Overview of Service-Based Governance Statements 2010/11

Background
All Heads of Service were asked to complete the annual review and update of their Service Based Governance Statements for 2010/11. This process involves the following elements:

- Assurance that the control environment operated effectively during 2010/11 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 2011/12.

When reviewing arrangements last year, Heads identified 52 actions to improve governance arrangements during 2010/11. Of these, 26 have been fully completed and the remainder are either in progress, or have been deferred to 2011/12.

Summary of progress against actions for delivery in 2010/11

Strategic direction and statutory obligations
Out of a total of 13 actions, 5 have been completed. The majority of those outstanding relate to service-based training and service planning and, along with a number of new actions, have been assigned for completion in 2011/12.

All services have seen a drive in improving staff attendance, participation at team meetings, one to ones and training sessions, and the cascade systems in place to disseminate relevant information.

Performance framework
Just over half of the 22 actions were completed in 2010/11, and the thread of those carried forward continues to be related to service planning. The process and template for completing service plans has been reviewed early in 2011/12 and a timeline for completion agreed following its introduction.

Three Service Delivery Units have carried forward actions relating to Operational Risk, although it should be noted that 10 of the 14 actions around Strategic and Operational Risk have been completed by services across the organisation. Heads have taken part in Risk identification training in May 2011 that will facilitate more effective reviews of Operational Risk Registers.

Stakeholder communication & engagement
A third of the actions have been completed in relation to stakeholders, and despite undergoing a period of significant change, the Finance SDU has completed its actions to address monitoring reports for managers, and INTEGRA screens.

Service Delivery Units that identified opportunities for improving stakeholder engagement are developing appropriate Forward Plans.

Staff performance & conduct
All actions have been completed.

Business continuity
Five actions were identified for delivery during 2010/11. Progress has been made against delivery of some of the actions, particularly in relation to the identification and development of an alternative site for the ICT Business Continuity solution. A site has been identified and progress in developing the site is being monitored through processes associated with the management of the Strategic Risk Register. The majority of actions relate to the review of Service Business Continuity Plans and though progress has been made, reviews are not yet complete.

Financial management
All actions were completed in the year, with the intention of raising staff awareness of the various regulatory policies and procedures to be adhered to. Heads have not identified any need for improvement in this area.

Overview of the actions for completion in 2011/12

A total of 40 actions are identified for delivery in 2011/12, some of which are actions deferred from 2010/11. Many of these are already in progress, and others tie in with corporate activity, e.g. the recent Service Planning review and recently completed risk identification training.