

Title of Report:	Annual Governance Statement for 2013-14
Report to be considered by:	Governance and Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	1 September 2014
Forward Plan Ref:	GA2868

Purpose of Report: To present the Annual Governance Statement for review.

Recommended Action: Approve the Statement

Reason for decision to be taken: Forms part of the Council's performance framework

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Council Risk Registers

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy principle:

CSP8 - Doing what's important well

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

Portfolio Member Details

Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Roger Croft - Tel (01635) 868638
E-mail Address:	rcroft@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	Report e-mailed to Councillor Croft on 6 August 2014.

Contact Officer Details

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Implications

Policy: none
Financial: none
Personnel: none
Legal/Procurement: none
Property: none
Risk Management: none
Corporate Board's Recommendation: Report to proceed to Management Board for consideration.

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes		Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (AGS) for the Council for 2013-14.
- 1.2 This report outlines issues that Corporate Board should consider for inclusion in the 2013-14 AGS as requiring action to resolve. Depending on the view of Corporate Board these issues may be included in the AGS.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 No issues of concern, in terms of the Council's governance arrangements, were noted in 13-14.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 3.1 This item is not relevant to equality.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Council has effective governance arrangements that are kept under constant review.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report outlines the purpose of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and explains how the necessary assurance to support the AGS has been obtained. This should 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 2013-14 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 Chief Internal Auditors 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. However, in respect of 2.3 (1) above, only seven of the Heads of Service Assurance Statements have been completed, leaving seven outstanding, see appendix B.
- 2.5 The Annual Governance Statement was prepared by the Finance and Governance Group and reviewed by Corporate Board.

3. Update on areas identified in the 12-13 AGS as requiring action in 13-14

- 3.1 The Annual Governance Statement for 2012-13 outlined one area where action was required. This was:
- (1) Legal challenge to Council decisions regarding changing service delivery - may compromise the Council's ability to deliver service reductions.
- 3.2 The Head of Strategic Support reviewed the processes around carrying out equalities impact assessments in relation to proposed changes in service provision. He has confirmed that the Council's procedures for carrying out Equalities Impact Assessments are robust.

4. Areas identified in the 13-14 AGS as requiring action in 14-15

4.1 No areas of concern were noted during 13-14.

5. Role of Governance and Audit Committee re the AGS for 2013-14

5.1 A key function of the Governance and Audit Committee is to review and approve the AGS for 13-14 prior to it being signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

5.2 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. This evidence will be presented in separate reports.

Appendices

Appendix A - Annual Governance Statement

Appendix B - Summary of the Heads of Service Assurance Statements

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: N/a

Officers Consulted: Corporate Board

Trade Union: N/a