

**AUDIT COMMITTEE
20 JULY 2022**

MANAGERS' ASSURANCE STATEMENTS

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To report outcomes from the completed 2021/22 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 2021/22 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 2021/22 MAS, a number of improvements to process/controls were identified. These matters are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during 2022/23.

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.

**Elizabeth Davison
Group Director of Operations**

Background Papers

- (i) Managers' Assurance Statements 2021/22

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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. |
| Council Plan | Maintaining a system of sound internal controls and risk management processes will help contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan Objectives |
| 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 or Heads of Service and endorsed by the appropriate Director, covering their areas of responsibility in 2021/22. They are published on the [intranet](#) and are available on request.
9. There were no common improvement themes highlighted by the 2021/22 MAS.
10. A number of improvements to process/controls were identified, including in some cases where the Assistant Director was already able to provide assurance in relation to a particular issue. Examples include:

Adult Social Care:

- (a) Ensure all managers including those new to the service have attended the appropriate training in relation to the Council's risk management methodology.
- (b) Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is in place, tested and reviewed as appropriate by Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- (c) Performance meetings are in place, with monthly reports to Assistant Director and SLT.
- (d) Monthly budget meetings are in place with Team Managers and SLT.
- (e) SLT to ensure all staff undertaken the equalities training.
- (f) Improved analysis of findings and learning from complaints.

Community Services:

- (a) Need to ensure inventories are complete for all areas by December 2022.

Education:

- (a) Information Management - New Education Management System (Liquid Logic) purchased 2022.

Housing and Revenues:

- (a) Reviews of Health and Safety risk assessments due in 2022-23

Human Resources and Health and Safety:

- (a) Risk Management, added to monthly HR & H&S SLT meetings.
- (b) BCP - Annual review and testing of all plans completed in April 2021, Next HR formal review due January 2023.
- (c) Inventories to be updated following the start of the Agile Pilot.
- (d) Corruption and Fraud information sent to team as a reminder and for new staff in July 22.

Strategy Performance and Communications:

- (a) Risk management is now a standing item on the management meeting agenda.
- (b) Complete testing of 2 remaining Business Continuity Plans.
- (c) Given staff changes and further issuing of equipment, another inventory is required in 2022-23.

Transport and Capital Projects:

- (a) New PMF systems and Performance clinic being developed in parallel with development of new Corporate Plan & Service Plans.
- (b) Health and Safety - Review CDM arrangements & Implement Continuous Improvement Plan.

11. Those improvements to process/controls which require further work are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during 2022/23.

Conclusion

12. Generally the review of the 2021/22 MAS has identified an overall positive position.
13. Those improvements to process/controls which require further work are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during 2022/23.

Outcome of Consultation

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