
MANAGERS' ASSURANCE STATEMENTS

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To report outcomes from the completed 2014/15 Managers' Assurance Statements (MAS).

Summary

2. The report emphasises that MAS are a key element of the Council's corporate governance arrangements and based on the 2014/15 returns concludes that generally an overall positive position was identified. In addition to recognition of the corporate requirement to review the Council's Equalities Scheme and roll out appropriate training the common themes highlighted were a continuation from the previous year in the need to continue to advance delivery of Heads of Service Information Governance Toolkit Action Plans, to test Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) for identified priority services and to refresh/complete inventories. These matters are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during 2015/16.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that the contents of the report be noted.

Reason

4. The recommendation is supported to provide the Audit Committee with evidence to reflect on the Council's governance arrangements.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources

Background Papers

Managers' Assurance Statements 2014/15

Brian James: Extension 5408

S17 Crime and Disorder	The MAS includes reference to the need for staff to be aware of and understand the requirements of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption arrangements.
Health and Well Being	There is no specific health and well being impact.
Carbon Impact	There is no specific carbon impact.
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not affect the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	There is no specific relevance to the strategy beyond a reflection on the Council's governance arrangements.
Efficiency	There is no specific efficiency impact.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. Annual MAS are a key element of the Council's corporate governance arrangements and an integral part of the framework that supports the production of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).
6. MAS have been formally completed for a number of years and this Committee has previously received reports on the outcomes that depicted a largely positive position.
7. The MAS takes the form of a standard template covering the key aspects of the Council's internal control environment on which assurance is required. This coverage is wide ranging and includes risk and financial management, health and safety, information governance and HR arrangements etc. In providing this assurance the MAS also states that *'the system of internal controls is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness'*.
8. The outcomes from the MAS are considered by the AGS Management Group for significant issues that merit reference in the AGS.
9. Statements have been completed by all Assistant Directors, endorsed by the appropriate Director, covering their areas of responsibility in 2014/15. They are published on the intranet at:
<http://intranet/Resources/Finance/corpgov/ags/managersassurancestatements.htm>

10. The 2014/15 MAS acknowledged the corporate requirement to review the Council's Equalities Scheme and roll out appropriate training. Moreover, the common themes highlighted were a continuation from the previous year in the need to continue to advance delivery of Heads of Service Information Governance Toolkit Action Plans, to test BCPs for identified priority service areas and to refresh/complete inventories. These matters are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during 2015/16.
11. Other matters raised in the 2014/15 MAS concerned more specific operational issues to be addressed in certain areas related to changes in duties and responsibilities.

Conclusion

12. Generally the review of the 2014/15 MAS has identified an overall positive position. The common themes highlighted in paragraph 10 are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during the 2015/16 financial year.

Outcome of Consultation

13. There was no formal consultation undertaken in production of this report.