

Overview of Service-Based Governance Statements 2012/13

Background

All Heads of Service were asked to complete the annual review and update of their Service Based Governance Statements for 2012/13. This process involves the following elements:

- Review of the operation of the Council's system of internal control within their service area and identification of supporting evidence
- Assurance that the control environment operated effectively during 2012/13 in respect of the service areas for which they have responsibility
- Review of actions taken during the year to address any weaknesses and identification of any further areas for improvement in 2013/14.

When reviewing arrangements last year, Heads identified 16 actions to improve governance arrangements during 2012/13

Summary of progress against actions for delivery in 2012/13

Strategic direction and statutory obligations

Three of the five actions set have been completed and one action relating to VOSA Operator's licence training (also referred to in 'Staff Performance and Conduct) has a revised completion date of March 2014. The remaining action regarding the creation of a performance based job description/person specification template is a corporate action and is therefore no longer appropriate as a service governance action.

Performance framework

The only action set regarding the delivery of risk identification training for Managers in Leisure, Community and Children's Services is complete.

Stakeholder communication & engagement

The two actions set for delivery in 2012/13 have been deferred:

- An action identified by Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR and OD) to revise the Council's Grievance Policy and create new Capability Procedures has been deferred to 2013/14. As part of the proposed HR and OD restructure, a new post of HR Policy Officer is being created. This officer will be responsible for the development of these policies and procedures.
- The corporate project to review customer feedback initially identified in the Customer Services and Business Improvement Service Assurance Statement has also been deferred. A Customer Access Review pilot was carried out in Environmental Services. Following a staff restructure, the Council is reviewing its position in relation to the delivery of elements of the Customer Focus Action Plan and a potential reprioritisation will be considered. This action is included on the 2013/14 corporate actions list for monitoring, so will therefore not be transferred to the service based governance actions list for 2013/14.

Staff performance & conduct

Following the identification of actions to ensure additional persons receive certified training in 2012/13 in Environmental Services, two members of staff are currently undertaking the Certificate of Technical Compliance training and will complete the training by July 2013. Additional VOSA Operator's licence training has been deferred to 2013/14 due to the restructure of the fleet management service.

Business continuity

Service Business Continuity arrangements were identified for review or monitoring in four Service assurance Statements. It was agreed at Corporate Governance Group on 6 November 2012 that these actions should be deleted from the Service Governance Actions List. Corporately, monitoring of the Council's business continuity arrangements will continue and any concerns regarding service business continuity planning and preparedness will be highlighted to Corporate Governance Group.

The action to enhance arrangements for the technical solution to address ICT business continuity by establishing an alternative site for servers has been completed and tested in a live environment.

Partnerships

An action for Environmental Services to improve monitoring of partnership arrangements against the Partnership Toolkit has been completed. In relation to an action to review the Partnership Toolkit, SMB determined that resource could not be applied to a review or refresh of the Partnership Toolkit at this stage. For information, SoStevenage Governance is annually refreshed.

Overview of the actions for completion in 2013/14

Six actions to enhance service governance arrangements were identified by Heads of Service for delivery in 2013/14. Two of these relate to deferred activity from 2012/13.