IGO is in agreement with IT regarding a wider rollout as the training and rollout will need to be IT led with support from legal as required.	Will be agreed following review at CMT in Nov 23.	Progress

Action from 21/22 AGS	Original target date	Last update from March 2023	Revised target date	Update October 2023	Revised target date	Direction of travel
Ensuring comprehensive compliance around cyber security in line with the guidelines provided by the National Cyber Security Centre. *(Head of IT)*	October 2022	2023 PSN compliance achieved. DLUHC treatment plan, part 2 to be completed by Sept 2023. LGA Peer Review* – complete Internal audit – compete, 'Reasonable Assurance' Members briefings – complete Priorities from cyber security plan 2023/24; • Cyber supply chain review* • Cyber Incident Response Plan* • NCSC Cyber Security Framework – continued implementation • Training & awareness & policy refresh **PROGRESSING**	N/A	A cyber supply chain review is currently being carried out by internal audit. The cyber response plan is currently being worked on. Work continues to be progressed with the NCSC cyber security framework. Training has been refreshed on the Council's new Skillgate training system. There will be further ongoing awareness training on this as it is constantly evolving so will form business as usual. The policies require a comprehensive review. There is a review corporately of how to get policies across the organisation updated. A plan around this will be reported back to the Corporate Governance Group on the 6th Nov.	Completed - BAU Tba following project set-up and initial analysis (feedback 6/11/23 initially)	Progress
Ensuring compliance with the mandatory elements of the Local	July 2022	Process for achieving this has now been agreed and will be implemented in 2023/24. This will	October 2022	The mandatory elements of the Local Government Transparency Code are complied with and a central location on	N/A	

Action from 21/22 AGS	Original target date	Last update from March 2023	Revised target date	Update October 2023	Revised target date	Direction of travel
Government Transparency Code *(Assistant Chief Executive, Information Governance Officer and relevant Heads of Service)*		include monitoring and reporting on compliance with the Transparency Code. **PROGRESSING**		the Council's website has been set up to enable clear identification of all data published in relation to the Transparency code. Heads of Service/ Service Managers have been reminded of their responsibility to maintain the data to ensure compliance with the Transparency code.		Completed

Actions outstanding from 2022/23

Action from 22/23 AGS	Original target date	Last update from March 2023	Revised target date	Update October 2023	Revised target date	Direction of travel
External Audit to complete work and sign off 2020/21 and 2021/22 accounts. *(Executive Head of Finance and S151 Officer)*	2020/21 – To be finalised by the end of the financial year 2021/22 – preparation work to be underway this financial year.	N/A – New action	N/A	The 2020/21 audit will be completed by Christmas. The 2021/22 audit will pause until the government has given a directive on a general disclaimer and the terms of such. In this event, the 2021/22 audit will not proceed and the next audit will be the 2022/23 accounts in the Autumn of 2024. The government position will be known in the next couple of months. A revised audit timetable will be agreed at that point.	TBC	↑ Progress

Action from 22/23 AGS	Original target date	Last update from March 2023	Revised target date	Update October 2023	Revised target date	Direction of travel
Lack of robustness for the response to FOI requests resulting in the ICO judging against the Council due to lack of prompt response rather than the actual decision made not to provide certain information. *(Corporate Manager – Legal Services)*	October 2023	N/A – New action	N/A	Significant improvements have been made in the last 6 months in reducing the number of overdue FOI requests and complying with the statutory timeframe for responding to requests. This has been through a) increasing awareness amongst Service Managers and staff of overdue requests b) creating an action plan to reduce the backlog of requests with oversight from the Executive Director (Ian Harrison) and c) working with IT to introduce a new internal system which allows for more automated reminders, improved oversight for Managers and a reduction in single points of failure. This piece of IT work is in progress and a new system should be in place by July 2024.	July 24	↑ Progress
Ensure appropriate documentation is held within the Council for surveillance work. *(Corporate Manager – Legal Services)*	September 2023	N/A – New action	N/A	Surveillance policy documentation was updated and approved by the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee (CGAS) on 1 June 2023. In the last 3 months, the Legal Services team have updated logs of any surveillance work and ensured the correct authorisation is in place. There have been no new covert surveillance requests in this	N/A	

Action from 22/23 AGS	Original target date	Last update from March 2023	Revised target date	Update October 2023	Revised target date	Direction of travel
				financial year so far. In June 2023, the Council received a positive letter from IPCO (Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office) who are satisfied of Rushmoor Borough Council's ongoing compliance with Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA 2000) and Investigatory Powers Act 2016. Rushmoor is not due its next inspection until 2026. The Legal team will provide annual RIPA updates to CGAS.		Completed
Ensure that all mandatory and statutory training for Elected Members and all staff is undertaken in a timely manner and regularly reviewed to ensure that it is maintained and up to date. *(Corporate Manager – Democracy* *Corporate Manager – Democracy, in liaison with Member Development Group*	From election in May 23 – and by 30th Sept 23 Ongoing	N/A – New action	N/A	Mandatory Induction Training for Councillors took place during May 2023 and September 2023 with core essential training delivered as a priority early in the civic year. This included an Induction Programme for New Members supplemented by Mentoring arrangements, Code of Conduct Training (22/5/23), Development Management Committee Induction Training (18/5/23), Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Induction Presentation (25/5/23), GDPR and Information Governance Training (29/6/23), Audit Training for	N/A	Completed for Members part

Action from 22/23 AGS	Original target date	Last update from March 2023	Revised target date	Update October 2023	Revised target date	Direction of travel
and Corporate Governance Group)				CGAS (12/7/23), Licensing Hearing Training for individual members and Training for new Taxi Licensing Hearings (2/8/23), Induction Presentations for Overview and Scrutiny (15/6/23) and PPAB (27/6/23). This is in addition to a range of seminars and other learning and development activities that councillors have participated in so far during 2023/24. Copies of all Induction and training presentations are available for councillors on the Members SharePoint site. The Member Development Group will review progress and priorities for future training at its meeting on 6th November. The completion rate for staff mandatory training is currently 93%.		Progress

AUTHOR: Nikki Fleming, Service Manager - Audit
01252 398810
nikki.fleming@rushmoor.gov.uk

HEAD OF SERVICE: Peter Vickers, Executive Head of Financial Services

References:

- *Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 – reported to CGAS Committee 1st June 2023*