



**COTSWOLD**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 25 JANUARY 2024</b>
Subject	<b>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ACTION PLAN 2023/24 UPDATE</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Joe Harris, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk">joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Robert Weaver, CEO Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Cheryl Sloan, Business Manager, Governance, Risk & Business Continuity Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	This report provides the Audit and Governance Committee with an update on progress against the Annual Governance Statement action plan for 2023/24 as of January 2024.
Annexes	Annex A – Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2023/24
Recommendation(s)	That the Audit and Governance Committee resolves to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. Note the Annual Governance Action Plan and associated progress updates</li></ul>
Corporate priorities	All
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	NA



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To provide the Audit and Governance Committee with an update on the progress made against the actions detailed in the Council's Annual Governance Action Plan for 2023/2024.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Audit and Governance Committee is the Committee of the Council charged with overseeing governance.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The draft AGS for 2023/24 was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 25 July 2023 and is included within the approved Annual Statement of Accounts. An update on the progress against the Action Plan was last presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 18 October 2023.

## **3. MAIN POINTS**

- 3.1 There are 11 key actions within the 2023/24 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
- Constitution Review

- 3.2 The plan identifies the specific tasks that will be undertaken in the respective areas of focus and sets timescales for their completion, along with any progress up to January 2024. The Action Plan also includes a RAG rating to show whether the actions are 'on target', 'off target but with action being taken to ensure delivery', or 'off target and no action yet agreed to resolve the situation'.

- 3.3 As of January 2024, all actions are on target, with the exception of Business Continuity Plans (BCP) and Financial Management. The BCP action has been progressed, however, the delivery plan will roll into 2024/25. The Financial Management action will be pushed into next financial



year due to the Publica Review and planned changes to delivery and structures. Both actions will therefore carryover into the next financial year.

#### **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 2023/24, as identified in the AGS, provides 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 2023/24
- Statement of Accounts for 2022/23

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

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