



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 29th April 2021

To the Chair and Members of the Audit Committee

2020-21 DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Ros Jones	N/a	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. An annual review of the Council's governance arrangements and the subsequent preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) are statutory requirements by virtue of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015.
2. The council's governance arrangements in place during 2020-21 have been reviewed and an Annual Governance Statement has been drafted which shows our governance compliance.
3. We acknowledge that 2020-21 has been a year of new challenges and opportunities as a result of the COVID 19 Pandemic. Despite this all heads of service have shown continued commitment to evidencing that good governance is in place, by completing their self-assessments in a timely and accurate manner. The draft AGS document (Appendix A) shows the following:
 - **3** key areas of improvement have been completed or have been effectively managed to the extent that they were no longer significant. (Page 13)
 - **5** new significant issues arising from the 2020-21 review of effectiveness of the corporate governance arrangements and including the (Pages 5-8)
 - Updates on the **4** key areas identified during previous years that remain an issue in 2020-21 (Pages 9-11).
4. This gives us a total of 9 key areas of focus for 2020-21. This is a slight increase on last year, which is a result of the challenges that have impacted on some statutory service delivery and the continued financial demands of the pandemic.
5. Please note that this document is the draft AGS and some of the key actions to mitigate the weaknesses identified for 2020-21 will be reviewed; and may be improved upon before the production of the final AGS, which is

anticipated to be presented in September 2021 to reflect the final position.

EXEMPT REPORT

6. Not Applicable

RECOMMENDATIONS

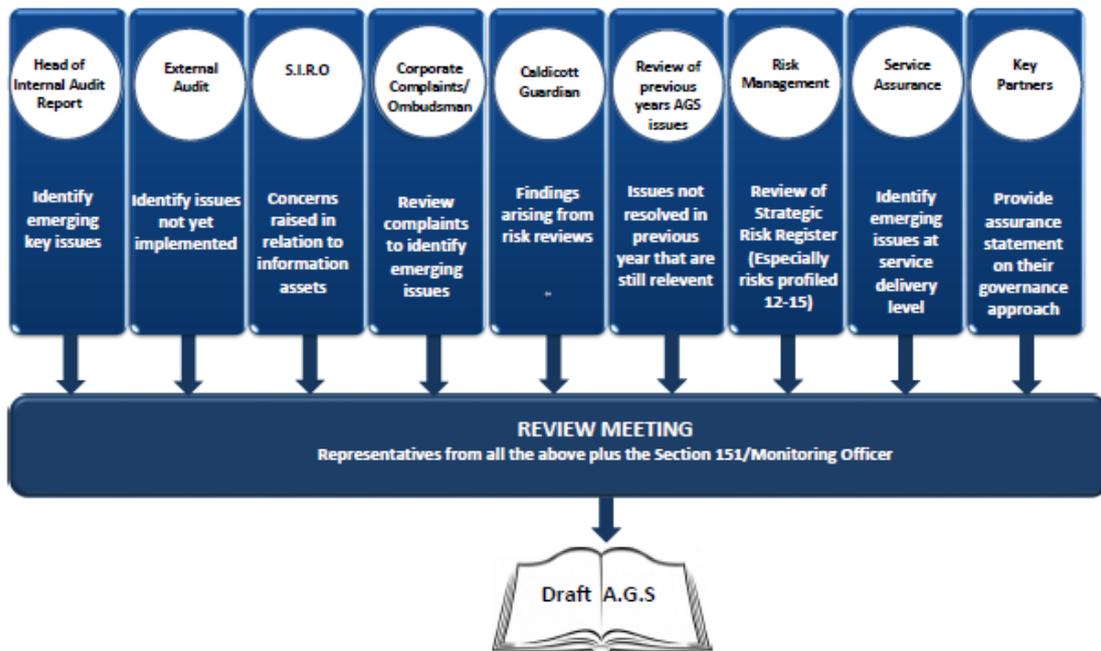
7. The Chair and Members of the Audit Committee are asked to the review and endorse the outline of the draft Annual Governance Statement:
 - prior to being published for consultation as part of the Draft Accounts in July 2021

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

8. By ensuring that there is good governance and a sound system of internal controls in place the Council will be able to provide the citizens of Doncaster with services that are provided in accordance with the law and proper standards. It will also ensure that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

BACKGROUND

9. The Council is required to prepare, approve and publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations and professional accounting practice. The Council must ensure that there is good governance and a sound system of internal controls in place.
10. Our simplified process amalgamate a top down and bottom up approach, whilst still maintaining confidence in the process. This process was followed again this year and has helped sustain our continued commitment to embedding good governance and processes across the Council. Issues identified that make it onto the AGS are reviewed and updated as part of the quarterly resource management cycle and any items that start to be a concern are elevated to the Governance Group. This allows the Council to react to emerging issues and possibly prevent entry onto a future AGS.
11. Pentana continues to be used to record compliance and/or areas for development and to provide updates for the quarterly Resource Management process
12. A review meeting considers relevant information from a diverse range of internal and external sources, as identified in the diagram below. This meeting facilitates the top down bottom up approach that will produce the 2020-21 Annual Governance Statement from the emerging issues. This year, to strengthen this approach we have consulted with our key partners (Doncaster Culture Leisure Trust, Doncaster Children's Services Trust and St Leger Homes Doncaster) seeking assurance from their own organisation's governance approaches.



13. The production of the AGS has been aligned with the production of the Head of Internal Audit report to allow them both to be considered at the same Audit Committee meeting.

14. The AGS document is a valuable means of communication. It enables the Council to explain its governance arrangements and how the controls it has in place manage risks of failure in delivering its outcomes.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

15. Not Applicable

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

16. Not Applicable

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

17.

	Outcomes	Implications
	Connected Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	The Annual Governance Statement enables the Council to ensure that there is good governance and a sound system of internal controls in place

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

18. The production of an Annual Governance Statement is a statutory requirement. The key risk is that failure to produce a statement to meet this requirement would result in an adverse audit report by the Council's external auditor and damage the Council's reputation. The original risk profile is 16 but by producing the Annual Governance Statement and addressing key corporate issues the risk profile is reduced to 8.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials SRF Date 24/03/21]

19. The production and publication of an Annual Governance Statement is a statutory requirement by virtue of Regulation 6(1)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, following a review of the Council's effectiveness of internal controls in terms of the exercise of its functions, financial and operational management and management of risk. The 2015 Regulations and the Council's Constitution also require the findings of that review to be considered by the Audit Committee.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials MS Date 30/03/21]

20. There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. The individual elements in the AGS will be subject to specific reporting as required.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials RH Date 27/03/21]

21. There are no specific human resources implications resulting from this statement. The organisational workforce requirements are addressed through work with directorates in relation to the workforce strategy.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials PW Date 23/03/21]

22. There are no specific technology implications arising from this report. As outlined in the draft AGS, there is a heightened risk globally of cyber-attacks together with successful attacks on some other authorities. Although Digital & ICT have robust arrangements in place and are implementing further technologies to mitigate the risks as far as possible, it is crucial that the actions outlined under 'Cyber Attack Business Continuity (Principle F) are progressed to ensure that every service area across the Council and Partners have considered the critical impact this would have on their ability to deliver services and how they would operate without technology.

23. The DIPS programme continues to progress well with the major milestone of the Adult Social Care, Residential Financials & Mosaic Portal going live as planned on 22nd March 2021. The remaining deliverables and timescales are outlined under 'Doncaster Integrated People Solution (DIP's) (Principle D)' and quarterly updates will continue to be provided via Pentana.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials RS Date 24/03/2021]

24. Whilst there are no immediate health implications from the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) effective governance of civil institutions is a key prerequisite for Health and Wellbeing. Decision makers should consider the extent to which the AGS provides this assurance.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials SWr Date 11/03/2021]

25. In line with the corporate approach for compliance against the equality act 2011 due regard must be shown across all activity within the council. As the Annual Governance Statement draws together a diverse range of activities at a strategic level a due regard statement is not required. All the individual

components that make-up the Annual Governance Statement may require a due regard statement to be completed and reported as and when appropriate.

CONSULTATION

26. Throughout this process consultation is undertaken with Heads of service, Directors, as well as assurance from key areas of governance and our Key partners, which supports the production of the final Annual Governance Statement.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

27. CIPFA/ SOLACE delivering good governance in Local Government Framework
Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015.
Local Code of Corporate Governance 2020-21
2019-20 Annual Governance Statement
Annual Report of the Head of Internal Audit 2019-20

REPORT AUTHORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

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Debbie Hogg
Director of Corporate Resources



Doncaster
Council

Draft
**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE
STATEMENT
2020/21**



Introduction

2020-21 was a challenging year for our services as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted across the council. Throughout this time our governance arrangements have held strong and allowed us to be both flexible and confident with responding to emerging priorities, changes to service delivery and timely decision making. We continue to follow CIPFA guidance incorporating the recently published updates for the production of the Annual Governance Statement during the pandemic.

Scope of responsibility

Doncaster Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. We also have 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.

In discharging this overall responsibility, we are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Doncaster 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 Doncaster Council's Corporate Code of Governance is on our website at www.doncaster.gov.uk or can be obtained from The Policy, Insight and Change Team, 01302 862533

Doncaster Council has considered its position in relation to the CIPFA Financial Management (FM) Code. A key goal of the FM Code is to improve the financial resilience of organisations by embedding enhanced standards of financial management. Inevitably, the impact of Covid-19 has tested that financial resilience in 2020/21 and will continue to do so in coming years. Understanding the pressures on local government, CIPFA has concluded that while the first full year of compliance can remain as 2021/2022, it can do so within a more flexible framework where a proportionate approach is encouraged. In accordance with these flexibilities, during 2021/22 Doncaster Council will undertake an assessment of compliance with the principles of the FM code and any outstanding matters or areas for improvement will be incorporated into this statement, prior to final approval.

This statement explains how we have complied with the code and also meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, regulation 6 (b), which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

The purpose of the governance framework

The governance framework comprises of systems and processes, culture and values by which we are directed and controlled and our activities through which we account to, engage with and lead our communities. It enables us to monitor the achievements of our strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led us to deliver appropriate services that are value for money.

The system of internal control is a significant part of our 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. Our system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of our policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

Whilst the AGS consider the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, it must also reflect any significant events or developments relating to the governance system that occur between the year-end and the date on which the Statement of Accounts are signed off which, is not currently anticipated until September 2021.

Our Governance Framework

The Council's executive arrangements and the oversight of the council's functions ensures strong political and strategic leadership. We have a clearly visible golden thread linking our Borough Strategy priorities into our corporate and services plans as well as our performance development review process. Where necessary induction arrangements include tailored introductions to the council's structure, decision making arrangements for officers who are new to the council or the Senior Leadership Team as well as information on key policies and procedures.

Audit Committee

Our Audit Committee is a key component of Doncaster Council's Corporate Governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.

The purpose of our Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance to the Members on the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides an independent review of Doncaster Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

The Committee has a programme of work in place to ensure it fulfils its responsibilities. The Committee has overseen and supported positive progress in a number of areas during the year, including:

- Helping to maintain and improve the Council's system of risk, governance and control by reviewing internal and external audit work carried out during the year;
- Supporting improvement in the Council's control arrangements by ensuring appropriate action is taken to implement management actions arising from audit recommendations and calling officers to account where explanations over any lack of progress are required;
- Critically assessing the Council's governance arrangements and supporting the production of an Annual Governance Statement;
- Supporting the maintenance of the good standards achieved in producing the Council's Statement of Accounts;
- Supporting the Council's antifraud, bribery and corruption arrangements and noting progress in this area as set out in the annual fraud report, this was

especially important this year with the heightened risk of fraud due to the pandemic;

- Ensuring the Council's surveillance policies are kept up to date and reviewing surveillance carried out by the Council;
- The last year has been unprecedented due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. The committee has actively engaged with the Head of Internal Audit and other officers during this period to understand the nature and depth of challenges relevant to the committee.

The Audit Committee produces an Annual Report which is available [doncaster.gov.uk](https://www.doncaster.gov.uk)

Governance Group

The Group which is chaired by the Monitoring Officer leads on the development of governance arrangements at the Council and ensures the Council complies with best practice guidance issued by CIPFA / SOLACE and any other sector-leading advice.

Role of Internal and External Audit

The council has both internal and external auditors. Internal Audit and External Audit aim to coordinate their work to get best value from the resources in use and to do this, aim to work closely together to achieve our objectives.

The role of Internal Audit is to:

- give independent assurance over the Council's risk, governance and control arrangements
- alert managers to areas of potential weakness and to agree management actions for improvements
- give unbiased professional advice on policies, procedures, practices and systems

All councils are subject to ongoing scrutiny by External Audit and their role is to:

- give an opinion on the Council and group's financial statements
- assess the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (the value for money conclusion)
- audit specified grant claims required for various Government Departments

Grant Thornton were appointed as External Auditors to the Council for the 2018-19 audit onwards and in their second annual report, presented to Audit Committee in October 2020 they gave an "unqualified audit opinion" on the Council's financial statements for 2019-20 and an unqualified Value for Money (VFM) conclusion for 2019-20. This is consistent with the opinions provided in previous years. Internal Audit were able to provide a positive opinion in their annual report for 2020-21, which alongside the good VFM conclusion, indicates there are sound risk, governance and control arrangements in place.

These positive opinions are especially important during the current coronavirus pandemic and provide reassurance during a period where these arrangements have been subject to considerable "stress-tests"

Overall, the Grant Thornton annual report was an extremely positive one as it has been in previous years and with the "unqualified audit opinion", recognising the further improvements that have been made by the Council in preparing the Statement of Accounts for audit. The quality of the working papers and the supporting information has improved year-on-year with the working papers, once again, meeting the standards

specified in the Accounts Audit Protocol with a clear audit trail provided. Responses to audit queries were also provided in a timely manner.

Additionally, both the preparation of accounts and their audit, all had to be carried out virtually which presented its own challenges. Nevertheless, this was all completed within statutory deadlines which was not the case for many other authorities nationally and the work of all parties in achieving this is acknowledged

The 2020/21 audit will commence in July 2021 (date to be confirmed) and Grant Thornton are anticipated to present their annual report to Audit Committee in September 2021.

Our Approach to Risk Management

Doncaster Council recognises that risk management is an integral part of good governance and management practice.

Managing our risks effectively contributes to the delivery of the strategic and operational objectives of the authority. Doncaster Council manages risks via a Risk Management Framework that has been designed to provide structure and guidance to support our organisation, and the individuals within it, to take positive risks in an informed way.

Review of effectiveness

Doncaster Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the Effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The Policy Insight and Change team led the Annual Governance review.

The review of effectiveness is derived from two perspective, corporate and service areas. The corporate perspective is taken from existing intelligence proved by colleagues holding a key governance position within the authority including the Head of Internal Audit, the Caldicott Guardian, Senior information Risk Owner, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer. The current strategic risk register and complaints received are also reviewed. The service area perspective, including that of key partner organisations, is provided by each Head of Service via a series of governance statements in the form of a self-assessment and other information provided. The individual statements are reviewed and an overall declaration provided by the relevant Assistant Director, which is then summarised to create a single return for the Director to review and update as required.

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Executive Board and Audit Committee, and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. The areas already addressed and those to be specifically addressed with new actions planned are outlined on the following pages.

As stated earlier, our governance arrangements have held strong and our administration arrangements effective during these unprecedented times. The Council has maintained adherence to our Financial Procedure Rules and Contract Procedure Rules, for example, progressing variations to contacts delivering Adult Services and the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment. On behalf of the Government, the Council has also administered significant additional business rate reliefs and grants to businesses. Including the added complexities of some of the funding being channelled via the Sheffield City Region (SCR) and the discretionary nature of some of the support payments.

The Council's approach has been to undertake proactive checks to verify business credentials before any payments were released. This has had the effect of minimising the Council's fraud exposure, but as with all fraud, it is impossible to stop completely. The report to Audit Committee on 27 January 2021, Preventing and Detecting fraud and error – October 2019 to September 2020, outlined the payment of 5,419 grants with a combined value of £57.9m, covering both government prescribed grants and discretionary grants available during the reporting period. During this period only 22 cases of fraud or error were detected, which represents 0.4% of grants paid out in this respect (by number), amounting to £271k. These schemes remain open and will be for some time, therefore the Council remains alert and continues to manage the associated risks.

The Council's Constitution allows for urgent decisions to be taken and implemented immediately. Such decisions are referred to as Rule 16 Decisions and do not require 28 days advance notice publication on the Forward Plan and may not be called-in by Councillors. The Constitution requires that such decisions may only be taken if the Chair of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee agrees that the decision is urgent. Traditionally such decisions are rarely taken, however the response to the Covid-19 pandemic has led to 34 such decisions being utilised in the past 12 months. Most decision making has been in relation to the acceptance and utilisation of Covid-19 response grants. In all such instances all appropriate scrutiny has been taken (including notifying all Councillors of decisions taken) and the process demonstrates that Council decision making can be agile and responsive to urgent circumstances. A report detailing the annual use of Rule 16 decisions was presented to Council on 1st March 2021

Significant governance issues identified in 2020-21

Whilst we are satisfied with the effectiveness of corporate governance arrangements and systems of internal control, as part of our continued efforts to improve governance the following new issues have been identified for improvement as part of the 2020-21 Annual Governance Statement process:

ISSUE: Food Safety and Trading standards inspection arrangements (Principle D)

There is continued reduction of capacity to complete some areas of statutory work, especially around food safety. This is due to the high level of Covid compliance work being undertaken by Environmental Health Officers, risk around Covid control while undertaking inspections and the issue is further complicated by a national shortage of qualified officers.

We have reported this to The Food Standards Agency (national regulator) so they are aware and supportive of our revised approach, which is similar to that of other local authorities at this time.

The Covid pandemic and reprioritisation of the services' resources has resulted in a significant number of management actions agreed, following an Internal Audit review during 2019 being unable to be implemented during the 2020/21 year.

Actions:

- Undertake another recruitment exercise in the near future.
- In the meantime we will continue with our prioritisation of services and keep all our relevant bodies informed of further progress.

Completion Date:
March 2022

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management actions from the internal audit have been regularly reviewed and addressed when possible alongside any mitigating factors and actions. The majority of these have now been addressed and the remainder have revised dates agreed for their implementation. <p>Responsible Officer: David Coulson - Assistant Director Environment Dan Swaine – Director of Economy and Environment</p>	
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<p>ISSUE: Partnership Recovery & Resilience in relation to DCST (Principle F) The effects from the last twelve months, including floods and Covid, resulting in increased demand and reduced workforce capacity, impacting on quality and performance</p>	
<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Children’s Recovery and Resilience programme has been established and a Board co-commissioned by DMBC and DCST to oversee developments. Additional investment has been provided to support for the programme including DCST capacity for fostering, care proceedings and quality and improvement. Details of the full programme can be found here: https://doncaster.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=131&MId=3485 <p>Responsible Officer: Leanne Hornsby - Assistant Director, Education, Skills, Culture and Heritage Riana Nelson – Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills</p>	<p>Completion Date: March 2022</p>

<p>ISSUE: Cyber Attack Business Continuity (Principle F) Due to the heightened risk globally and successful cyber-attacks on some other authorities despite the technical security measures taken and in place, the Council, DCST and SLHD business preparedness in response to a cyber-attack should be reviewed further to ensure that every service area across the Council and Partners have considered the critical impact this would have on their ability to deliver services and how they would operate without technology.</p>	
<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all existing business continuity plans to ensure how all services would operate successfully without technology is covered. Prepare a ready-made Communication Plan that could be initiated immediately. Have a ready-made organisation/s action plan. Pre-agree what the organisation/s would need to look like as a minimum. Review the prioritised list of business systems by the order the organisation would need them restored. Run a major cyber-attack response and recovery test scenario across the Council and partners to test the service business 	<p>Completion Date: October 2021</p>

ISSUE: Ensuring building safety compliance

The Grenfell disaster galvanised national action to ensure that all buildings area safe. Doncaster was quick off the mark to address fire safety in its high rise properties. But the legacy of the disaster is the enhanced scrutiny and regulatory enforcement on all elements of building safety compliance. In this context St Leger Homes Doncaster needs to ensure it understand the inherent risks relating to the stock it manages, has accurate data, robust systems for managing that data and takes swift action to remedy defects when they arise.

Actions:

St Leger Homes Doncaster will invite external scrutiny of its compliance arrangements, putting in place a ‘health check’ of all compliance functions. We will put in place a new dedicated compliance database to modernise our record keeping and make the management of our data and the activity required to manage it more efficiently. We will ensure that we have the right staff to manage these functions and that all relevant staff have the required training and competencies to undertake their roles. We will also put in place new governance and oversight arrangements to ensure that our Board and the council have confidence in our management of these issues.

Responsible Officer:

Dave Richmond – Chief Executive, St Leger Homes of Doncaster
Dan Swaine – Director of Economy and Environment

Completion

Date:

March 2022

DRAFT

An update on Key Improvement Areas that were previously identified and remain an issue in 2020-21

<p>ISSUE: Governance Functions (Principle E)</p> <p>An improvement area has been identified around knowledge and understanding of various key governance policies and procedures that are in place to help support senior managers with their roles and responsibilities E.g. Financial Procedures Rules and Corporate Procurement Strategy.</p>	
<p>Actions:</p> <p>A training event will be held as part of the Senior Management Meetings for all senior staff (down to Head of service) to attend to improve awareness of key governance policies, procedures and arrangements that are in place to support senior managers</p> <p>Responsible Officer: Scott Fawcus - Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services Debbie Hogg – Director of Corporate Resources</p>	<p>Completion Date: June 2021</p>
<p>ISSUE: Adult Social Care Market Sustainability (Principle D)</p> <p>The potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider failure and associated disruption of care for people of Doncaster • Lack of investment from providers to develop services and innovate together with potential contraction of existing offer • Restricted choice of services and the providers of services for people of Doncaster. • Longer term impact of Covid on Market in terms of reduced occupancy levels 	
<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the market to make informed commercial and service planning decisions in order to stimulate a sustainable, diverse social care market to meet the current and future needs of the people of Doncaster. • Develop and maintain an ongoing awareness of local business environment for providers, providers business models and other intelligence to inform commissioning actions • Ongoing engagement with providers through partnership arrangements, contract management and contract monitoring activity to maintain oversight of the social care market in Doncaster • Market Position Statement is being drafted with key elements relating to Adult Social Care Markets e.g Care Homes and Dom Care etc • Throughout Covid all providers have been RAG rated against risk factors including financial sustainability. This is overseen via the Market Oversight Group which meets monthly to review all high risk provision. • Strategic Care Provision Group which is chaired by DASS and attended by commissioning partners. • Financial Support and additional investment has been delivered to help providers navigate the demands and meet costs throughout 	<p>Completion Date: Key actions are ongoing with timescales in place for Market Position Statement. Review end of Quarter 1 (June 2021).</p>

the pandemic. Responsible Officers: Phil Holmes – Director of Adults, Health & Wellbeing	
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<p>ISSUE: Organisational Workforce (Principle E)</p> <p>Within this context the council needs to ensure it has the right people, with the right skills, working in the right way, within effective roles, programmes and flexible structures. This brings a series of core behaviours and key competencies that are needed to address both capacity and capability issues within the organisation to successfully drive through performance.</p> <p>As an organisation we need to systematically identify and address critical skills gaps now and for the future; retain, develop and deploy resources to ensure services can be delivered to a high standard and are value for money.</p> <p>Specifically focussing on current and emerging recruitment and retention difficulties and skill shortages for appropriately qualified staff in certain occupational groups of social workers, occupational therapists and environmental health officers, which need to be addressed.</p>	
<p>Actions:</p> <p>To be monitored and addressed through priority actions included in this year’s workforce strategy 2021/22, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of a Recruitment and Resourcing Policy, focusing on effective ways of recruiting people with the right skills and behaviours including career pathways and succession planning options • Attracting and engaging a talented workforce including apprenticeship and graduate talent, as well as considering specific recruitment campaign where gaps in workforce arise • Ensuring leadership development, learning and training programmes meet current and future needs <p>Responsible Officer: Jill Parker – Assistant Director - HR, Communications & Executive Office Debbie Hogg – Director of Corporate Resources</p>	<p>Completion Date: March 2022</p>

<p>ISSUE: Doncaster Integrated People Solution (DIP’s) (Principle D)</p> <p>The full implementation of an integrated technology solution for Adult and Children Social Care case management, Early Help, Financial Management, Education Management, integration between key systems and joining up with health and partners is progressing. The programme is progressing well after delays due to the Covid situation and it is hoped further delays are not required. Due to its importance and how it will change these services and ways of working, it is remaining as a key issue to monitor.</p>	
<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and redesign of all business processes. • Implement new Children’s Social Care Management solution for use by the Council, Doncaster Children’s Services Trust and other key partners. • Implement new Adult Social Care Management solution to be used by the Council and key partners. 	<p>Completion Date: November 2021</p>

- Implement new Education Management Solution to be used by the Council and key partners.
- Implement new associated financial solutions.
- Implement all key integrations with other key systems including joining up with health, financials etc.
- Implement Citizen, Professional & Provider Portals
- Migration of all required data from many solutions.
- Train all users of these solutions across partners and providers.
- Decommission all the legacy solutions.
- Education Transport module (Go Live November 2021)

Most of Education Management is now successfully implemented and being used daily across partners and providers to deliver services. Adult Social Care, Residential Financials & Mosaic Portal are due to go live 22nd March 2021, with the Adult non Residential finances and provider portal due late spring / early summer. Children Social Care & Financials are planned to go live in Summer 2021. An additional Education Transport module is hoped to go live in November 2021.

Responsible Officer:

Julie Grant – Assistant Director of Customers, Digital & ICT

Debbie Hogg – Director of Corporate Resources

Statement of Commitment

We have been advised of the implications of the result of the 2020-21 review of the effectiveness of the governance and internal control frameworks by the Audit Committee and of the plans to address identified weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system in place. We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to enhance further the Council's governance and internal control arrangements.

We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and that we will monitor their implementation and operation over the next year and as part of our next annual review of effectiveness.

Signed on behalf of Doncaster Council:

Ros Jones
Mayor of Doncaster

Damian Allen
Chief Executive

Key Areas of Improvement from previous Statements that have been completed

There are a numbers of areas requiring improvement that have been identified in previous statements that have been effectively managed to the extent that they are no longer significant in 2020-21. These are:

- ❖ **Data Quality Arrangements (Principle D)** - The data quality issue has been addressed by a series of interventions aimed at correcting historic problems and improving practice standards. At the end of the data quality improvement project, these practice standards have been mainstreamed into normal service. The risk of poor data quality impacting the planned implementation of the new case management system in social care has been reduced significantly by work undertaken during this project. The expectation is that this improvement will be sustained in future practice, and this issue has been stepped down, but it will continue to be monitored as a business-as-usual activity.
- ❖ **Data Quality Arrangements within the Assistive Technology Service (Principle C)** - The issue identified has been addressed with assurance arrangements considered business as usual and completed daily. 97% complete in issuing new contracts, data cleansing is ongoing to maintain accurate records and appropriate measures are in place to ensure customer safety when querying the service options and potentially cancelling the service.
- ❖ **Assurance over Financial Resilience and Service Sustainability in response to COVID 19 (Principle F)** – Whilst the Council’s governance arrangements appear to have held strong during the COVID-19 response period, our financial position was exposed and dependent upon central government fully reimbursing us for the additional budget pressures. Over the last year we have monitored COVID related cost pressures and income losses alongside our normal monthly monitoring processes. Additional monitoring information has been provided in the quarterly Finance & Performance monitoring reports and completed returns sent to MHCLG on a monthly basis. The quarterly Finance and Performance monitoring report approved budget transfers during the financial year that ensured services had sufficient budgets to meet cost pressures and to reduce income targets. We are continuing to project a balanced budget position for 2020/21 due to careful management of budgets and specific COVID-19 grant funding received.