Appendix 4

Overview of Service-Based Governance Statements 2009/10

All Heads of Service have completed the annual review and update of their Service Based Governance Statement for 2009/10. This process involves the following elements:

- Assurance that the control environment operated effectively during 2009/10 in respect of the service areas for which they have responsibility
- Review of the operation of the Council's system of internal control within their service area and identification of supporting evidence
- Review of actions taken during the year to address any weaknesses and identification of any further areas for improvement in 2010/11.

At the end of 2008/9, Heads identified 74 actions to improve governance arrangements during 2009/10. Of these, 38 were fully completed and 22 were partially completed or ongoing. The remainder will be carried forward for completion in 2010/11. Some actions became redundant during the course of the year for a number of reasons (e.g. government policy changes or internal restructuring).

Overview of the actions identified for 2009/10

Objective 1: Establishing principle statutory obligations and organisational objectives

Nearly two thirds of the 37 actions under Objective 1 were completed and most of the outstanding ones are underway.

Objective 1.1 : Mechanism established to identify principle statutory obligations

Actions were identified by about half of the Heads of Service. The majority of actions related to ensuring that officers continue to receive appropriate professional updates and training, and capturing relevant briefings on departmental and team meeting minutes. The mechanisms are in place and this is an on-going process.

Objective 1.2 : Mechanism in place to establish corporate objectives

Stakeholder consultation process is underway through the new Customer Focus Strategy

Reflecting organisational objectives within the service plans requires some further development in 2010/11 following the corporate restructure and the planned review of the service planning process.

Objective 1.4 : Performance management arrangements are in place

About three quarters of Heads had identified actions to review performance indicators and to increase the monitoring of performance against targets. Around half of the planned actions were completed. Some actions were not completed due to key staff vacancies (e.g. in Constitutional Services), others are underway and part of larger projects such as Working Together.

Objective 2; Identify principle risks to achievement of objectives.

Around one third of the 18 actions identified were completed and approximately another third are underway.

Considerable progress has been made in respect of management of risk at Head of Service level. A process is in place to review and monitor operational risk registers in which the Corporate Risk Group plays a key role. Training has taken place with a number of Heads and key managers and this will continue in 2010/11. Most of the actions concerned embedding and cascading participation in the risk process to other managers and team leaders. Examples of actions were to use the PDM process to ensure ownership of risk and have a standing item on team meeting agendas. Most of the outstanding actions are in-progress and have been slowed by the restructure.

Objective 3 : Identify and evaluate key controls to manage principle risk

3.1.1-3.1.4 relate to key corporate policies e.g. Financial Regs, Contract SOs, Whistle Blowing, Procurement etc.

80% of the 10 actions identified have been completed.

These mainly concerned recording the process through which staff are made aware of corporate policies. All staff are initially made aware through the induction process. Examples of processes in place to remind staff are through PDMs or departmental team meetings; in some cases more formal processes are in place such as sign-off. A more coherent approach could be taken at corporate level.

3.1.9 Business/Service Continuity Plans have been prepared for all critical services.

A quarter of the 8 actions identified have been completed.

Plans for critical service areas have been developed and most of the outstanding actions refer to the need to review and test service plans. This process is underway but again has been affected by restructuring of services.

All services are affected by the need for IT resilience. A technical solution has been established but a viable alternative accommodation site is still being sought. A business case is in preparation to consider the various options.