

**AUDIT COMMITTEE  
16 SEPTEMBER 2020**

ITEM NO. ....

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**MANAGERS' ASSURANCE STATEMENTS**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To report outcomes from the completed 2019/20 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 2019/20 returns concludes that a thorough review has been undertaken and generally an overall positive position was identified. While there were no common improvement themes highlighted in the 2019/20 MAS a number of service specific issues were. These matters are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during 2020/21.

**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  
Managing Director**

**Background Papers**

Managers' Assurance Statements 2019/20

Lee Downey: Extension 5451

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| 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 and Climate Change                 | There are no specific recommendations contained within the attached reports concerning Carbon Reduction.   |
| 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.  |
| Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers | There are no specific recommendations contained within the attached reports concerning Looked After Children and Care Leavers.                           |

## 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. 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. Statements have been completed by all Assistant Directors, endorsed by the appropriate Director, covering their areas of responsibility in 2019/20. They are published on the intranet at:

<https://intranet.darlington.gov.uk/services-search/legal-services/corporate-governance/annual-governance-statement/managers-annual-assurance-statements/>

9. There were no common improvement themes highlighted by the 2019/20 MAS.
10. Service specific issues identified included:

#### *Adult Social Care*

- Maintenance of Sound governance structure in respect of Adult Social Care which incorporates all service areas and key work projects in order to identify, evaluate (with regard to mitigating controls), prioritise, allocate, record, manage and report on key areas of risk.
- Business Continuity will be understood and owned by all managers within the service.
- Managers fully understanding the performance management framework and being accountable for oversight of this.
- Robust arrangements will be in place to ensure compliance with financial procedural rules.

#### *Commissioning Performance and Transformation*

- Business Continuity Plan to be reviewed in October 2020 to incorporate systemwide winter planning.

#### *Community Services*

- Ensuring inventories are up to date by March 2021.

### *Economic Growth*

- Improvements to performance management systems being implemented through new ICT.
- Robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms to be developed alongside Local Plan submission.
- Review training needs in relation to financial procedures.

### *Education*

- Further development of information management procedures in SEN service being undertaken in future state procedures work.

### *Housing and Building Services*

- Continue to work with the Civil Contingencies Team to review Business Continuity Plans as appropriate.
- Procedural notes/manuals that reflect the Health and Safety Policy to be reviewed at every team meeting and compliance meeting.

### *Resources*

- Business Continuity Plans to be reviewed with particular reference to any changes from COVID-19 learning.
- All staff to attend the new mandatory equalities training.

### *Transport & Capital Projects*

- Review and Test Business Continuity Plan (BCP).
- Review/refresh Performance Management Information.
- Ensure inventories are updated.
- Refresh knowledge around role/responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer.
- Review Health and Safety arrangements/develop action plan.
- Review Information Asset Register/Privacy Notices.

These matters are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during 2020/21.

## **Conclusion**

11. Generally the review of the 2019/20 MAS has identified an overall positive position. All of the identified improvement themes are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during the 2020/21 financial year.

## **Outcome of Consultation**

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