

# Annual Governance Statement

2013-14



Draft 7

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## A. Scope of Responsibility

1. Wiltshire Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
2. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, including the management of risk, and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions.

## B. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

3. The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and the activities through which the Council accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.
4. The assurance framework and the system of internal control are significant parts of that framework. They are designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. They cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The assurance framework and the system of internal control are based on an ongoing process that is designed to:
  - a. identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives;
  - b. evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised;
  - c. assess the impact of the risks if they are realised;
  - d. manage the risks efficiently, effectively and economically.
5. The assurance framework also provides a mechanism for monitoring and implementing a system of continuous governance improvement.
6. The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2014 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts for 2013/14.

## C. The Governance Framework

7. The Council's governance framework comprises a broad range of strategic and operational controls, which work together to ensure the sound operation of the Council. The key elements are summarised below.
8. Documents referred to are available from the Council or may be viewed on the Council's website ([www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)).
9. The review of the Council's governance arrangements, through the Annual Governance Statement, has taken account of best practice identified in the CIPFA/Solace guidance Delivering Good Governance in Local Government, Addendum 2012.

### **Purpose and Planning**

10. In September 2013 the council adopted a new Business Plan for 2013-17 with the following priorities:
  - to protect those who are most vulnerable;
  - to boost the local economy; and,
  - to bring communities together to enable and support them to do more for themselves.
11. These priorities serve to deliver the council's vision to create stronger and more resilient communities.
12. The Business Plan is supported by a Financial Plan, which demonstrates how it will be funded. The management of the Council's strategic risks helps achieve the Council's objectives

### **Policy and Decision-Making Framework**

13. The Council's Constitution provides the framework within which the Council operates. It sets out how decisions are made and the procedures which must be followed to ensure that these are efficient, effective, transparent and accountable.
14. The Constitution defines the role and responsibilities of the key bodies in the decision-making process - the Council, Cabinet, and Committees, including the Strategic Planning Committee, Area Planning Committees, Licensing Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Standards Committee, Audit Committee, Staffing Policy Committee, Officer Appointments Committee and Area Boards.
15. The council has established a Health and Well-being Board in accordance with requirements under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The Board is a committee of the council with a strategic leadership role in promoting integrated working between the council and the NHS, and in relation to public health services. It is the key partnership and focal point for strategic decision making about the health and well-being needs of the local community. The council has also established the Wiltshire

Police and Crime Panel to review and scrutinise decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Panel is a joint committee with Swindon Borough Council.

16. The Constitution is reviewed regularly by the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee through its Constitution Focus Group to ensure that it reflects changes in the law and remains fit for purpose.
17. The Leader and Cabinet are responsible for discharging the executive functions of the Council, within the budget and policy framework set by the Council, and some of this is delegated to Area Boards.
18. The Council publishes a Forward Work Plan once a month giving details of all matters anticipated to be considered by the Cabinet over the following 4 months, including items which constitute a key decision<sup>1</sup>
19. Schemes of Delegation are in place for Cabinet Committees, Cabinet Members and Officers to facilitate efficient decision-making. The Leader has established three Cabinet Committees - the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee, Cabinet Transformation Committee and the Cabinet Business Relief Committee.
20. The Council has established 18 area committees known as Area Boards. Each area board exercises local decision making under powers delegated by the Leader.
21. The Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements consist of a management committee and 3 select committees covering Children's Services, Environment, and Health. These committees establish standing and ad hoc task groups to undertake detailed reviews. Rapid scrutiny exercises also provide opportunities where there are time constraints. Scrutiny member representatives can also be appointed to boards of major projects to exercise lay challenge. Partners and contractors also contribute to the scrutiny process.
22. These arrangements serve to hold the Cabinet, its Committees, individual Cabinet Members and officers to public account for their executive policies, decisions and actions.

<sup>1</sup> 'Key decisions' are defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of the Constitution. They include any decision that would result in the closure of an amenity or total withdrawal of a service; any restriction of service greater than 5%; any action incurring expenditure or producing savings greater than 20% of a budget service area; any decision involving expenditure of £ 500,000 or more, (subject to certain exceptions), any proposal to change the policy framework; any proposal that would have a significant effect on communities in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions.

23. The Standards Committee is responsible for:

- promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members and Officers across the Council;
- determination of complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct;
- oversight of the Constitution, overview of corporate complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations, and the whistle blowing policy;

24. The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for members and established arrangements for dealing with complaints under the code for Wiltshire unitary and parish councillors, including the appointment of 3 independent persons in accordance with the statutory requirements.

25. The Council has in place arrangements for considering complaints made about the conduct of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire.

26. The Audit Committee is responsible for:

- monitoring and reviewing the Council's arrangements for corporate governance, risk management and internal control;
- reviewing the Council's financial management arrangements and approving the annual Statement of Accounts;
- focusing audit resources
- monitoring the effectiveness of the internal and external audit functions;
- monitoring the implementation of agreed management actions arising from audit reports.

### **Wiltshire Pension Fund**

27. The Wiltshire Pension Fund is overseen by the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee. This Committee has its delegated power from the full Council, rather than the Executive (Cabinet), so as to avoid any conflict of interest (e.g. in relation to the setting of employer contributions).

28. This Committee is responsible for all aspects of the fund, including:

- the maintenance of the fund;
- preparation and maintenance of policy, including funding and investment policy;
- management and investment of the fund;
- appointment and review of investment managers;
- monitoring of the audit process.

29. The Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee exercises its responsibilities in relation to investment management when it sets investment policy and appoints/monitors external investment managers.

## Regulation of Business

30. The Constitution contains detailed rules and procedures which regulate the conduct of the Council's business. These include:

- Council Rules of Procedure
- Budget and Policy Framework Procedure
- Financial Regulations and Procedure Rules
- Procurement and Contract Rules
- Members' Code of Conduct
- Officers' Code of Conduct
- Corporate Complaints Procedure

31. The statutory officers - the Head of Paid Service (see note below in this paragraph), the Monitoring Officer (Solicitor to the Council) and the Chief Finance Officer have a key role in monitoring and ensuring compliance with the Council's regulatory framework and the law. The statutory officers are supported in this role by the Council's HR, legal, governance and democratic services, finance and procurement teams, and also by the internal audit service.

32. Internal Audit services in Wiltshire are provided through a partnership with South West Audit Partnership.

33. The following bodies have an important role in ensuring compliance:

- Audit Committee
- Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Task Groups
- Standards Committee
- Internal Audit (this function is provided externally by the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP))
- External Audit and Inspection Agencies.

34. The Council has established a Governance Assurance Group whose membership is composed of senior officers with lead responsibility for key areas of governance and assurance, together with an elected member who is the vice-chair of the Audit Committee. Other officers and members attend by invitation to provide the Group with information about issues on which it is seeking assurance. Officers can also bring any concerns about the Council's governance arrangements forward to the Group for consideration.

<sup>2</sup> The Corporate Leadership Team comprises the three Corporate Directors, supported by the Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer, Solicitor to the Council / Monitoring Officer, Service Director HR and Organisational Development and the Director of Communications. The statutory role of Head of Paid Service is rotated between the three corporate directors every four months.

35. The Governance Assurance Group meets monthly and has a forward work plan. It is responsible for gathering evidence for and drafting the Annual Governance Statement. It identifies any potential significant governance issues throughout the year, and seeks assurance on the effectiveness of measures to address these. It has a key role in promoting and supporting sound governance across the organisation and reports as required to the Corporate Leadership Team.<sup>3</sup>

## **Management of Resources, Performance and Risk**

### **Financial Management**

36. Financial management and reporting is facilitated by:

- Regular reports to Cabinet on the Council's Revenue Budget and Capital Programme;
- Regular review by the Corporate Leadership Team;
- Regular consideration of these reports by the Budget and Performance Task Group;
- Budget monitoring by Service Managers;
- Compliance with the Council's Budgetary and Policy Framework, Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules;
- Compliance with external requirements, standards and guidance;
- Publication of Statement of Accounts;
- Overseeing role of the Audit Committee.

37. The Council's financial management arrangements are consistent with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government, issued in 2010.

### ***Performance and Risk Management Reporting***

38. At the heart of the Business Plan 2013 – 2017 is the vision to create stronger and more resilient communities and sets out how we plan to achieve this and outlines our key priorities which are to continue to:

- Protect our most vulnerable in our communities;
- Boost the local economy – creating and safeguarding jobs
- Support and empower communities to do more for themselves

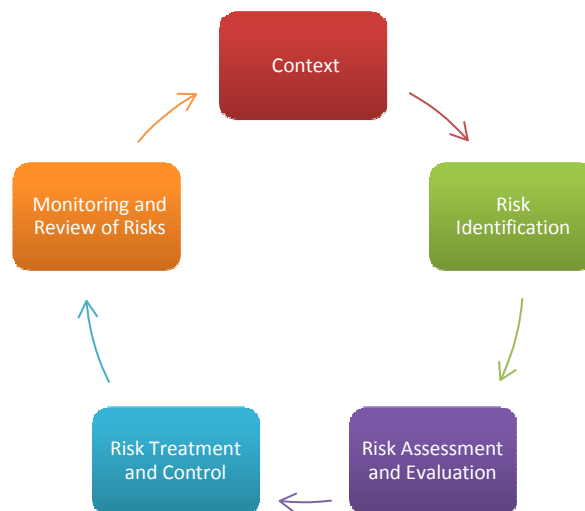
<sup>3</sup>

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The role of Head of Paid Service was discharged by the Service Director, HR and Organisational Development until July 2013 when the council agreed that the role should be discharged by one of the corporate directors, Maggie Rae, pending consideration of a further report in November 2013 on how this would operate on a rotational basis between the three corporate directors)



39. Measuring success is about how we will know we are performing well and moving in the right direction to achieve our vision and priorities. A Strategic Performance and Risk Management Board has been established to take the strategic lead on the development and review of the corporate planning cycle including the performance and risk management approach. Risk management is a central part of the Council's strategic management and the Board will review the Risk Management Strategy on an annual basis to ensure that risk management arrangements remain effective.
40. The Corporate Leadership Team receives six monthly performance and risk reports detailing the risks that impact upon the strategic objectives of the Council. The Audit Committee receives reports every six months on the effectiveness of the risk management processes within the Council and its partnerships. Exception reports are submitted as and when required.
41. Risks are identified and monitored by service areas. Risks that are deemed significant are referred to the Operational Performance and Risk Management Group in the first instance for challenge and review. Reports are issued on the corporate risks through the Council's reporting arrangements. Training on Risk Management is delivered to Members annually, including the development of specific training for staff involved in risk management arrangements as a result of their work. The diagram below demonstrates the cycle of managing risk.



42. The risks associated with major projects are managed through project management arrangements with regular reporting to the relevant boards and member bodies. Any significant or corporate risks are also considered by the Operational Performance & Risk Management Group and included within the Corporate Risk Register where appropriate.
43. The Council's Business Continuity Policy provides a framework to maintain and develop business continuity arrangements at both corporate and

service levels. It sets out the responsibilities of different management levels and groups as part of this process.

## **Internal Audit**

44. The main role of Internal Audit is to provide an independent and objective opinion on the Council's control environment.
45. Internal Audit has the following additional responsibilities:
- providing support to the Chief Finance Officer in meeting his responsibilities under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, to make arrangements for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs;
  - investigating any allegations of fraud, corruption or impropriety;
  - advising on the internal control implications of proposed new systems and procedures.
46. The annual Internal Audit Plan is based on an assessment of risk areas, using the most up to date sources of risk information, in particular the Council's Corporate and Service Risk Registers. The Plan is agreed with Corporate Directors, and presented to the Audit Committee for approval. The Committee receives reports of progress against the plan throughout the year. The Internal Audit Annual Report summarises the results and conclusions of the audit work throughout the year, and provides an audit opinion on the internal control environment for the Council as a whole.

## **External Audit and Inspections**

47. The Council is subject to audit by its external auditors, KPMG LLP, specifically in relation to the Council's financial statements and achievement of value for money (VFM). It is also subject to reviews by external inspection agencies, OFSTED, and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The outcomes of external audit work and inspections are used to help strengthen and improve the Council's internal control environment and help secure continuous improvement.
48. In September 2013 the authority was the subject of a peer review challenge. A further visit is planned for later in 2014.
49. The challenge covered five core components: understanding of the local context and priority setting, political and managerial leadership, financial planning and viability, governance and decision making and organisational capacity. In addition the peer team was asked to focus on how the Council was transforming Wiltshire through innovation in three particular areas.
50. The council's key strengths were identified as follows:
- A very strong respect and high regard for the council leader
  - A strong and trusted relationship between officers and elected members with a clear appreciation that the council is strongly member led.

- The council has a good reputation in the community. Its vision ‘to create stronger and more resilient communities’ has resonance locally. Parish and town councils, volunteers and voluntary sector organisations speak positively about the purposeful intent of the council to delegate responsibilities and enable local people and groups to do more for themselves.
- A highly engaged workforce with a real sense of pride in the organisation.

51. Recommendations included addressing the budget gap for 2015/16 and beyond, clarifying the desired outcomes for area boards, improving the effectiveness of scrutiny, strengthening performance management and working closely with the CCG to ensure shared visions and plans. Action has been taken to implement these recommendations.

52. The council has also undergone a peer review challenge of its adult social care Help to Live at Home programme. The initial findings are positive and the full report is awaited.

### **Associate Directors’ Assurance Statements**

53. Associate directors’ assurance statements [ are being] reviewed by the Governance Assurance Group. [Any significant governance issues identified will be included in Section E].

### **Monitoring Officer**

54. The Monitoring Officer has not made any adverse findings in the course of the exercise of his statutory responsibilities.

#### D. Review of Effectiveness

55. The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the executive managers within the Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Council's internal audit function, and also by reports of external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

56. The key principles of corporate governance are set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance as follows:

- Focusing on the purpose of the Council and on outcomes for the community, creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability;
- Ensuring that members and officers work together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
- Promoting high standards of conduct and behaviour, and establishing and articulating the Council's values to members, staff, the public and other stakeholders;
- Taking informed, risk based and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny; and
- Developing the capacity of members and officers to be effective in their roles.

57. The effectiveness of the Council's assurance framework and system of internal control is assessed against these six principles.

#### **Focus on the purpose of the Council and on outcomes for the community, creating and implementing a vision for the local area**

58. The Council's vision and priorities are set out in its Business Plan 2013-2017. This is consistent with the long term priorities that are set out in the Community Plan 2011-2026.

#### **Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability**

59. The development of Wiltshire's area boards has played a key role in ensuring robust public accountability and democratic engagement in Wiltshire. The devolved governance arrangements are set out in the Council's Constitution. In 2014 a comprehensive review of the Area Boards was undertaken to more closely align governance arrangements with the aspirations set out in the Council's business plan. The conclusions and recommendations arising from the review were adopted by the Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 (Cabinet minute no. 47).

60. The Council monitors the performance of the area boards in a number of ways:

- Public reporting on all issues and grant applications referred to the boards through online systems (including a new grants evaluation process in 2014);
- Periodic scrutiny reviews and audit of financial arrangements;
- Feedback received following events;
- An annual satisfaction survey of people attending area board meetings;
- The Area Boards self evaluation process; and
- Ongoing lean systems reviews.

61. The Council seeks to align the resources delegated to area boards with the needs of local communities and to assess the impact of its devolved governance arrangements through the Joint Strategic Assessment process. This involves the prioritisation of issues by the local community, action and resource allocation by the area boards and the use of the boards' collaborative influence to initiate community-led action in the area. In 2014, revised arrangements were put in place to capture and monitor the effectiveness of this process, through improved reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

### **Ensuring that councillors and officers work together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles**

62. The Constitution sets out clearly the roles and responsibilities of Councillors and Officers in the decision making process.

63. The Council has adopted a Councillor and Officer Relations Protocol which:

- outlines the essential elements of the relationship between councillors and officers;
- promotes the highest standards of conduct;
- clarifies roles and responsibilities;
- ensures consistency with the law, codes of conduct and the Council's values and practices; and
- identifies ways of dealing with concerns by councillors or officers.

## **Promoting high standards of conduct and behaviour, and establishing and articulating the authority's values to members, staff, the public and other stakeholders**

64. All staff are required to meet high standards of ethical conduct under the Officers' Code of Conduct.
65. The council has a code of conduct for officers which is underpinned by a behaviours framework. This framework clearly articulates the behaviours expected of council officers, and is explicitly referred to in recruitment and performance appraisal processes.
66. The Council has adopted a code of conduct for Councillors and arrangements for dealing with member misconduct complaints under the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. The effectiveness of the code is kept under review by the Standards Committee.
67. The Council has established arrangements for receiving and investigating complaints about the Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire.
68. The Council's Governance Service is responsible for customer complaints, access to information legislation, operation of the agreed arrangements under the new standards regime, and the promotion of good governance within the Council and with key partners, including the town and parish councils of Wiltshire. This helps to ensure that robust governance arrangements are supported across the Council.

## **Internal Audit**

69. Internal Audit represents an important element of the Council's internal control environment, and to be effective it must work in accordance with the Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government, which lays down the mandatory professional standards for the internal audit of local authorities.
70. The Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2013 -14 summarises the results and conclusions of the audit work throughout the year, and provides an independent audit opinion on the internal control environment for the Council as a whole. The Council's internal auditors, SWAP, have given an overall audit opinion of reasonable assurance on the adequacy and effective operation of the Council's control environment for 2012-13.

## **External Audit**

71. The latest report to those charged with governance, issued by KPMG LLP in respect of Wiltshire Council for 2013/14, is the interim report, in advance of the full report, which summarises the key issues arising from the interim work at Wiltshire Council in relation to the 2013/14 financial statements and the work to support the 2013/14 value for money conclusions.

72. The report highlights the key messages as follows:

- The organisational control environment is effective overall;
- Good progress has been made during the year in improving the overall IT control environment;
- In relation to those controls reviewed, the key financial systems are sound;
- In relation to the work on the financial controls, the external auditor is able to place reliance upon the work of Internal Audit;
- The overall process for the preparation of the financial statements is strong.

73. KPMG LLP's report to those charged with governance for 2013/2014 will be tabled at the meeting of the Audit Committee on 31 July 2014.

## **Taking informed, risk based and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny**

74. Cabinet Members and Officers exercising delegated powers are required to take decisions in accordance with their respective schemes of delegation. The Leader's protocol for decision-making by Cabinet Members ensures transparency by requiring publication of the intention to make a decision on 5 clear days' notice and the final decision.

75. The Partnership Protocol and Register captures the Council's partnership arrangements. As of May 2014 the number of partnerships in operation is 42. During 14/15 a review of the protocol will be conducted. Once completed all arrangements will be reviewed with service areas to check all are aware of the requirements of the revised protocol and all partnerships are captured.

76. Since implementing the recommendations of a major review in May 2012 to increase the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny function, a single work programme has been developed in discussion with Cabinet members and senior management under the control of the Management Committee



which focused on Council priorities. It aims for early dialogue enabling most of its work to support policy development and pre-decision scrutiny in the Council. The peer challenge review undertaken in September 2013 made a number of recommendations relating to Overview and Scrutiny. As a consequence a closer alignment has been made between its work and the Council's Business Plan 2013-17 with a stronger focus on better outcomes for communities and residents. This includes supporting delivery of the Plan's objectives and monitoring the investments and efficiencies in the corresponding Financial Plan.

77. The work undertaken by the Audit Committee this year has included:

- review and approval of the Annual Governance Statement for 2012-13;
- review and approval of the Statement of Accounts for 2012-13 and 2013-14 - due to a change in timings, it has been possible for the current years' accounts to also be included in this year's Assurance Governance Statement;
- review of the work and findings of Internal Audit, including the Annual Report and audit opinion on the control environment;
- review of the Council's risk management arrangements;
- review of the work and findings of external audit, including the Annual Audit Letter and Report to Those Charged with Governance;

78. The successful transfer of the Public Health team into the authority in April 2013 offered an opportunity to strengthen our response to both business continuity and emergency planning - to learn from their experience and expertise and to ensure the Council is able to respond to Public Health emergencies. During 2013- 14 the Emergency Planning and Resilience teams have been restructured to ensure the structures are fit for purpose. In addition organisational resilience has been strengthened through the introduction of Corporate Director and Associate Director on call arrangements.

### **Developing the capacity of councillors and officers to be effective in their roles**

79. The Council is committed to the ongoing development of its Councillors and recognises the importance of building up their capacity and effectiveness.

80. The Council's Councillor Development Policy:

- Establishes Councillors' individual training needs and

protocols and allocates budget according to the Council's priorities;

- Ensures equality of access to funds and training events;
- Evaluates the effectiveness of councillor development annually to inform the prioritisation and allocation of funding for future years.

81. A "People Strategy" is in place to support delivery of the business plan and the transformation programme, and priorities to continue embedding the Behaviours Framework and developing the culture of the council are clearly outlined in the strategy. An action plan that outlines the activities needed to deliver the aims of the People Strategy is reviewed regularly and updated annually to ensure the actions are aligned with the priorities in the business plan. The People Strategy outlines priority areas for action which are critical to the delivery of this plan, ensuring that the Council has the workforce capacity it needs to work in different ways and successfully meet current and future challenges.

#### E) Significant Governance Issues

82. The following have been identified as significant governance issues:

#### **Delivery of the Council's Business Plan 2013-17**

Last year the council published its Business Plan 2013-17 that sets out what the council plans to deliver over the next four years. The vision to create stronger and more resilient communities will underpin the work and provide a clear focus to the actions taken. The priorities will also continue to focus on

- **Boosting the local economy - creating jobs and safeguarding jobs**
- **Supporting and empowering communities to do more for themselves**
- **Protecting those who are most vulnerable**

Delivering the Business Plan remains a significant challenge given an increasing demand for key services, such as care for vulnerable children and adults, and highways maintenance, as well as rising inflation costs, and reducing resources. In order to achieve this, the Council will continue to embrace change and adopt a transformational and innovative approach, aligning resources to priorities and challenging if or how services are provided. This will be underpinned by effective performance, financial and workforce information and sound risk management.

## Information Governance

In February 2013 the Corporate Leadership Team agreed an action plan to strengthen and improve the Council's information governance arrangements. A number of priority actions have been put in place, including the appointment of a Corporate Director as the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), the establishment of an Information Governance Assurance Group and the introduction of an on-line register of data incidents. The on-line register has been publicised to staff and is working effectively. In addition the council has recently established the Information Management Transformational Board to oversee the delivery of improvements in the council's information management arrangements. The council's Data Protection Policy has been refreshed. At the beginning of July 2014 the council will start a phased roll out of mandatory on-line training programme for all staff, including agency staff, on data protection and good practice in information management. The Information Commissioner will be invited to conduct an information governance audit in order to provide an overview of other steps that may be taken to reinforce the improvement programme already in place.

## Safeguarding Children and Young People

The Improvement Notice has now been lifted and the last meeting of the Safeguarding Improvement Board was held on 5 April 2014. A Peer Review of the Wiltshire Children Safeguarding Board (WCSB) took place in December 2013. This judged that the WCSB was able to fulfill its statutory duties.

The Lead Member and Corporate Director (who is the statutory Director of Children's Services) will receive 6 weekly highlight reports on progress. A Safeguarding and Child Protection Improvement Group has been established, chaired by the Associate Director for Operational Children's Services. The Safeguarding Scrutiny Task Group will continue to meet until October 2015.

The Council will continue to have a relentless focus on safeguarding improvement, and in order to monitor progress this safeguarding remains an SGI this year. A safeguarding Peer Challenge will take place in October 2014.

Jane Scott

Leader of the Council

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Corporate Directors

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Dated

