

APPENDIX 1: Action plan for improvement following review of effectiveness of governance arrangements 2023-24

	Action	Who	Date	Progress Update
1	<p>Annual Review of Corporate Governance</p> <p>At the end of the year, the Council will produce its statement on governance, which includes end of year assurance statements by Directors, Assistant Directors/Chief Officers and internal audit's opinion report.</p>	Monitoring Officer	May 2024	<p>In progress. The monitoring officer will circulate the assurance statements to relevant officers in or around March 2024</p> <p>Status: In progress</p>
2	<p>Governance Arrangements</p> <p>To keep under review the Council's governance arrangements, making any necessary improvements in response to the reported potential breaches that are investigated throughout the year.</p>	Monitoring Officer and Corporate Finance Director	March 2024	<p>Various actions as reported in the audit update reports have been undertaken to address the governance issues identified towards the end of 2022/2023. To name a few, all staff have been provided with comprehensive training on the importance of complying with various governance requirements and a Corporate Governance Board has also been established. The Council's governance arrangements will be kept under review.</p> <p>It should also be noted that The Council commissioned Local Partnerships to conduct an in-depth Governance Review as the OPLLP was set to embark on a new phase of the project having successfully achieved a resolution to grant outline planning.</p> <p>The Council and OPLLP have started to implement the recommendations raised in the Local</p>

				<p>Partnerships review. A joint action plan has been established by the Council and the LLP with the aim of agreeing priorities and will also track the commitments the Council and LLP have made in response to the Governance Review.</p> <p>Status: In progress</p>
3	<p>Data Retention Policy and General Data Protection Regulation</p> <p>To keep under review, the Data retention policy and the new General Data Protection Policy ensuring Officers and Members of the Council are aware of their responsibilities.</p>	Monitoring Officer	March 2024	<p>The Data Retention policy is being reviewed as well as the General Data Protection Policy. The importance of Data Retention and the requirements of GDPR are reminded to staff on a regular basis.</p> <p>Status: In progress</p>
4	<p>Review of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee function</p> <p>To keep under review the governance and working arrangements of the committee.</p>	Monitoring Officer	Ongoing	<p>The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and how a scrutiny function is embedded in the new Governance Arrangements is very much being discussed and assessed by the Working Group Members, the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Status: In Progress</p>
5	<p>Financial Management Code</p> <p>Raise awareness in the organisation of the CIPFA Statement of Principles of Good Financial Management.</p>	Chief Financial Services Officer & Monitoring Officer	<p>December 2023</p> <p>April 2024</p>	<p>A previously arranged Manager Programme on Financial Management Awareness (training session) arranged for 21st November 2023, has been rescheduled to take place on 20 February 2024.</p> <p>This was due to the ongoing staff restructure</p>

				<p>consultation. The session will cover and raise awareness about the Financial Management Code, its assessment, principles', objectives, etc.</p> <p>Status: In Progress</p>
6	<p>Develop temporary corporate policy compliance function</p> <p>To provide independent oversight and ensure that compliance with key corporate policies is monitored and reported to senior management team.</p>	<p>Corporate Finance Director</p>	<p>August 2023</p>	<p>The Chief Officer Regulatory & Community Services has created a job specification for this role. However, the process is currently on hold pending the outcome of 'taking stock' and the ongoing council restructure. This role will be part procurement team going forward.</p> <p>Status: Not Completed</p>
7	<p>Corporate Policy Training</p> <p>Maintain corporate policy training programme and staff understanding of corporate expectations, roll out to new recruits.</p>	<p>Chief HR Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All staff were required to attend face to face training on 'Getting it Right' covering the importance of good governance and the requirements on all staff to make the appropriate declarations. There were very few exemptions (which had to be agreed by the Chief Executive or Chief HR Officer) and an online session was run to catch them.</p> <p>Our e-learning has been updated to include specific links to FHDC policies and information and completion of all e-learning is being closely monitored. Grounds Maintenance are in the process of doing GDPR e-learning to support strong</p>

			<p>compliance with data protection law.</p> <p>New starter processes were updated to ensure awareness raised at the earliest possible opportunity.</p> <p>The appraisal process has been renewed ahead of 2024 and there are now checks done each year to remind staff that they need to renew their declarations annually and also when anything changes that may require a declaration to be made.</p> <p>Training has been run by area specialists on procurement and contract management. Financial management is already planned for early 2024 (delayed from Nov 2023 due to clashes with the staff consultation).</p> <p>The following training has taken place in 2023:</p> <p>Contract Standing Orders – 12th January 2023</p> <p>Fraud Awareness (East Kent Audit Partnership) – 24th January 2023</p> <p>Contract Management Standards - 9th March 2023</p> <p>Fraud Awareness for Grounds Maintenance – 7th March 2023</p> <p>Getting it Right Governance training for all staff - May</p>
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8	<p>Corporate Governance Group</p> <p>Establish Corporate Governance Group to strengthen internal assurance and compliance with corporate policies.</p>	<p>Corporate Finance Director</p>	<p>July 2023</p>	<p>A new, monthly advisory corporate governance group has been established. Members include all chief officers, the emergency planning; treasury and performance leads, and the group will be chaired by the Monitoring Officer and Deputy S151 Officer.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>
	<p>Monitor staff surveys and conduct programme of spot checks to ensure that new training and processes to strengthen declarations, management of and conflicts of interest, and adherence to procurement policy are monitored</p>	<p>Corporate Governance Group</p>	<p>In place July 2023</p>	<p>Status: Ongoing and is work in progress</p>

	and corporate expectations embedded.			
9	<p>Development of the new Programme Management Office Function</p> <p>Continue to develop the Programme Management approach across all of the Council's major projects to provide standardised reporting, consistency and governance oversight across all projects.</p>	Chief Officer Corporate Estate & Development	March 2024	<p>A standalone Project Management Office (PMO) function is not being progressed due to resource constraints. A PMO approach is being embedded within existing staff resources.</p> <p>Status: PMO approach being embedded</p>