

AUDIT COMMITTEE
31 JULY 2019

ITEM NO.

MANAGERS' ASSURANCE STATEMENTS

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To report outcomes from the completed 2018/19 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 2018/19 returns concludes that generally an overall positive position was identified. While there were no common improvement themes highlighted in the 2018/19 other matters raised included ensuring inventories are up to date, robust information management arrangements are in place and ensuring officers are fully aware of risk and financial management processes and the role and responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer. These matters are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during 2019/20.

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 2018/19

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. Statements have been completed by all Assistant Directors, endorsed by the appropriate Director, covering their areas of responsibility in 2018/19. They are published on the intranet at:

<http://intranet.darlington.gov.uk/services-search/financial-services/corporate-governance/annual-governance-statement/managers-annual-assurance-statements/>
9. Having implemented the common improvement theme identified in the 2017/18 MAS i.e. the need to review and test Business Continuity Plans for identified priority service areas, there were no common improvement themes highlighted by the 2018/19 MAS.

10. Other matters raised included ensuring inventories are up to date, robust information management arrangements are in place and ensuring officers are fully aware of risk and financial management processes and the role and responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer. These matters are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during 2019/20.

Conclusion

11. Generally the review of the 2018/19 MAS has identified an overall positive position. All of the identified improvement themes are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during the 2019/20 financial year.

Outcome of Consultation

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