

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Review of 2013/14 and Actions Required in 2014/15

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

1.0 Scope of responsibility

- 1.1 Gloucester City Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. Gloucester City 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.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, Gloucester City Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, to facilitate the effective exercise of its functions.
- 1.3 Gloucester City Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. A copy of the code is on our website at www.gloucester.gov.uk, is included in the Council's Constitution (Part 5 – Codes & Protocols), or can be obtained from the Council's Audit, Risk & Assurance Manager or the Monitoring Officer. This statement explains how Gloucester City Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement.

2.0 The purpose of the governance framework

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the authority is directed and controlled and it's the activities through which it 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.
- 2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It 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 system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Gloucester City Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 2.3 The governance framework has been in place at Gloucester City Council for the year ended 31st March 2014, and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

3.0 The governance framework

- 3.1 Governance is about how the Council ensures it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.
- 3.2 The Council has adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance that is based around a number of key principles. These principles are identified below, together with a commentary on the current level of organisational compliance.

4.0 Focus on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creation and implementation of a vision for the local area

- 4.1 The Council's major policy objectives in 2013/14 were detailed as part of the corporate plan, entitled 'Transforming Your City'. This Plan, is a 4 year plan (2011-2014) designed as a framework for delivering Gloucester's future, reflecting the unique nature of the city's character and the challenges faced by the Council.
- 4.2 The three key priorities of the Plan are:
1. Prosperity – Strengthening Gloucester's Economy
 2. People – A City for Everyone
 3. Place – Creating Pride in Our City

These three key priorities are underpinned by the following four principles:-

- Leadership – We will provide strong, ambitious and enthusiastic leadership, putting the interests of the city first and we will act in an open and transparent way.
- Sound Finance – We will strive for value for money and only spend what we can afford.
- Your Services – We will strive for top-performing services, built around you the customer, in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- People – We will consult and engage with the community to help shape the decisions we take, giving everyone a voice and looking after the most vulnerable in society.

- 4.3 The Council's major policy objectives, as detailed in 'Transforming Your City' were approved by Full Council at a meeting held on 24th March 2011. A copy of the 'Transforming Your City' Council Plan 2011-2014 can be found on the Council's website www.gloucester.gov.uk

- 4.4 In order to ensure that progress is being made against the aims and objectives detailed in the Corporate Plan, monthly performance reports are produced to highlight achievements and address any challenges. These reports were reviewed during the year by the Chief Executive, Directors (SMT), and Members.
- 4.5 An end of year, annual performance report was presented to SMT on 10th June 2014 and was presented to Cabinet on 15th May 2013.??????
- 4.6 The Council Plan 2014-2017 was presented to Council on 8th April 2014 for comments and further recommendations, with a view to the final version being considered by full Council on 17 July 2014.
- 4.7 The Forward Plan contains matters which will be the subject of a 'key decision' and 'decisions relating to the Budget and Policy Framework'. In the interests of transparency, it also includes matters which are non-key decisions. Proposals relevant to the Budget and Policy Framework are subject to a period of consultation and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the opportunity to respond in relation to the consultation process. Forward Plans are prepared by the Leader of the Council, and cover a rolling period of twelve months. They are prepared on a monthly basis and subsequent plans cover a period beginning with the first day of the second month covered in the preceding plan. A copy of the Forward Plan is also published on the Council's web site.
- 4.8 In order to provide services to meet the needs of the community, the Council needs to obtain the views of those being served. This will allow the Council – and Members – to provide sound evidence for the decisions that are made, as well as enabling redirection of resources where necessary. In June 2013, Cabinet agreed to the introduction of a new system to aid the gathering of customer feedback on service delivery, at the point of interaction.
- 5.0 Members and officers work together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles**
- 5.1 Members are responsible to the electorate and serve as long as their term of office lasts. Officers are responsible to the authority and carry out the Council's work under the direction of the Council, Executive and Committees.
- 5.2 The relationship between Councillors and officers is essential to the successful working of the Council. This relationship within the authority is characterised by mutual respect, informality and trust. The Council has adopted a 'Councillor – Officer Relations' protocol to help councillors and officers perform effectively by giving guidance on their respective roles and expectations, and, on their relationship with each other.
- 5.3 In December 2013, the City Council was subject to a corporate peer challenge process facilitated by the LGA as part of the Council's commitment to ongoing improvement. Peer challenges are improvement orientated and designed to complement the Council's own performance and improvement plans. A copy of the Corporate Peer Challenge report can be found on the Council's website (www.gloucester.gov.uk). An action plan is being developed by Members and

officers to implement the recommendations made in the Peer Challenge report and there has already been progress made on some of the recommendations.

- 5.4 The Council has adopted a Scheme of Delegation detailing the delegation of responsibilities and functions to the Council, Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members, Committees, and officers.
 - 5.5 Under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, local authorities are required to have in place a scheme which sets out payments of allowances to councillors. The City Council formally adopts its allowances scheme for the forthcoming year at Annual Council. The Scheme for 2013-14, which was based on recommendations by an independent "Members Remuneration" panel, was adopted by the Council in May 2013..
 - 5.6 Under Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council must approve and publish a senior pay policy statement before the start of the financial year to which it applies. The Council is expected to keep the statement under review and publish a new version each year. The Senior Pay Policy Statement for 2013/14 was approved by Council in May 2013..
- 6.0 Promote values for the authority and demonstrate the values of good governance through the upholding of high standards of conduct and behaviour.**
- 6.1 The Council has adopted codes of conduct for Members and Officers. The code of conduct for Members was amended during 2012/13 to take account of changes required by the Localism Act 2011. The revised Member Code of Conduct was approved by Council in July 2012. No complaints about breach of the Member Code of Conduct were received during 2013-14 .
 - 6.2 Staff are also expected to maintain high standards of behaviour at all times. The standards of behaviour and other related matters are set out in an officer Code of Conduct which is based on a national model. A copy of this Code is contained in the Council's Constitution. The Council's Constitution also contains a number of protocols in respect of Member/Officer and Member/Member relations, and a whistle-blowing policy for employees.
 - 6.3 The Council has a complaints procedure that enables dissatisfied members of the public to raise concerns. The Council views all comments, whether they are complaints or compliments, as a valuable way of collecting continual feedback about services and identifying how it can improve the services it provides. Complainants may also refer matters to the local government ombudsman for investigation once they have been through the Council's complaint system if they are dissatisfied with the Council's response. The Council's Audit and Governance Committee receives an annual report on complaints and compliments monitoring.
- 7.0 Take informed and transparent decisions, which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.**
- 7.1 The Council is committed to efficient and effective decision-making and for ensuring that those responsible for decision-making are clearly identifiable to local people and that the decision-makers explain the reasons for their decisions.

- 7.2 In accordance with the statutory requirement, the Council has established an overview and scrutiny function. The Overview and Scrutiny function is a central element of the Council's aims and objectives and a key part of the democratic structure. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meets in public to discuss and make recommendations on the development of policies and to hold the Cabinet and Cabinet Members to account for both their actions and performance.
- 7.3 The Council's Democratic Services section maintains the up to date Register of Members' Interests on behalf of the Monitoring Officer and also ensures that Members are reminded at least annually to update their record. Declarations of Interest are a standard agenda item for each main Committee meeting. The requirement for staff to declare interests is included in the Officers' Code of Conduct – Council Constitution Part 5, Codes and Protocols.
- 7.4 Risk Management is essentially about good management practice and effective decision making. It can be defined as:
- 'A logical and systematic method of establishing the context, identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating monitoring and communicating risks associated with any activity, function or process in a way that will enable organisations to minimise losses and maximise opportunities'.
- 7.5 The Council recognises that all aspects of business risk must be managed. The Council has a Risk Management Strategy, the purpose of which is to provide a framework for the effective management of risks within the authority. The Strategy was last reviewed in March 2012, and is due to be reviewed again in October 2014 . It contains the objectives of the strategy, linked to the Council's key aims, and guidance on the risk management cycle and scoring of risks.
- 7.6 The Senior Management Team and the Leader and Cabinet are responsible for reviewing the Council's Strategic Risk Register. Since January 2013, the Strategic Risk Register has become a standard agenda item for the joint monthly meetings between SMT and Senior Managers to ensure any risks associated with the Council's aims and objectives have been identified and are being managed . A review of the Strategic Risk Register was also undertaken by the Leader of the Council in April 2014.
- 7.7 The Council has established an Audit and Governance Committee. The Terms of Reference for this Committee were revised during the year as a result of the revised guidance issued by CIPFA entitled "Audit Committees – practical guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2013 Edition. .
- 7.8 The Head of Legal and Policy Development & Monitoring Officer identifies any forthcoming relevant legislation and, together with the relevant Director, is responsible for ensuring that the Cabinet is appraised of the implications and what action the Council may need to take.

7.9 The Council has an agreed Whistleblowing policy under which members of staff may raise any concerns. Following a recommendation by the Audit & Governance Committee, a review of the Whistleblowing policy was undertaken in June 2013.

8.0 Develop the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.

8.1 The Council has the Investor in People (IIP) award, which is a national standard that sets a level of good practice for the training and development of people to achieve business goals.

8.2 Access to Member Development is a key element of the Local Code of Corporate Governance. From the Annual Council meeting in May 2012, the Constitutional and Electoral Working Group became responsible for reviewing, developing and setting the Council's Member development programme. An ongoing programme of Member development was agreed by the Group on 12 March 2013. Member training in 2013/14 included the following:

- A 'Know Your Service' Day held on 25 October 2013
- Various seminars and briefings on the Joint Core Strategy
- Risk Management Workshop
- Social Media Training

8.3 In total 13 training courses were provided by the Council in 2013/14, including refresher training for Planning and Licensing. Attendance at training sessions is variable, with some sessions being cancelled due to lack of interest. Higher attendance levels remain desirable.

9.0 Engage with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

9.1 Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings are open to the public with agendas and minutes being publicly available. Members of the public are able to ask questions at such meetings and, with effect from 27 March 2014, the Council has decided to allow the public to record its public meetings. A protocol setting out the Council's rules on recording has been adopted and is contained in the Council's Constitution.

9.2 The Council publishes a leaflet with its Council Tax demands which summarises financial performance and, at the end of each financial year, publishes its Statement of Accounts. A comprehensive annual budget consultation process is also undertaken with residents, voluntary sector groups and local businesses.

9.3 The Council has agreed and published a petitions scheme which details guidance and procedures for the way in which it deals with petitions from members of the public which may include a debate at Council or the matter being considered by the Cabinet, appropriate Committee, or a Forum.

9.4 In order to increase transparency and accountability in local government, central government introduced a legal requirement for councils to report upon the remuneration of senior employees. This information was published as part of its annual accounts. The Council's comprehensive Pay Policy Statement for 2013-14 was also approved by full Council on 20th May 2013 .

- 9.5 The Council has a strong track record of partnership working with the public, private and voluntary sectors. It has established: an arms length management organisation, Gloucester City Homes (GCH), to manage, maintain and improve the council housing stock, a charitable trust, Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust, to manage its leisure services, a separate legal entity, Marketing Gloucester Ltd, to promote the City, and, has entered into two strategic partnership contracts with the private sector for the provision of Streetcare services (street cleansing, waste collection, grounds maintenance and public conveniences), and the delivery of Revenues and Benefits services. In May 2014, the Council entered into a further partnership contract with Civica for the provision of IT services.
- 9.6 Monitoring arrangements for the major partnerships are delivered through a combination of client/contractor meetings, the Senior Management Team and members (Cabinet and/or Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

10.0 Review of effectiveness

- 10.1 Gloucester City 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 senior management team within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the annual report of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Manager , and also by reports issued by the Council's external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- 10.2 The process that has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework are as follows:-

11.0 The Council

- 11.1 The Council has adopted a Constitution that controls how the Council is structured and the decision-making procedure laid out in the Constitution details the procedures designed to support open and accountable decision-making. During 2013/14, a number of further changes to the Constitution were made, and agreed by Council, to ensure it remained up to date. A copy of the Constitution can be found on the Council's website at www.gloucester.gov.uk.

12.0 The Cabinet

- 12.1 The Council determines the budgetary and policy framework. The principal decision-making body is the Cabinet (Executive). The Cabinet took all Key Decisions in 2013/14 . Key Decisions are subject to pre-scrutiny by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 12.2 The key statutory document that sets the agenda for a rolling programme of future key decisions is the Forward Plan; hence this is a critical factor in the Council's overall decision- making process.
- 12.3 Executive decisions taken by Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members are published and may be subject to a call-in process for examination by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

13.0 The Audit and Governance Committee

- 13.1 Good corporate governance requires independent, effective assurance about both the adequacy of corporate, operational and financial management and reporting, and the management of other processes required to achieve the organisation's corporate and service objectives. Effective audit committees help raise the profile of internal control, risk management and financial reporting issues within an organisation, as well as providing a forum for the discussion of issues raised by internal and external auditors.
- 13.2 The Terms of Reference for the audit and governance elements of the Audit and Governance Committee cover the core functions of an audit committee as identified in the CIPFA guidance 'Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities, and revised during the year to reflect the CIPFA guidance (2013 Edition) entitled 'Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for local Authorities and Police . . .
- 13.3 The Council's committee, whose role is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted Members, is the Audit and Governance Committee. A review of the operation of the Council's standards arrangements was considered by the Audit and Governance Committee on 24th June 2013.

14.0 Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 14.1 As part of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements, it was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would 'provide and co-ordinate the input to an annual report to Full Council on such issues or topics as the Committee saw fit'. The Annual Report setting out the work and achievements of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function during 2012/13 was reported to Council on 18th July 2013.
- 14.2 The Committee used an annual work programme to manage the business of the Committee during 2013/14 and there was an agreed programme of reviews to be carried out by Task & Finish Groups, with regular reporting on progress being made to the full Committee.

15.0 Internal Audit

- 15.1 Internal Audit is a legislative requirement of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011. This requires the authority to undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control.
- 15.2 Gloucester City Council (GCC) and Stroud District Council (SDC) have formed the Gloucestershire Audit & Assurance Partnership (**G A A P**) in order to deliver a professional, cost effective, efficient internal audit function to the partner organisations. The provision of the Internal Audit Service is by a team consisting of

6 staff; 3 based at GCC and 3 based at SDC. In addition, the team is managed by the Head of Partnership, who is the GCC Audit, Risk & Assurance Manager.

- 15.3 The 2011 Accounts and Audit Regulations also require the authority to review the effectiveness of its internal audit function at least once a year, and that the findings of this review should be included in the Annual Governance Statement.
- 15.4 This review consisted mainly of a self-assessment against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, and the results were reviewed by the Council's Corporate Director of Resources, and will be reported to the Council's Audit & Governance Committee in June 2014 . The overall conclusion from the review was that internal audit at GCC is effective. Although the self-assessment identified a number of 'gaps' in compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards , these do not materially effect the reliance the Council can place on the Audit, Risk & Assurance Manager's opinion on the adequacy of the control environment.
- 15.5 Internal Audit work is carried out to the standards outlined in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards' (the Code). The Code requires the Head of Internal Audit to 'provide a written report to those charged with governance timed to support the Annual Governance Statement'. The 2013-14 report by the Audit, Risk & Assurance Manager concludes:-

"My overall opinion is that a satisfactory level of assurance can be given that there is generally a sound system of internal control, designed to meet the Council's objectives, and that controls are generally being applied consistently."

16. 0 External Audit and Other Review/Assurance mechanisms

External Audit

- 16.1 External Audit is part of the process of accountability for public money. It makes an important contribution to the stewardship of public resources and the corporate governance of public services. The scope of External Audit work covers not only the audit of financial statements but also aspects of corporate governance.
- 16.2 In September 2013, the Council's external auditor produced their 'Report to those charged with governance (ISA 260) relating to the 2012/13 audit of the council's financial statements. The headlines from the ISA 260 report were that:-
- The auditors anticipate issuing an unqualified audit opinion by the 30 September 2013. NB This was subsequently issued.
 - The audit identified a total of four significant audit adjustments, all of which were adjusted by the Authority
 - Record keeping relating to fixed assets remain an area of concern
 - The auditors noted an improvement in the quality of the accounts and the supporting working papers
 - The Authority's organisation and IT control environment is effective overall
 - The auditors concluded that the Authority had made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

16.3 In relation to 'audit matters of governance interest that arise from the audit of the financial statements' the report concluded "There are no other matters which we wish to draw your attention in addition to those highlighted in this report and our previous reports relating to the audit of the Authority's 2012/13 financial statements".

Corporate Peer Challenge

16.4 There were a number of positive outcomes identified in the Corporate Peer Challenge Report, following the review that was carried out in December 2013. These were:-

- "There has been a huge amount of regeneration and development activity in Gloucester over recent years and the council can be proud of what has been achieved in this regard"
- "There is good cross-party working politically and mutual respect between elected members"
- "Council staff are committed and conscientious and clearly want to do their best for Gloucester and the council"
- "The Council is valued by external partners and it is seen as good to work with"
- "The Council has dealt successfully with the financial challenges to date"

16.5 The report also referred to "a very difficult and challenging situation in late 2012" and the need to now move things forward. The following key areas have been identified as being important :-

- Elected members and officers at all levels need to better understand their respective roles and responsibilities and adhere to them. The senior political and managerial leadership need to lead the way on this
- The leader and Chief Executive need to continue to be willing to invest the time and effort to re-build relations and adapt their style and approaches. They also need to take the lead in fostering the leadership style and approach that is desired across the council.
- The senior political and management leadership of the council needs to improve the dialogue between them and the wider organisation.

16.6 As a result of the report findings, an Action Plan has been produced detailing proposed actions to implement the findings from the report.

Director of Resources and Head of Finance Statement (Former and Current S151 Officers)

16.7 To comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, a specific statement is required to be reported in the Annual Governance Statement on whether the authority's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010) to ensure an effective system of internal control is maintained and operated in connection with the resources concerned. The Director of Resources and Head of Financial Services, have confirmed that the authority's financial management arrangements conform with the CIPFA Statement, and have also made the following comments in paragraphs 17.7 to 17.13, below:

16.8 The system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information, financial regulations, administrative procedures (including segregation of duties), management supervision, and a system of delegation and accountability. Development and maintenance of the system is undertaken by managers within the council. In particular, the system includes:

- Budget systems
- Reviews of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts;
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance
- The preparation of financial reports which indicate actual expenditure against the forecasts;
- Capital expenditure arrangements and project management disciplines.

16.9 The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control is informed by:

- The work of managers within the Council
- The work of internal auditors as described above, and
- The external auditors in their annual audit letter and other reports

The system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period.

16.10 The arrangements for internal audit are as set out in the Annual Governance Statement (paragraph 16) and we are satisfied that they operate to a defined standard. A review of the effectiveness of internal audit has been undertaken and reported to the Audit Committee. The Head of Internal Audit has also provided an independent opinion in his annual report stating that he is satisfied the council has an adequate control environment in place.

16.11 The work of both Internal and External Audit has further confirmed our view, endorsed by SMT and the Corporate Governance Group, that following implementation of the Financial Services Improvement Plan, it is now essential that as next steps, that ongoing ownership and accountability for financial management are embedded across the Council.

16.12 Significant improvements have been implemented as part of the financial services improvement plan. The Council has completed its financial statements for the last two consecutive financial years earlier than ever before in the life of the council. The challenge has been to make these changes sustainable - and over the last 12 months, the Financial Services team has been restructured and 3 Senior Accounting posts have been appointed to, with the necessary skills to deliver a professional accounting service on an ongoing basis. This has ensured both short term and long term service resilience.

16.13 Risk Management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled, and is a key element of the governance framework. Ongoing reviews of the strategic risk register has been undertaken throughout the year to ensure any

risks associated with the achievement of the Council's aims and objectives in the corporate strategy 'Transforming Your City' have been identified. Regular reviews of service plans and risk registers and the Strategic Risk Register are carried out by SMT supported by the Officer Risk Champion.

Other sources of Assurance

17.13 A further source of assurance has been obtained from the use of Management Assurance Statements. These Statements have been issued to all Directors and Group Managers, and they have been requested to complete, and to identify any significant internal control issues within their portfolio. There were no significant control issues identified.

18.0 Significant governance issues

18.1 We have been advised of the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Corporate Governance Group. A plan to ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place and key actions identified is appended to this statement.

18.2 We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed

Paul James
Leader of the Council

Peter Gillett
Director of Resources

Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2014-15

| No. | Core Principle | Governance issue | Responsible Officer | Action Required |
|-----|--|--|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Promote values for the authority and demonstrate the values of good governance through the upholding of high standards of conduct and behaviour. | | | |
| 2 | Take informed and transparent decisions, which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk. | An external review of the Governance arrangements of Gloucestershire Airport Ltd, jointly commissioned by Gloucester City and Cheltenham Borough Councils. Whilst the report is not yet finalised, it will make recommendations for ongoing improvements to both governance and operations at the airport. | AH/JT/SM | To implement the recommendations made by York Aviation, through a report to Cabinet and Full Council in July 2014. |
| 3 | Develop the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective. | Key areas identified from the Corporate Peer Challenge Report | SMT | See below |
| | External Audit and Other Review/Assurance mechanisms | Key areas identified from the Corporate Peer Challenge Report | SMT | <p>A comprehensive action plan to address each of the key recommendations arising from the peer challenge is being produced a draft of which was discussed with political Group Leaders on 16th June 2014.</p> <p>This approach to producing and monitoring the action plan is an inclusive one – and has been informed</p> |

| No. | Core Principle | Governance issue | Responsible Officer | Action Required |
|-----|----------------|------------------|---------------------|---|
| | | | | <p>by staff involvement and feedback, which was completed in May 2014. In addition, following the Group leaders meeting on 16th June, all City Council members have also been given the opportunity to contribute to this process, with a timescale of 30th June.</p> <p>The action plan when finalised with member comments will be closely monitored throughout the year.</p> |