



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 25 JULY 2023
Subject	ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND ACTION PLAN
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Joe Harris, Leader of the Council Email: joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Robert Weaver, CEO Email: robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Cheryl Sloan, Business Manager, Governance, Risk & Business Continuity Email: cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report presents the Audit Committee with the new Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan for 2023/24
Annexes	Annex A – Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan 2023/24
Recommendation(s)	<i>That the Audit and Governance Committee review and agree the revised Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan for 2023/24.</i>
Corporate priorities	All
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Audit and Governance Committee is the Committee of the Council charged with overseeing governance.
- 1.2 Regulation 4 of The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 require the Council to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS), setting out the Council's governance arrangements.
- 1.3 A progress update on the Annual Governance Action Plan for 2022/23 was presented to the Audit Committee on 27 April 2023. As part of the Annual Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Action Plan for 2023/204 has been developed and will be presented to Cabinet. The draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and Action Plan is being presented to the Audit and Governance Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The AGS provides an overview of the Council's governance arrangements and is based on evidence from a variety of sources.
- 2.2 The AGS incorporates the current governance arrangements and explains how some of these changed over the course of the year.
- 2.3 As part of this, an Annual Governance Action plan is developed, identifying the key areas of focus for the following financial year. There are 10 key actions within the 2023/24 Annual Governance action plan, these include:
 - Raising awareness of the new contract procedure rules
 - Financial Management
 - Risk Management
 - Emergency Planning
 - Portal Content Management
 - Business Continuity
 - New HR Policies
 - LGA Peer Review & Support
 - Review of service delivery model
 - Internal Audit Recommendations
- 2.4 The plan identifies the specific tasks that will be undertaken in the respective areas of focus and sets timescales for their completion.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 None.



4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no 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 2023/24 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. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan for 2022/23
- Draft Statement of Accounts for 2022/23

9.2 These documents will be available for inspection online at www.cotswold.gov.uk or by contacting democratic services democratic@cotswold.gov.uk for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.