

Title of Report:	Annual Governance Statement 2012-13
Report to be considered by:	Governance and Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	2 nd September 2013
Forward Plan Ref:	GA2703

Purpose of Report: To review the Annual Governance Statement.

Recommended Action: To agree the Annual Governance Statement.

Reason for decision to be taken: To allow the Leader and Chief Executive to sign the Annual Governance Statement

Other options considered: n/a

Key background documentation: n/a

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Strategy principle:

CSP9 - Doing what's important well

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy priorities and principles by:

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Roger Croft - Tel (01635) 868638
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Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	01 July 2013

Contact Officer Details	
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Implications

Policy:	none
Financial:	none
Personnel:	none
Legal/Procurement:	In accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations England 2011
Property:	none
Risk Management:	none
Corporate Board's Recommendation:	To proceed to Management Board.

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes		Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:				
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)				
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at www.westberks.gov.uk/eia			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 The report sets out the Annual Governance Statement for the Council for 2012-13.

2. Proposals

2.1 The Annual Governance Statement for 2011-12 outlined two areas where action was required. This was:

- (1) Service resilience – may lead to failures in key systems
- (2) Legal challenge to Council decisions regarding changing service delivery - may compromise the Council's ability to deliver service reductions.

2.2 In addition Corporate Board considered that the Council needs to do further work in respect of the risk of legal challenge. The Head of Strategic Support will review the processes around carrying out equalities impact assessments in relation to proposed changes in service provision.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

3.1 This item is not relevant to equality.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The Council's governance arrangements are robust.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the purpose of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and explain how the necessary assurance to support the AGS has been obtained. This will enable the Committee to make an informed judgement as to the effectiveness of the process that the Council has followed in conducting the annual review of the system of internal control within the Council.

2. Purpose of the AGS

- 2.1 The AGS is designed to provide stakeholders of the Council with assurance that the Council has operated within the law and that the Council has met the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations:

“The Council shall conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control”.

- 2.2 A copy of the AGS for 2012-13 is attached to this report for review, at Appendix A.
- 2.3 The approach taken by the Council to carrying out the review of the system of internal control was set out in the report to Corporate Board in December 05. This report identified the sources of assurance that underpin the review. These are:
- (1) Head of Service Assurance Statements and service risk registers
 - (2) The “Head of Internal Audit” annual report
 - (3) The Monitoring Officer’s annual report
 - (4) The s151 Officer’s annual report
- 2.4 This evidence provides the assurance that enables the Leader and Chief Executive to sign the AGS with confidence.
- 2.5 The Annual Governance Statement was prepared by the Finance and Governance Group and reviewed by Corporate Board.

3. Role of Governance and Audit Committee re the AGS for 2011-12

- 3.1 A key function of the Governance and Audit Committee is to review and approve the AGS for 11-12 prior to it being signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.
- 3.2 In order to be able to review the AGS the Committee needs to examine the evidence, noted in 2.3, above, that supports the AGS.

Appendices

Appendix A - Annual Governance Statement

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: -

Officers Consulted: Risk Strategy Group - Finance and Governance Group,
Corporate Board

Trade Union: -