

Wiltshire Council

Audit and Governance Committee

28 April 2021

Subject: Corporate Governance Update

Executive Summary

The Annual Governance Statement for Wiltshire Council demonstrates how the Council is meeting the principles of good governance adopted in its Local Code of Corporate Governance (LCCG). Following the agreement of the Annual Governance Statement at the end of last year, this report provides a second quarterly update on the current status of improvement actions identified in the Annual Governance Statement for 2020.

This report also proposes changes to update the Governance Reporting Arrangements document at Protocol 11 of the Constitution.

Proposal(s)

Audit and Governance Committee is asked to consider:

- a. the current status of improvement actions identified in Annual Governance Statement, as set out at **Appendix 1**.
- b. the proposed changes to Protocol 10 – Governance Reporting Arrangements, as set out at **Appendix 2**.

Reason for Proposal

In considering the draft Local Code of Corporate Governance in 2019, Audit Committee agreed to receive quarterly updates on the implementation of improvement actions identified in the Annual Governance Statement. Consideration of these actions will inform the development of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) that the council is required to produce for 2020/21.

At its meeting on 10 February 2021 the Audit and Governance Committee asked the Monitoring Officer to review the governance reporting arrangements in the constitution and report back to the Committee.

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Jo Pitt

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Wiltshire Council

Audit and Governance Committee

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Subject: Corporate Governance Update

Purpose of Report

1. a. To consider the current status of improvement actions identified in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and emerging themes to capture in the AGS for 2020-21.

b. To consider proposed revisions to the governance reporting arrangements in Protocol 10 of the Constitution.

Background

2. Wiltshire Council agreed a revised Local Code of Corporate Governance in 2019.
3. In considering the draft Local Code of Corporate Governance, Audit Committee agreed to receive regular updates on the implementation of improvement actions identified in the Annual Governance Statement. Consideration of these actions will inform the development of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) that the council is required to produce for 2020/21.

Main Considerations

4. In 2019/20's Annual Governance Statement the Council identified a number of areas where further improvements could be made to strengthen its governance framework. It should be noted that these areas are not to be regarded as failures, rather examples of issues where scope for further improvement has been identified. In many cases, work is already well underway to address these areas for improvement.
5. The governance of the Council continues to be monitored by Cabinet, Audit and Governance and other councillor committees and the Council's Corporate Leadership Team.
6. The Corporate Governance (Officer) Group chaired by the Monitoring Officer met on 16 March 2021 and discussed:
 - Training sessions within the post-election Induction and Development Programme that will assist councillors in fulfilling their decision-making responsibilities;
 - Draft amendments to the Constitution prior to review and approval by Councillors;
 - The implications of the Redmond Review on the Oversight of Local Audit and Transparency of Financial Reporting, which was discussed by

the Committee in February;

- The legal position with regard to virtual council meetings and contingency planning in the event that emergency legislation is not extended.
7. A quarterly update on progress with the improvement actions identified in the Annual Governance Statement 2019-20 is included at **Appendix 1**. This document will be kept live and updated and inform the development of the AGS for 2020/21.
 8. Protocol 10 - Governance Reporting Arrangements outlines the responsibilities of cabinet and relevant committees in relation to various elements of corporate governance. It was last updated in May 2018 following a review of the constitutional role of the Audit Committee (as it was then called). The review examined, in particular, the role of the Audit Committee vis-à-vis other committees and scrutiny bodies to ensure clarity of their separate and distinct roles in corporate governance.
 9. As background, details of the review that was carried out by the Audit Task Group may be found at:

[Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Wednesday 11 April 2018, 10.00 am | Wiltshire Council](#)
 10. The changes agreed by full Council on 22 May 2018 may be found at:

[Agenda for Council on Tuesday 22 May 2018, 10.30 am | Wiltshire Council](#)

(Item 36)
 11. A copy of Protocol 10 with notes and proposed revisions is attached at Appendix 2 for consideration and comment by the Committee. The main changes include:
 - Incorporating the Committee's change of name to Audit and Governance Committee;
 - Confirmation of the Committee's responsibility to approve the Annual Statement of Accounts and the AGS;
 - Clarification of the Committee's role in relation to Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP);
 - The Committee's role in relation to the Council's Stone Circle companies, which will be considered as part of a review of the governance arrangements for these companies as requested by Cabinet at its meeting in February. An update on the review will be provided to Cabinet in July 2021.
 12. The Protocol will be referred to the Constitution Focus Group to review, having regard to any comments from the Audit and Governance Committee. It will then be taken to the Standards Committee and on to full Council for

final approval of any changes.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Quarterly LCCG AGS update

Appendix 2 Protocol 10 – Governance Reporting Arrangements with proposed revisions