



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	AUDIT COMMITTEE – 29 SEPTEMBER 2022
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM 15
Subject	ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021/2022
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Joe Harris, Leader of the Council Email: joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive Email: rob.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report presents to the Audit Committee the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the financial year 2021/2022 and action plan for 2022/2023
Annexes	Annex A – Draft Annual Governance Statement 2021/2022 Annex B – Draft Action Plan for 2022/2023
Recommendation(s)	<i>For Members to receive and discuss the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2021/2022 and action plan for 2022/2023</i>
Corporate priorities	All
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A



1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The 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. The Council also has 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.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is 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. As part of that progress the Council has adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance (the Local Code) which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Guidance.
- 1.3 The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) details how the Council has complied with the Local Code and also meets the requirements of Regulation 4(4) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 in relation to the publication of an AGS and, from 1st April 2015 the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of a Statement on Annual Governance.

2. THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

- 2.1 The AGS for the financial year 2021/2022 has been developed, and subsequently reviewed, by the Council's Local Management Team and Publica Directors. It details the Governance Framework and the Review of Effectiveness that has been used to measure the Council's existing governance arrangements and includes improvements which have been identified to strengthen the Governance Framework.
- 2.2 A copy of the draft AGS is attached at Annex A.
- 2.3 The draft version of the AGS for 2021/2022 which forms part of the draft accounts as published on the Councils website is now brought to this Committee for consideration and comment. Amendments will be made where appropriate, and the final version will form part of the audited Statement of Accounts.

3. AGS ACTION PLAN 2022/2023

- 3.1 The AGS for 2021/2022 identified six areas for focused improvement in 2022/2023. These centre around
 - Raising awareness of the contract procedure rules
 - Development of a training programme for members
 - Budget management
 - Risk management training
 - Compliance with audit recommendations
 - Business continuity plan development and testing



3.2 These areas have been developed into an action plan which identifies the specific actions and timescales for their completion. A copy of the action plan is attached to this report at Annex B.

3.3 In addition to the new areas of focus the plan also identifies actions which have been carried forward from the 2021/2022 AGS action plan.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 If the Council's governance arrangements are weak then Council is at risk of failing to safeguard the use of public funds. In turn this would lead to poor external assessments, damaging the reputation of the Council. The areas of focus for the 2022/23 financial year identified in the AGS provide a clear set of priorities for the continual improvement of governance and mitigation of risk.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

7.1 An equalities impact assessment is not required for this report

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no climate or ecological emergency implications arising directly from this report

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

9.1 No alternative options have been identified

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

(END)